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## **Peer & Parent Encouragement of Early Algebra Enrollment & Mathematics Achievement**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

*Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), path analytic procedures were performed to test a model of the effects of parent and peer encouragement to take algebra on the mathematics achievement of eighth grade students. The effects of socio-economic status (SES) on middle school algebra course-taking and mathematics achievement were also examined. Results showed peer and parent influence variables as well as SES were directly related to early algebra attendance and eighth grade mathematics achievement. Furthermore, algebra instruction in eighth grade was directly related to higher mathematics achievement scores. Overall, the findings supported the benefits of algebra instruction prior to high school for the improvement of mathematics achievement scores. This research extended the body of work on parent and peer influences to consider their impact on higher level course taking and mathematics achievement.*