

# Types of Parental Involvement in Education, Socio-Economic Status of the Family and Students' Academic Results

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**Abstract.** The article gives an overview of the theoretical models of parental involvement in education. The peculiarities of parental involvement in Russian education are correlated with the typologies proposed by J. L. Epstein. Comparison

of typologies of parental involvement for different parents' socio-economic categories was carried out. Low-income families were especially identified. It is shown that the higher degree of involvement is characteristic of the parents whose children attain better academic results and plan to proceed with higher education after school. The study produced data demonstrating inequality in education, i. e. children from low-income families have lower educational outcomes than average values for the sample. The higher the level of involvement that parents have, the more leveled the difference in educational results becomes.

**Keywords:** family involvement, educational inequality, typologies of parental involvement, students' academic results, low-income families

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With the emergence and development of educational institutions in society, the tendency to shift the responsibility for children's education from the family to the school has emerged. As society developed along its historical path, it trusted more to the social educational institutions and a general opinion gradually took hold that school possessed the best teaching and upbringing methods [Mannan, Blackwell 1992]. As the school's functional scope became wider, the role of parents and family was reducing.

Beginning in the 1960s, however, researchers started pointing out the need for emphasizing and increasing parents' intervention in their

children's education. Over the second half of the last century parental involvement in education on the global scale progressed from a deficit model approach (where the school was understood to be supplementing for that which the family could not provide) and a "difference model" (where the school and the family were regarded as two completely different and almost never overlapping realms) to an "empowerment model" [Shepard, Rose 1995] where the parents are viewed as a major source feeding their children's development and education and where the parents play the primary role in helping their children to get accustomed to school life, socialize, and master important life skills.

The empowerment model in various interpretations is the most popular model nowadays. It distinguishes four hierarchical levels of parental involvement in education. The first two levels are *basic communication* (tracking the child's academic results, communicating with the school, talking to teachers, getting feedback on the child) and *home improvement* (creating a learning environment at home, working on discipline skills, homework assistance, reading at home, promoting health consciousness). They reflect the basic involvement of the parents in the education process of their children without much intervention into their children's school life. Two further levels are *volunteering* (involvement and connection with other students and parents at school) and *advocacy* (connecting to local communities and organizations). They imply more active engagement of parents in the life of the educational institution. The highest level, *empowerment*, is achieved when parents develop the capability to define school policy and influence decisions made at school. This level of the parental involvement in their children's education requires confidence, knowledge, and leadership.

Some Russian researchers conclude that since Soviet times Russian parents' participation in the education of their children has been, for the most part, limited to providing the school with supplies and other resources [Khomenko 2006]. Even the teachers who pioneered innovative humanistic approaches and principles in schools (Alexander Tubelsky, Vladimir Karakovsky, Oleg Gazman, and others) never considered parents and family to be either partners of the school or participants of the education process.

The interest in parental involvement in education in Russia began to surface in the early 2000s. An opinion had formed that reforming the education system was only possible through new forms of communication with the public based on dialogue, equality, joint decision-making, and cooperation of schools and parents in particular [Pinsky 2004].

A group of researchers led by developmental psychologist Katerina Polivanova studied the phenomenon of modern parenthood. They make a point that the value of childhood in the public discourse and neoliberal attitudes that imply, among other things, the increased responsibility of the individual, raise the value of the parents' decisions

**Table 1. Types of parental involvement (engagement)**  
(after [Epstein 1987])

Type of involvement	What parents do	What school does
Parenting	Satisfy child's basic needs, establish favorable home environment to support learning.	Assist families in understanding how they could support the development of their children. Parent education, training for parents, home visits, family-oriented support programs.
Learning at Home	Help children at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions. Participate in goal-setting and planning learning activity.	Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school-work at home.
Communicating	Continuous two-way communication with the school. Monitoring of children's progress, responding effectively to their problems.	Regular communication on children's progress. Work with parents taking into account their cultural background.
Volunteering	Contribute to the development of the school environment and the education process, participate in school activities.	Create favorable conditions for parent engagement, make flexible schedules to enable parents who work to participate, recognize parents' talents and interests.
Decision-Making	Participate in school governance. Maintain networks that link all families with parent representatives.	Enable parents to participate in decisions about the governance of the educational institution.
Collaborating with Community	Participate in education policy-making at the community level.	Coordinate resources and services from the community, businesses, and partnerships, assistance to families, soliciting support from cultural, healthcare, and other government agencies.

about their child's life [Polivanova 2015]. In the context of parental involvement in education, parental self-efficacy comes to the fore as the parent's perceived competence and capability to contribute to the education of their children [Bandura 1977] (as quoted in [Polivanova 2015]). Parental self-efficacy implies confidence in one's efforts and the expectation that these efforts will bring about desired results.

One of the most popular theories on parental involvement existing today is Joyce Epstein's model defining six types of interactions enabling school-family-community partnerships [Epstein 1987] (Table 1).

Some researchers criticize this approach for the unjustified 'leveling' of the school and the family grounds and a too narrow notion of involvement [Vincent, Tomlinson 1997, Lareau 1996, Auerbach 2007, Galindo, Medina 2009]. They also point at a blinkered view on the school-family partnership and too much focus on the school in it [Ban-

Table 2. **Differences between traditional and partnership orientation** (after [Sheridan, Kratochwill 2007])

Partnership orientation	Traditional orientation
Clear commitment to work together in order to promote child's performance/ achievement	Emphasizing the school role in promoting learning
Frequent communication that is bidirectional	Communication initiated just by the school, infrequent and problem-centered
Appreciating the cultural differences and recognizing the importance of their contribution to creating the positive learning climate	'One size fits all'—cultural difference is a challenge that needs to be overcome
Appreciation of the significance of different perspectives	Differences are seen as barriers
Goals for students are mutually determined and shared	Goals determined by school, sometimes shared with parents
Plans are co-constructed with agreed-upon roles for all participants	Educational plans devised and delivered by teachers

quedano-Lopez, Alexander, Hernandez 2013]. Despite the criticism, however, this model is praised for being conceptually right [ibid.] and providing a succinct summary of different interactions enabling meaningful cooperation between the school and the family. Most Western research is focused around some 'branch' of that 'tree' or other. Based on the above, it appears relevant to examine how Epstein's model fits with Russian reality.

Researchers Susan Sheridan and Thomas Kratochwill undertook an attempt to develop the Epstein model further by formulating differences between the traditional relations of the school and the family and a partnership approach (Table 2).

The partnership approach consists of three important building blocks defining one another: basis of partnership, actions, and academic outcomes. The *basis of partnership* embraces the approach (acceptance by the school of the family's participation, shared responsibility for the child's academic performance), relations (the school and the family recognizing that together they will achieve much better results, rather than separately), and environment (mutual trust, the school is perceived as a friendly community by the family). *Actions* include strategies and practices aimed at building a successful school-family partnership. Naturally, the partnership brings about better *academic outcomes* (through a more successful learning process and healthy development of the child).

In summary the results of 66 studies Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla concluded that the family is a major contributor to the child's

accomplishments from their early childhood to high school [Henderson, Berla 1994], and that parental involvement has a stronger effect on attainment in primary school than in the secondary school [Jeynes 2007].

The positive influence of parental involvement in education is also discussed in the context of educational inequality. Educational institutions and the government help balance the odds to a certain extent for children from families of different socio-economic status and provide certain compensatory mechanisms. At the same time, the risk of reproduction of social inequality remains. It becomes relevant, therefore, to conduct research that would open up possibilities to overcome educational and social marginalization of the most vulnerable categories of children through their families' involvement in the education process and the everyday life of the educational institution [Gadsden, Davis, Artiles 2009, Zimmer 2003, Brunello, Checchi 2007].

Family involvement in education is addressed as a mechanism to improve the child's academic performance at school and reduce the large gap in attainment between children from low-income families and their wealthier peers. A home environment that is full of encouragement and support, and high expectation as well as the parental engagement in school life both promote student performance regardless of their social, national, cultural, or economic background [Eagle 1989, Dauber, Epstein 1993, Christenson et al. 1997]. Parental involvement in education can also help compensate for the lack of other family resources [Derrick-Lewis 2001]. Whatever the family's socio-economic status and the student's talents, family-school partnerships provide many advantages and, among other things, help tackle educational inequality [Epstein 1987, Caldas, Bankston 1997, Kellegan et al. 1993].

Different types of families and different categories of parents can have an equally positive influence on the academic performance of children. However, due to their natural differences as well as the difference in opportunity and conditions, they take different approaches to involvement in education. Even though, depending on the conditions and the situation, the same parent will choose different types of involvement, it can be assumed that his/her preferences are dictated by certain characteristics of the family such as its socio-economic status, educational and cultural background.

One of the objectives of this study was to confirm or reject this hypothesis by analyzing different typologies of parental involvement based on Epstein's model [Epstein 1987] adapted to the realities of Russian education. The main line of this analysis is a correlation between the types of participation (involvement) of parents from families of different socio-economic status, the academic results of children from those families, and the educational trajectories of the children.

**1. Empirical Basis of the Study**

For the purposes of this study, a survey of 3,887 parents whose children attend general education institutions was conducted. The survey was undertaken in 2016 as part of the *Monitoring the economics of education* initiative by the Higher School of Economics in 9 federal districts of Russia.

In accordance with the theoretical framework of the study (J. Epstein's model) for each of the six types of parental involvement in education there was a set of multiple choice questions about the parents' participation in school life and in their child's education.

The sample of pre-school and general education institutions was stratified based on the following parameters: (a) geographic location, (b) type of populated place, (c) type of educational institution, (d) form of ownership. The sample was spread over the strata "administrative and geographic attribute" and "type of populated place" in proportion to the population of those strata. The distribution by types of populated places was as follows: Moscow—12.1% (471 people), cities above 1 million people (excluding Moscow)—13.8% (536 people), cities from 100,000 to 1 million people and towns below 100,000 people—26.3% (1,021 people) and 18.2% (709 people) respectively, and urban-type settlements and village settlements together—29.6% (1,150 people). The structure of the sample by the level of education of the mother (stepmother) was the following: general secondary education or lower—4.6% (178 people), elementary or secondary vocational education—33% (1,273 people), higher education not completed or without academic degree—59.4% (2,289 people), higher professional education and higher education with an academic degree—2.5% (98 people).

Distribution by the level of income: Sometimes we do not have enough money to buy necessary foods—1.3% (51 people), We have enough money for food but not for other daily needs—7.5% (290 people), We have enough money for daily needs but not for necessary clothes—14.7% (565 people), We have enough money for food and clothes but not for TV, refrigerator, etc.—39.4% (1,513 people), We live well but would have to borrow money for a car or an expensive vacation—32% (1,231 people); We live well and can afford a car or an expensive vacation—5% (193 people).

A separate analysis was carried out for the answers of parents belonging to the category "low-income families" in order to study the specific characteristics of the types of parental involvement, children's attainment, and children's educational trajectories in the low-income families. This category consisted of the parents who selected the answers *Sometimes we do not have enough money to buy necessary foods* and *We have enough money for food but not for other daily needs*.

## 2. Results of the Study

### 2.1. Representation in the Sample of the Six Types of the Parents' Involvement in the Education and the School Life of Their Children

Almost all parents participate at the level of the basic types of involvement in *Parenting* and *Communicating* (average values for the sample are 93.3% and 97.9% respectively). Those parents establish a learning environment at home, take their child to school if necessary, and communicate with the school by tracking on a daily basis their child's performance and behavior, and by monitoring school news and classroom activities. The results of a study conducted in the US [Derrick-Lewis 2001] also show an overwhelming majority of parents involved in education at the level of *Parenting* and *Communicating* (96.6% and 93.2% respectively).

A significantly smaller portion of parents in Russia (only 62%) are involved in *Learning at Home* (helping with homework, searching for information on school subjects, guiding through difficulties, helping with planning curriculum activities). In the US, the degree of involvement at the *Learning at Home* level is higher—93.5% of parents control whether their child did their homework or not, and 81.1% of parents help their children with their homework [Derrick-Lewis 2001]. Just a bit less than a half of Russian parents (45.3%) are involved in *Volunteering* in school—they participate in and help with classroom and school activities and events, give help to other children and their parents, and sit on parents' committees (Fig. 1).

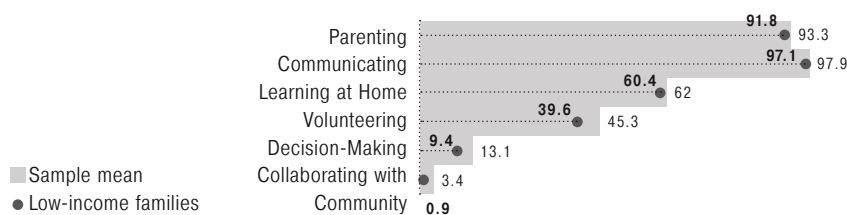
The study showed that the Epstein model allows us to classify Russian parents very clearly by the types of their real involvement in education. There are, however, peculiarities characteristic of the Russian cases. For example, according to J. Epstein [Epstein 1986], more than 70% of parents never act as volunteers. The results of our study show that almost half of the Russian parents are involved in *Volunteering*. It obviously should be regarded as the specific feature of the Russian case that is associated with the historically rooted attitudes of the Russian parent community about the importance of participating in school life.

Only a small percentage of the parents are involved in education at the highest levels of *Decision-making* and *Collaborating with Community*. Participation in decision-making on school governance is practiced by 13.1% of the parents. They sit on the governing boards and facilitate communication and information exchange between the parent community, educational institutions, education authorities, etc.

The least popular format of parental involvement in education in Russia is through informal groups of active parents who not only facilitate communication between the parent community, educational institutions, and education authorities but also maintain school-oriented cooperation in the local community. Only 3.4% of the parents are engaged in such formats of involvement.

A comparison of the percentage of involved parents from low-income families with the average sample values showed that involvement in *Parenting*, *Communicating*, and *Learning at Home* is essentially independent of the wealth status. *Volunteering*, however, is

Fig. 1. Distribution of the six types of parental involvement in the education and the school life of their children



significantly less popular among the parents from low-income families as compared to the average sample values (Fig. 1). The percentage of parents involved in *Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community* is generally low, and critically low among low-income families.

Hence, the involvement of the parents from low-income families varies from the average for the sample at three upper levels only. The largest gap is observed in *Collaborating with Community*.

## 2.2. Types of Parental Involvement and the Students' Academic Results

Better academic performance is one of the most important outcomes of parental involvement in education. It becomes vital, therefore, to evaluate how types of parental involvement are reflected in the students' academic results.

According to the survey, in almost every third family where parental involvement does not take any form from the proposed typology, the children mostly get passable or low grades. The percentage of children with passable or low grades is about twice as low (around 15%) in families where the parents are involved in *Parenting*, *Communicating*, and *Learning at Home*. In families where the parents practice *Volunteering* and *Decision-Making* the percentage of underperforming children is even lower—around 10%. The lowest percentage of the poorly performing students—less than 7%—is observed in families where the parents participate in *Collaborating with Community* (Table 3).

The percentage of children mostly getting good grades and always getting good and excellent grades being slightly higher with involved parents compared to uninvolved parents is almost the same, however, among all types of involvement. The percentage of children with only excellent grades is the lowest where the parents are only involved in *Parenting* and *Learning at Home* and is gradually growing at further levels up to *Collaborating with Community*. The study conducted in the US found an irrelevant correlation between the parents' involvement in *Parenting* and *Communicating* and the children's academic results. A better expressed correlation was observed where the par-



**Table 3. Students' attainment depending on the type of parental involvement in school and education** (% of the total number of responding parents)

Types of parental involvement (after [Epstein 1987])	Occasional very low (E) grades	Normally passable (D) grades	Mostly good (C) grades	Only good (C) and excellent (B, A) grades	Only excellent (B, A) grades
Not involved	3.3	24.1	40.6	25.9	6.1
Parenting	3.2	11.2	46.7	36.1	2.7
Learning at Home	3.4	10.1	47.0	37.2	2.3
Communicating	3.4	11.7	47.1	35.0	2.8
Volunteering	2.5	8.1	46.2	39.7	3.5
Decision-Making	3.0	6.9	46.8	39.2	4.1
Collaborating with Community	2.5	4.1	46.3	41.3	5.8

ents were involved in *Learning at Home*, *Volunteering*, *Decision-Making*, and *Collaborating with Community* [Derrick-Lewis 2001].

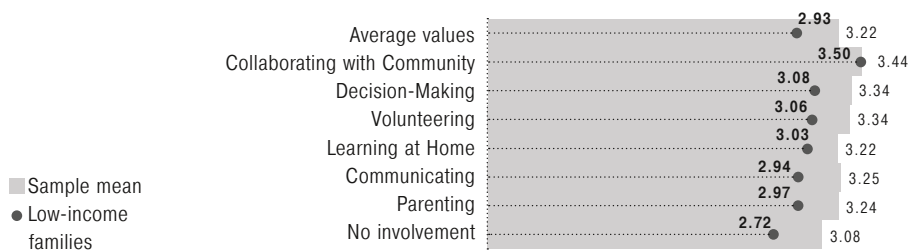
The highest percentage of children with excellent academic performance (6.1%) was observed in the group where the parents do not have any involvement in education. It appears that there is a specific category of families with excellent students who do not see any reason to participate in their children's education, and allow them independence, or actively engage in outside school education (tutors, courses, etc.).

Western research [Hart, Risley 1995, Revicki 1981] has found that parents with the lowest socio-economic status and the lowest incomes mostly disengage themselves from their children's education, whereas direct involvement in the school life promotes socialization amongst parents and improves the children's educational outcomes irrespective of the parents' income levels.

For the analysis of the situation in the families with different income levels academic performance indices<sup>1</sup> were calculated to reflect the academic results of the children whose parents practice different types of involvement in education. The average academic performance index for the sample was 3.22. For the children from the low-in-

<sup>1</sup> The index for each answer choice was calculated by assigning a whole-number weight coefficient from 1 (lowest performance) to 5 (highest performance). The index value is the sum of products of weight coefficients and the percentage of the respondents who chose the respective answer. Possible index values range from 1 to 5.

Fig. 2. **Children's academic performance indices depending on the types of parental involvement in education**



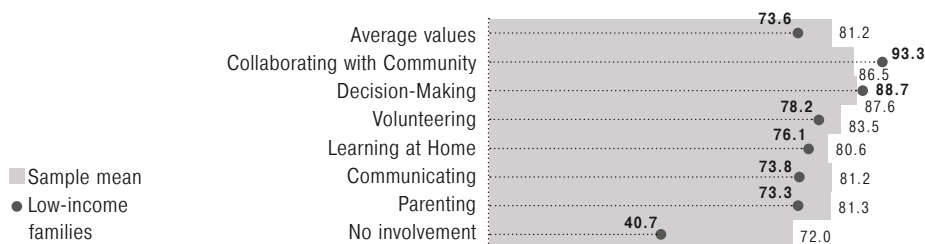
come families this index was lower by 0.29 points, which again proves the existence of educational inequality.

The lowest academic performance index is observed where the parents do not practice any type of involvement in education. For this category of parents, this index has average values of 3.08 for the sample average and 2.72 for low-income families (Fig. 2). The average indices are higher for children whose parents practice *Parenting*, *Communicating*, and *Learning at Home*—3.22–3.25 for the sample average, and 2.97–3.03 for low-income families. The indices are almost the same for children whose parents practice *Volunteering* and *Decision-Making*—3.34 for the sample average, and 3.06–3.08 for low-income families. The highest academic performance is demonstrated among children whose parents practice involvement at the highest level, *Collaborating with Community*—3.44 for the sample average. It is worth noting that in low-income families where the parents are involved in *Collaborating with Community* this index is even higher than the sample average—3.50.

The findings of this analysis lead to a conclusion that where parents are involved in education, the children demonstrate higher academic performance irrespective of the family's wealth status. The more actively the parents are involved in education (from *Parenting* and *Communicating* to *Collaborating with Community*) the higher their children's academic performance indices are, and the smaller the gap in attainment becomes between low-income families and the average values for the sample.

The academic performance of children is higher than the sample average in families with low wealth status (such as large or displaced families) where the parents are socially active and involved in their children's education by not just communicating with their school but collaborating with the whole local community. These findings allow us to assume that a more active parents' position with regard to their children's education can successfully contribute to overcoming edu-

Fig. 3. **Percentage of the parent respondents whose children plan to go to a university after completing schooling**



cational inequality. There is not sufficient grounds, however, to judge about the direction of the cause-effect link between these phenomena—whether a higher degree of involvement brings about better academic performance of the children or vice versa. Further research can help solve this problem.

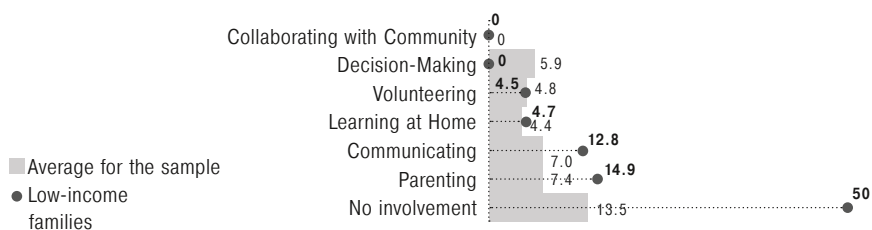
Along with the academic performance index, educational inequality manifests itself in students' educational trajectories, particularly in the orientation towards getting higher education. A comparison of the parents' answers about their children's plans to enroll in higher education with the types of parental involvement reveals a correlation between the parents' involvement in education and the child's educational trajectory.

Parental involvement in education in any form almost doubles the frequency of choices made by students from low-income families to go into higher education after school (from 40.7% to 73.3% and higher). Moreover, when low-income parents are involved in education at the two highest levels, *Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community*, their children choose to proceed with higher education more frequently than the average value for the sample.

The likelihood of choosing the educational trajectory "Go to university" significantly increases when the parents are involved in their child's education. The higher the level of involvement, the higher the percentage of children considering going to a university, and the smaller the relevant gap between the values for low-income families and the average value for the sample. Almost all low-income parents who are involved in *Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community* responded that their children plan to go to a university (88.7% and 93.3% respectively, which exceeds the average values for the sample, 87.6% and 86.5%).

The motivation for learning and getting the best quality higher education is shaped to a great extent by parenting practices and values. Compared to the groups of parents practicing some type of involve-

Fig. 4. **Percentage of the parent respondents whose children will not proceed with higher education due to the lack of motivation**



ment or other, the group where the parents are not involved in education at all contains the highest percentage of parents who say that their children do not intend to pursue higher education because of the lack of motivation for learning—13.5%. Among low-income families this percentage is 50% (Fig. 4). Among families where the parents practice *Parenting* and *Communicating*, the percentage of such children is 7%—almost twice as low. Among low-income families the percentage of parents who selected this answer is almost three times as low compared to the group of totally uninvolved parents, but at the same time is almost two times higher than among middle-to-high income families practicing *Parenting* and *Communicating*. Among parents involved in *Learning at Home*, *Volunteering*, and *Decision-Making* only 5% reported the lack of motivation in their child to continue with higher education. In the group of the parents collaborating with community nobody chose this answer. In the low-income families practicing *Learning at Home* and *Volunteering* the percentage of children not intending to pursue higher education is almost the same as in the middle-to-high income families. In the group of the low-income parents collaborating with community nobody reported the lack of motivation for further learning in their child.

The above findings demonstrate that the Epstein model fits for the assessment of parental involvement in education in Russia and for the comparison of the parental involvement types with the students' academic results. Children whose parents are involved in education demonstrate better academic performance in secondary school and will much more likely proceed with higher education than the children of uninvolved parents. Even when the parents only practice basic types of involvement such as *Parenting* and *Communicating*, their children's academic results will be higher compared to the children whose parents do not practice any type of involvement. The children of parents who are involved in *Learning at Home* and *Volunteering* have even higher academic results. The highest academic performance is demonstrated by children whose parents are involved in *De-*

Table 4. **Types of parental involvement in education** (distribution by places of residence, %)

Types of parental involvement (after [Epstein 1987])	Type of place of residence			
	City above 1 million people	City 100,000–1 million people	Town below 100,000 people	Urban-type settlement, village settlement
Not involved	3.9	5.3	7.2	6.6
Parenting	92.9	92.9	92.8	94.5
Communicating	97.9	98.0	97.9	98.3
Learning at Home	56.3	65.3	61.5	61.5
Volunteering	43.3	47.4	40.9	45.0
Decision-Making	17.4	13.5	10.6	11.9
Collaborating with Community	7.8	2.7	2.4	2.1

*Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community*. Despite generally having lower than average academic results, children from low-income families have better attainment and more often plan to go to a university when their parents are involved. The higher the level of parental involvement, the smaller the gap in the academic results between the values for children from low-income families and the average values for the sample.

### 2.3. Types of Parental Involvement Depending on the Place of Residence and the Mother's Education and Occupation

The representation of each of the six types of involvement in education depends on the family's place of residence. The overall percentage of parents not involved in their children's education does not exceed 10%. It is the highest in small towns below 100,000 people and the lowest in cities above 1 million people. *Parenting* and *Communicating* are distributed rather evenly across different types of populated places—they are practiced by the majority of the parents (Table 4). *Learning at Home* is practiced the least often by parents living in cities above 1 million people. *Volunteering* is practiced much more often by parents living in cities from 100,000 to 1 million people. The most pronounced correlation with the place of residence is observed in the percentages of parents involved in *Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community*—the highest levels of involvement are the least often practiced in small towns, urban-type settlements, and village settlements, and much more often in the cities above 1 million people.

Western researchers have collected a substantial body of evidence which highlights that the level of the parents' education, and the mother's education in particular, is one of the main drivers of the students' successful academic performance and educational achieve-

**Table 5. Types of parental involvement in education**  
(distribution by the mother's education, %)

Types of parental involvement (after [Epstein 1987])	Mother's (stepmother's) education			
	General secondary or lower	Elementary or secondary vocational education	Higher education not completed or without academic degree	Higher professional education and higher education with an academic degree
Not involved	10.4	5.4	4.3	5.6
Parenting	87.5	93.4	95.1	94.4
Communicating	95.8	97.8	98.2	96.3
Learning at Home	57.3	59.8	64.9	64.8
Volunteering	30.2	40.5	50.3	55.6
Decision-Making	7.3	10.0	14.1	16.7
Collaborating with Community	3.2	2.9	3.8	9.3

ments. The results of our study also show a correlation between the level of parental involvement in their child's education and their educational background.

Among the parents who completed general secondary education or have a lower educational background there are twice as many parents not practicing any involvement in the education of their children than among the parents who completed professional education of any kind (Table 5). The lowest percentage of parents involved in each of the six types of involvement is observed among those parents with the lowest educational backgrounds. The parents with university degrees demonstrate high involvement performance for almost each type of involvement.

The percentage of parents practicing *Communicating* has very little dependence on the mother's education. The parents' education has the most impact at the higher levels of involvement starting with *Learning at Home*, and the impact becomes stronger with every further level upwards. At the highest levels of involvement, *Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community*, the percentage of parents with a university degree is two-three times higher than the percentage of parents who completed general secondary education or have a lower educational background.

The mother's occupation also has an influence on the parents' preference for the type of involvement in education. The smallest percentage of parents not involved in education is among the entrepreneur parents who run their own business (Table 5). It appears that

**Table 6. Types of parental involvement in education**  
(distribution by the mother's occupation, %)

Types of parental involvement (after [Epstein 1987])	Mother's (stepmother's) occupation				
	Unemployed	Nonprofessional worker, agricultural worker	White-collar worker	Manager	Entrepreneur, company owner
Not involved	6.0	6.0	4.4	6.2	2.1
Parenting	95.4	93.4	94.1	91.7	94.8
Communicating	97.1	97.6	98.3	96.9	97.9
Learning at Home	61.1	62.7	62.3	67.9	62.5
Volunteering	44.8	38.6	46.1	53.9	59.4
Decision-Making	9.6	10.8	12.4	18.1	22.9
Collaborating with Community	3.8	3.1	3.2	4.7	6.6

the energy and initiative required for starting up a business manifest themselves in other spheres such as the education of the children.

The mother's occupation has a negligible effect on the percentage of parents practicing *Parenting* and *Communicating*. There are a few more managers among those parents who practice *Learning at Home*. Among the parents who are involved in *Volunteering* the ratio of managers and entrepreneurs is the highest and the ratio of nonprofessional workers is the lowest.

Also, the most intensely involved in *Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community* are those parents running a company or a sole proprietorship. Managers come second. An obvious conclusion is that the parents capable of starting and running their own business, making decisions and taking responsibility are much more likely to participate in the governance of the educational institutions attended by their children.

**3. Conclusion** The data obtained from this research confirms and complements certain findings from Western research that does not have parallels in Russia. For example, the correlation between children's academic results and their parents' involvement in education. The correlation is direct—the more active the parents, the better the academic performance of their children. Moreover, the comparison of the types of the parents' involvement in the risk-group families (with low socio-economic status) revealed that the parents' involvement in education carries high potential for overcoming educational inequality.

Utilization of J. Epstein's classical model allowed us to expand the idea of the types of parental involvement in education and prove its fitness for studying the Russian educational reality. According to J. Epstein, there are six types of parental involvement in children's education. They differ by the choice of activity and the degree of involvement and depend on the various characteristics of the family such as the family's financial position, the educational background and the occupations of the family members.

At the same time, the results of the study provide a snapshot of today's situation in Russia. The results for certain types of parental involvement were so close among one another that for the Russian sample, we should say, there are basically three main types of parental involvement in education.

The first—basic level—combines *Parenting* and *Communicating*. The overwhelming majority of Russian parents are involved in their children's education at this level with very little dependence on the place of residence, level of education, and occupation. The children of parents who practice this level of involvement have better academic performance than the children whose parents are not involved in education.

*Decision-Making* and *Collaborating with Community* can be described as the highest level of parental involvement in education that is practiced by only a few parents. Generally, those are the parents with a very high socio-economic status, well-earning and well-educated (with a university degree and very often with a post-graduate degree), working as managers, or running their own business. The possibilities of enhancing involvement at this level are rather limited for objective reasons such as a lack of education boards representing both the government and the public, or any other parent associations, and for subjective reasons such as the fact that only a small number of parents possess the qualities that are necessary at this level of involvement such as leadership, strategic thinking, and making decisions that not only influence the lives of their children but also define the development paths of their children's educational institutions.

The medium level combines *Learning at Home* and *Volunteering* and integrates two of the most important areas of parental involvement, i. e., providing a supportive environment for learning activity at home and participation in the education process in school. Around a half of Russian parents practice *Learning at Home* and *Volunteering*. Hence, this is the level where significant opportunity exists for enhancing parental involvement through attracting more parents and improving the efficiency of the school-family partnerships that already exist.

Here the key role should be played by the educational institutions. It is the attitude of the education system representatives that largely defines the success of the school-family partnerships [Mertsalova, Goshin 2015, 2016].



J. Epstein's typology obviously does not cover every possible type of parental involvement in their children's education and does not elicit the underlying causes and effects, which leaves some factors that may determine the parents' behaviors and the children's academic results undisclosed. This is a subject for further research. A science-based approach to the description of clusters of parental involvement in education allows us to define groups of parents based on their socio-economic characteristics and the types of involvement practiced by them. This information can be useful for education system representatives in the development of targeted initiatives for specific families that will unlock the full potential of each parent.

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