DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 219   UD 021 202

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TITLE   The Educational Needs of Black Children: Working
                Papers on Meeting the Education Needs of Cultural
                Minorities.
INSTITUTION   Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colo.
PUB DATE   Nov 80
NOTE   24p.: For related documents see UD 021 193-194.

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Academic Aspiration: *Black Youth: *Economic Factors:
                Educational Improvement: *Educational Needs:
                Elementary Secondary Education: Equal Education:
                Family (Sociological Unit): Parent Education: Parent
                Influence: *Parent Participation: *Poverty: Public
                Policy: *School Desegregation

ABSTRACT
                This paper, one of a series commissioned by the
Education Commission of the States to identify the educational needs
of minority groups, reviews the major factors that must be considered
if the educational needs of black children are to be met. An
important consideration is that the majority of black parents and
black children have high educational aspirations. Consequently, the
relatively lower scores of black pupils on standardized tests
(compared to those of white students) should not be attributed to
lack of achievement orientation. More crucial determinants of lower
black pupil performance are identified in this paper: poverty,
discrimination, and inadequate parental involvement. More than 25
years after the Brown decision, the struggle to achieve equality of
educational opportunity is ongoing. Poverty continues to be a way of
life for large numbers of black families and a major barrier to the
more effective education of black children. One important resource
for meeting the educational needs of black children has not yet been
fully tapped--black families. Parent education and parent involvement
programs, especially those that include members of the extended
family, may have an unexpected and important contribution to make to
educational improvement. (Author/MK)

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Preface

At the 1980 annual meeting of the Education Commission of the States, a resolution was adopted directing staff "to evaluate current and possible activities of the Commission concerning the educational needs of cultural minorities, including but not limited to Hispanics, and to report to the steering committee at its fall 1980 meeting."

To some extent, the ability of the staff to evaluate current activites of the Commission was dependent on developing an understanding of what kinds of education needs are of greatest concern to cultural minorities at this time (summer/fall of 1980). That, in turn, led to the need to group cultural minorities into specific categories and to identify the education needs of each group as well as to determine which needs were common to more than one group.

The staff, therefore, commissioned six papers to be written on the education needs of the following groups: (1) Blacks; (2) Mexican Americans; (3) Cubans; (4) Puerto Ricans; (5) Indians and Native Alaskans; and (6) Asians and Pacific Islanders. The papers were written by individuals who are noted authorities and they were reviewed by individuals who also are recognized as experts on minority concerns. Because of the very short period of time between the annual meeting and the fall steering committee meeting, authors and reviewers were not asked to provide exhaustive, documented reports, but to provide their own perspectives and understanding of the current needs that exist.

A complete list of titles, authors and reviewers follows. The papers will be made available by the Commission, as long as limited supplies last, along with

a "summary report" prepared by the staff. The summary report touches briefly on some of the major concerns raised in the papers and concludes with an overview of ECS activities that appear to be most relevant. The report was prepared for the review of Commissioners to facilitate their discussion at the 1980 fall steering committee meeting of possible future directions that ECS might pursue in the years to come.

Working Papers

on the Educational Needs of

Cultural Minorities

1. The Educational Needs of Black Children, by Andrew Billingsly, President, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland.

   Reviewer: Robert B. Hill, Director of Research, National Urban League, Washington, D.C.

2. The State of Indian Education, by Lee Antell, Director, Indian Education Project, Education Commission of the States.

   Reviewer: David L. Beaulieu, Academic Vice President, Sinte Gleska College, Rosebud, South Dakota.

3. Puerto Ricans and the Public Schools: A Critical Commentary, by Tony Baez, Program Coordinator, Midwest National Origin Desegregation Assistance Center, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

   Reviewer: Maria B. Cerda, Member of the Board, the Latino Institute, Chicago, Illinois.

4. A Report on the Cuban Students in the Dade County Public Schools, Miami Florida, by Rosa Guas Inclan, Supervisor of Bilingual Education, Dade County Public Schools, Miami, Florida.

   Reviewer: Gil Cuevas, Program Specialist, Miami Desegregation Assistance Center for National Origin (Bilingual Education), University of Miami, Miami, Florida.

5. A Legacy of Four Cultures: Education and the Mexican Americans, by
    Vicente Z. Serrano, Director, Interstate Migrant Education Project,
    Education Commission of the States.

    Reviewer: Alfredo G. de los Santos, Jr., ECS Commissioner, Vice Chancellor
    for Educational Development, Maricopa Community College, Phoenix, Arizona.

6. Asian and Pacific Americans: An Educational Challenge, by Siri Vongthieres,
    Senior Consultant, Lau Project, Colorado Department of Education, and
    Lawrence A. Egan, Senior Consultant, Bilingual Education Unit, Colorado
    Department of Education, Denver, Colorado.

    Reviewer: Masako H. Ledward, ECS Commissioner, Chairperson, Hawaii Edu-
    cation Counsil, Honolulu, Hawaii.

7. Summary Report, staff document prepared for the fall 1980 meeting of the
    steering committee of the Education Commission of the States.

Executive Summary

Efforts to improve equal education opportunity for Black students have encompassed: (1) school desegregation; (2) school finance reform; and (3) compensatory education programs. Each has been a strategy to improve the climate of the school environment in which Black students learn, to help overcome the effects of poverty, and to create for the future a more equitable educational system. Each, according to Billingsley, has met with some success and none have yet run their full course.

Billingsley, however, concurs with other educators that there is one important resource that has not yet been fully tapped -- Black families. Research has shown that Black parents are strong believers in the value of education as a means of improving their own lives and the lives of their children. The current interest in parenting and parent involvement may have an unexpected and important contribution to make to efforts to improve educational opportunity for Black children.

In general, parenting courses and parent involvement in the schools might have several kinds of contributions to make. In addition to enhancing the education of parents themselves, parent involvement can also lead to a better understanding on the part of educators of the strengths of Black families in their community. Parent education and involvement can not only improve the ability of the family to provide more effective learning environments for their children, it can also make it possible for parents to influence their children's education in constructive ways. Finally, parent involvement can, of

course, lead to more positive relations between schools and communities --
relations that are often severely strained between Black communities and the
schools that serve them.

In his review, Hill seconds Billingsley's assertion that Black families
have an important role to play in improving educational opportunity for Black
students. He also reinforces the authors concern about school suspension
rates for Black students, citing current research (the Black Pulse Survey con-
ducted by the National Urban League) showing that indeed, the suspension of
Black students from the public schools is excessive.

Hill also stresses the critical role that Black colleges play in providing
the nation with degree-holding Black adults. According to Hill, less than one-
third of all Black college students attend Black colleges -- but, of those
that do, 70 percent graduate (whereas 70 percent of Black students attending
white institutions do not). Thus, over one-half of all Black college students
graduate from Black colleges.

Billingsley and Hill share a number of common concerns for today's Black
students and both express optimism about the role that Black families can play
in improving their, and their children's, education. The challenge for educa-
tors is that of seeking ways to secure the active and meaningful involvement
of Black parents in the education of their children.

Reviewer Comments

Dr. Andrew Billingsley provides a very useful overview of major factors that must be taken into consideration if the education needs of Black children are to be met effectively. Foremost is the fact that the overwhelming majority of Black parents, low-income as well as middle-income, have strong achievement goals for their children and, also contrary to popular belief, most Black children have high educational aspirations. Consequently, the relatively lower scores of Black pupils on standardized tests (compared to white pupils) should not be attributed to the lack of an achievement orientation on the part of their parents or themselves.

Billingsley aptly identifies more crucial determinants of lower Black pupil performance: poverty, discrimination and inadequate parental involvement and education. He contends that the more successful parent/child education efforts are those that not only involve the natural parents of the children, but include significant members of the extended family as well.

Many of the key points made by Billingsley have been strongly reinforced by initial findings from a nationwide door-to-door survey of 3,000 Black households conducted by the National Urban League during the fall and winter of 1979. According to the Black Pulse Survey, one of the largest and most comprehensive needs assessment surveys ever conducted among Black families, school suspension is much more prevalent than is commonly believed. One-fourth (24 percent) of all Black parents said that at least one of their children had been suspended, while almost one-tenth (7 percent) of all Black parents had a

child who had been expelled. Interestingly, while 29 percent of all low-income Black parents (i.e., with incomes under $6,000 per year), had children who had been suspended, a surprisingly large proportion (18 percent) of all middle-income Black parents (i.e., with incomes of $20,000 or more) also had children who had been suspended from school.

Such relatively high rates of student "push-outs" underscore the concerns that the Children's Defense Fund has expressed over the years regarding the racial inequity of such practices throughout this nation. Related to this concern is the over-representation of Black children who are disciplinary problems in special education programs for the "mentally retarded."

But the education needs of Black children, as Billingsley notes, are quite varied and are not monolithic. All Black children are not poor nor low achievers. Unfortunately, the Black Pulse Survey further revealed that disproportionate numbers of Black parents felt that the education needs of their children were not being met -- regardless of whether they were slow learners, gifted, physically or mentally handicapped or not. Thus, education services must be more sensitive to the heterogeneity of the Black student population.

Another education need that was alluded to by Billingsley -- which he, as the president of Morgan State University, clearly recognizes as vital for the upward mobility of Black youth -- is the maintenance and strengthening of traditional Black colleges. Unfortunately, there are concerted efforts to severely reduce the effectiveness of these institutions. But, even with inadequate resources, Black colleges have continued to demonstrate their vitality and importance in meeting the education needs of Black -- and white -- youth. It is true that less than on-third of all Black students today attend Black colleges. But it is also true that over half of all Black students who receive

undergraduate degrees come from Black colleges! This is because 70 percent of

Black students attending predominantly white institutions do not complete their

studies, while 70 percent of Black students attending predominantly Black

colleges do graduate. Thus, such institutions that effectively meet the var-

ied education needs of Black youth, many of whom disproportionately come from

low-income and rural environments, should be provided with more, not less, re-

sources to continue their vital contributions to this nation.

<div style="text-align: right">

Robert B. Hill, Ph.D.
Director of Research
National Urban League
Washington, D.C.

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Introduction

Contrary to what is generally believed, Black families place an extremely high value on the education of their children. The sociologist, Robert Hill, in his book, <u>Strengths of Black Families</u>[1] has observed that among the five major strengths of Black families is a strong belief in the value of education as a means of achievement.

In a 1979 National Urban League Study, "The State of Black America,"[2] Madeline Stint has pointed out that 58 percent of the Black population between three and 34, was enrolled full time in some form of education in 1978. She observed further: "This percentage was higher than for any other race in the United States and symbolizes the educational and psychological drive of Blacks for education." Moreover she observed that Blacks are showing considerable gains in comparison to whites in the completion of high school. In 1974, for example, 72 percent of Blacks 20 to 24 years old, had completed high school compared to 85 percent of whites the same age. By 1977, however, these percentages had changed to 76 percent for Blacks and 87 percent for whites.

Similar observations on the value Blacks place on the education of their children have been made by Dr. Faustine Jones, Professor of Education at Howard University, in an unpublished paper.[3] And in our own study, <u>Black Families in White America</u>,[4] we have made a similar observation and have identified three characteristics of education that make it a major key to understanding Black family life:

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First it is a most reliable index and a potent means of
gaining social mobility and family stability in our society.
The absence of systematic training and education during
slavery and reconstruction depressed the social structure
of the Negro people most, just as the presence of education
in small and scattered doses proved such a powerful force
of achievement.

Second, education is a major tool which enables families
to meet the responsibilities placed on them by society,
helping them meet not only the instrumental functions of
family life, but the expressive ones as well.

Desegregation/Integration

A reading of any reputable daily newspaper in 1980 will show that over

a quarter century after the most profound legal doctrine designed to bring

about equality of educational opportunity for Black children was promulgated--

namely the _Brown_ decision of 1954--the struggle to achieve that objective

continues.

The education of Black children has, no doubt, been tremendously affected

by the _Brown_ decision and its aftermath in many parts of the country. It

would be hard to make a case, however, that a substantial degree of equality

has been achieved. That is not owing, in my view, to any lack of soundness

of the Brown Doctrine. It is due, most especially, to the nature of the

society and the reluctance of social institutions, their leadership and their

benefactors, to change. Privilege, to paraphrase Frederick Douglass, concedes

nothing without a struggle. Like its twin brother, power, the privileged

association which accrues to some people because of the structure of society,

including the racism which is inherent in it, gives way only reluctantly and

with great pressure to the "better idea" of an egalitarian, racially integrated,

culturally pluralistic society where privilege and power are shared more

suitably.

Still, any concern for the education of Black children must give some consideration to the movement for school desegregation ushered in by the decision of <u>Brown v. Board of Education</u>, issued by a unanimous Supreme Court under the leadership of Chief Justice Earl Warren in 1954. A number of institutions and publications have sought to assess the progress of this movement and its effects on the education of Black children.

A recent conversation with Ernest Green, Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Carter Administration, recalled the agony he suffered as one of the "Little Rock Nine"--that brave band of Black students trying hard to integrate Central High School in Little Rock and give meaning to the <u>Brown</u> decision. It was a struggle which has not yet been won.

Marion Wright Edleman, Director of the Children's Defense Fund in Washington has sought to capture both the progress and the absence of progress in the lives of Black children since that famous decree.

In a special report in 1978,[5] she wrote:

> I am a child of the Grown generation, and my path from a segregated and unequal, small Southern school, to a Black college, and ivy league law school and a satisfying career represents some of the promise of the last two-and-a-half decades. I worry less than my parents did about whether my children will have what they need to survive and more about whether they will have too much.

And of the special responsibilities of Black children and parents, she continues:

> I now grapple with how to balance at least two parenting tasks; first, transmitting to my children enough of the special commitment and purpose, born of centuries of struggle, which their racial and religious heritages compel (and which I hope will allow them to bring a special dimension to their community and nation); and second, encouraging them to move with security and ease in an America which I hope will judge them on the basis of their individual talents and character.

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In this essay, Mrs. Edleman is echoing the faith of our fathers. She is also chronicling the hopes and aspirations of all Black mothers. For she is acutely aware that her children, and all Black children, must still live out the meaning of W.E.B. DuBois, "double consciousness"--"A Negro and an American, two warring factions in one dark body, whose dogged determination alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

Perhaps, in 1980 our children have a bit more going for them than their and our determination. In many parts of the country, they have a school system and an education environment which seeks both to understand and to educate them effectively. But the struggle continues.

The assessment of the Children's Defense Fund[6] pointed out that 25 years after the Brown decision, the following conditions of life face Black children generally:

- Black mothers still die in childbirth three times as often as white mothers.

- Black babies die within the first year of life, twice as often as white babies.

- Black children are four times as likely to grow up in poverty as white children.

- Black children are more than twice as likely to drop out of school before completing high school as white children; more than twice as likely to be suspended from school; more than three times as likely to be placed in classes for the mentally retarded; and less than half as likely to be placed in classes for gifted children.

- A Black college graduate has about the same chance of being unemployed as a white high school dropout and, when employed, earns at about the same level as a white high school graduate.

- And, despite the Brown decision, most Black children attend public schools that are 90 percent Black. This is even more the case in the North and Midwest than in the Southeast.

The report points to the dual nature of racial discrimination which persists long after Brown, affecting both white and Black children:

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> Clearly <u>Brown v. Board of Education</u> and the Civil Rights
> Act of 1964 and 1968 have not run their course. But the
> fact of continuing and staggering denial of equal oppor-
> tunity for Black children is only half the picture.
> Equally serious is the less obvious, but real denial of
> opportunity to millions of white children."

For, in absolute numbers, the report points out that, "More white

than Black children go uneducated," (p.3). What is more, and perhaps even

more crippling to this society and to Black children, is the fact that most

white children educated in the racial superiority atmospheres, are mis-

educated and ill prepared for leadership or for effective human relation-

ships in an increasingly heterogeneous, culturally pluralistic, society.

What this suggests is that at least a part of the concern of policy

makers for the more effective education of Black children must be focused

on the more effective education of white children and parents and community

leaders about the nature of their society. For as Alvin Toffler has ob-

served in his new book, <u>The Third Wave</u>[7] the society of the future must make

way for minorities in ways undreamed of in years past.

The notion, however, that the desegregation of school children can

succeed without major changes in the rest of the society was and is naive

at best. The view that desegregation will in itself bring about more effec-

tive education of Black children is and was myopic. What seems more promis-

ing is to take a broader view of the education of Black children within the

context of society and of social change.

Again, the Children's Defense Fund[8] has identified eight barriers to meet-

ing children's needs that seem particularly applicable to a concern for the

education of Black children. These include:

1. The need for better and more universal counseling of teenagers,
   girls and boys, about the prevention of teenage pregnancies:

Too many Americans are content to bemoan the 'breakdown of' traditional family patterns, but refuse to help millions of families who struggle daily to raise children under conditions of poverty, unemployment, inflation and single- or teenaged parenthood. (p.5)

2. The need to institute comprehensive child care for working mothers.

3. The need to provide supportive services to families so that they can keep their children in their own homes, rather than placing such great emphasis on child placement outside the home. This is a condition still prevalent in the American child welfare movement which cripples Black children especially. In our study,[9] Children of the Storm, we found the problem to be pervasive. The change has been substantial in many child welfare programs, but the challenge and the struggle continue.

4. The need to set aside political ideology in focusing on the care and education of children.

Explaining why large numbers of Blacks, Black educators and Black organizations have withdrawn some of their enthusiasm for school desegregation, Dr. Faustine Jones has observed that:[10]

Desegregation has been a very 'mixed blessing' for the education of Blacks. While per pupil expenditures, length of school year and facilities have become more equal — we have on the other hand seen Black students suspended, and pushed out of school, Black teachers and principals dismissed, demoted and sidetracked into jobs with little meaning, and your prospective teachers not finding employment. We have lived through the massive resistence schemes of southern politicians, and white flight from desegregating northern school systems. (pp. 12-13)

She continues:

In many cities and counties we have elected school board members in an effort to change policy decisions; we have demonstrated, boycotted, picketed, sat-in, and sought community control of public schools in our neighborhoods. We have permitted our children to be bussed, paired, and magnetized in an effort to gain for them equal educational opportunity.

We have never given up on public schools or the concept of schooling as a primary means of self-development, occupational

opportunity, citizenship preparation, self-actualization, and
upward mobility. (p. 13)

And, also, Dr. Jones has reminded us that:

The educational programs now under attack, such as Head
Start, Follow Through, Upward Bound, etc., got their start
in 1965, only 14 years ago. They never were adequately
supported since it turned out that we could not have 'guns
and butter' in equal amounts during the Viet Nam Era period.
These programs and other public policy efforts to assist
Blacks came under attack as early as 1972, only 7 years
after they were begun. Thus, leading neoconservative intel-
lectuals gave Blacks, other minorities, and the poor only
7 uneven years of governmental assistance to make up for
generations of the most acute deprivation. (p. 22)

Poverty

Poverty continues to be a way of life for large numbers of Black families
and a major barrier to the more effective education of Black children. While
the number of white families below the poverty line decreased by some 20,000
between 1977 and 1979, the number of Black families below the poverty line in-
creased by some 20,000. Thus, the proportion of Black families who are poor
has increased from 27 to 28 percent while the number of poor white families
has decreased from eight percent to seven percent over this two year period.[11]

Moreover the Black middle and upper classes have been severely reduced
by the unrelenting recession and inflation of the past few years. Thus,
while the proportion of white families in the middle income range was increas-
ing from 47 percent to 49 percent between 1976 and 1977, the proportion of
Black families remained at 24 percent, the same since 1973.

Among upper income families (above the Federal standard of 25,000 dollars
in 1977) the situation did not improve for Blacks. Thus, while in 1977, only
nine percent of Black families were in this high income range (compared to 12
percent in 1972), among white families, the percent of upper income families

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rose from 23 to 24 between 1976 and 1977.

Thus, not only is abject and absolute poverty more prevelant in the Black community, but relative economic deprivation inflicts the middle and upper income Black disproportionately to their white counterparts. We are concerned, of course, about the injustice of these disparities. But they also have a direct bearing on the capacity of Black families to provide or supplement the education opportunities available to their children.

It is generally recognized that poverty inflicts single parent families more severely than two parent families. But what is not generally appreciated is that the phenomenon of poverty and low income among female headed Black families is related primarily to the inability of Black women to find meaningful work. Robert Hill has pointed out that only 27 percent of employed Black women heading families were poor in 1977 compared to 75 percent of unemployed Black women heading families. "Clearly," he observes "concerted governmental efforts to provide female family heads with meaningful employment opportunities would prevent thousands of families from falling into poverty."[12]

As a consequence of the above trends, the number of Black children in poverty has been increasing substantially while the number of white children in poverty has been decreasing substantially. It is difficult to imagine a more explicit social dynamic. While five million Black children live in two parent families, another four million live in families headed by women alone. Declining job opportunities, increasingly poverty, increasing single parent families, increasing growth in the numbers of Black elderly people has led to a substantial increase in public assistance.

Black children are increasingly more concentrated in urban areas and particularly in the central cities of America. In the nation's largest urban

area, New York City, a recent study[13] found that the public school system is increasingly Black and Puerto Rican with these two groups now accounting for more than 65 percent of all school children. At the same time, the report pointed to the proud heritage of public school education in New York:

> "New York City schools pride themselves for having received wave upon wave of immigrants from Europe and for having played an important part in their Americanization. Today's educational task-though different-is, if anything, more difficult. The obstacles of language and the widely disparate cultural and social backgrounds of the many ethnic groups are more complex, but the expectation that the school system will overcome them all has remained. How well are schools meeting the needs of today's children?"

The report answers its own question. The answer is not pretty. "Measured by grade level reading ability" the report observed, "the majority of children are not learning to read."

Suspensions

Whatever the problems Black children have getting an education in school, they are better off in school than out. Which is why the large numbers of children regularly suspended from school is a cause of concern to Black parents. All over the country Black and Spanish speaking children are most likely to be suspended. The Children's Defense Fund found that while 4.4 percent of all those children surveyed were suspended-at least once, this was true of 7.3 percent of Black children and 4.5 percent of Puerto Rican children and 3.9 percent of Mexican American children. Moreover at the secondary school level, the study found that Black students were suspended more than three times as often as white students.[14] (p. 6). The Children's Defense Fund called for a suspension of the explusion of children from school and an investigation by the federal government of the racial patterns of this practice.

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A critical element in the education of Black children is the education of their parents. As our two girls now 16 and 17 made their way through preschool, elementary, junior high school and now into senior high school, it is very clear to me that they could not have made it successfully were it not for the extraordinary time and attention given to their education by their mother as she interacted not only with them but with their teachers, principals, school boards and, especially, with other parents.

Parent participation in the education of their children has come to be an accepted part of American education but only lately and reluctantly. Because of the cultural hiatus between Black children and the largely white controlled and dominated school systems all over the country, it is especially important for Black parents to assist the schools in the education of their children. But this requires a certain level of sensitivity on the part of both parents and schools. It requires a certain attention to the education of parents themselves.

In my own experience, one of the most innovative and successful approaches to helping Black children learn the basics of education is practiced by Dr. Vivian Johnson, a graduate of the School of Education at Harvard. Her approach is to involve the parents directly in the teaching of their young children. The parent, the child, and the teacher working together to increase the cognitive learning of young children results in the enhancement of the education of all three parties. Not only parents, however, but the total family of siblings and even the extended family are incorporated in the model used by Dr. Johnson.

The idea of parent education has been recognized as important by the Education Commission of the States. In a report prepared by the Commission, Ira J. Gordon, Dean of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has outlined the history and functions of the parent education movement in this country. He points out that although parent education has a rather extensive history in this country, it has only received the attention it deserves on an organized basis during the past decade.

According to Dr. Gordon, the comprehensive analysis of studies of parent education will reveal three major impact dimensions, including family impact, school impact, and community impact.

Those programs and studies focused on the family seem to aim, primarily, at improving the ability of the family to provide effective learning environments for their children. It is important, he points out, not only to understand the child and his/her learning needs, but also to understand the family context and the learning and teaching capacilities of the family. For certainly long before children are subjected to any formal instruction, they are taught the most basic rudiments of education, informally and unconsciously by the family. For Black children, this powerful influence of the family has only recently been recognized. Still underappreciated is the powerful potential and influence for the positive education of their children, for the culturally distinctive features of parent education in the Black community.

What these studies suggest is that in the years ahead, a most effective means of enhancing the education development of Black children may well be for the schools to focus more attention on the education of parents. The close and sustained relationship between Black mothers and their children and even grandmothers and their grandchildren offer especially appropriate contexts for meeting the education needs of Black children.

A second focus of parent education has been on the impact of such education on the school. The concern here is to modify the school environment itself through the education and involvement of parents. The relationship between schools and parents, between teachers and parents—especially between Anglo-oriented schools and teachers on the one hand and Black parents on the other—is so tenuous, and often so stormy (when it is not absent altogether), as to make this a source of continuing exploration by those who would improve the education of Black children. According to Professor Gordon, the assumption is that schools will become increasingly more responsive to the cultural values, aspirations, and needs of children when their parents are actively involved with the schools.

It is certainly true that the national programs of Follow Through, Head Start, and the Compensatory Education Programs of Title I have had some impact in this direction. The results to date, however, suggest a need for continuing vigilance in this regard, and perhaps the need for the kind of structural rearrangements that will assign a great deal more power to the families and parents themselves in the education of Black children.

The third element in parent education has to do with its impact on the community. In our study of Black Families in White America,[15] we observed that Black children grow up within a network of social reality within which they are surrounded first by their own Black families, then by the Black community, and ultimately by the larger white society. The view that the community is an important context for the education of Black children is consistent with sound sociological theory.

The fact is, however, community institutions, particularly those which are controlled and dominated by the white community, respond slowly and

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reluctantly to the particular educational needs of Black children. The educa-

tion of parents with respect to their involvement in the community at large

on behalf of the education of their children is of critical importance. Dr.

Ruth Love, a prominent Black educator who serves as Superintendent of the

Oakland Unified School District, has placed the need for parent education as

one of the major challenges of the organized school system. After outlining

the elements of a successful model of parent education, she concluded a

recent article[16] as follows:

> "I believe that parent education programs are necessary.
> The need exists to have the skills required for good
> parenting available to all students prior to graduation
> from high school. Simultaneously, it is the respon-
> sibility of each school district to maintain opportu-
> nities for parents to develop and to improve their
> parenting skills."

> "Perhaps if all school districts, particularly those
> with large numbers of minority children, could adopt
> and implement this approach, Black children would cer-
> tainly receive a higher quality of education."

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