AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARENTS' ACCEPTING BEHAVIOR

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Bernice D. Borgman
Major professor

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AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARENTS' ACCEPTING BEHAVIOR

By

Mary Vivian Myhand

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARENTS' ACCEPTING BEHAVIOR

MARY V. MYHAND

Parental acceptance of children is believed to be a highly important element underlying the whole structure of parent-child relationships. If improving parent-child relationships is desirable, would it be desirable to have more knowledge and understanding about nonacceptance and about positive aspects of acceptance? What is parental acceptance and by what means can parental acceptance be measured?

Scope of Problem

The problem for this study included adapting an existing definition of parental acceptance to express children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them, and adapting an existing instrument which measures parents' perceptions of their acceptance to one by which children's perceptions of parental acceptance can be measured. The problem also included checking the validity of the adapted instrument and administering the instrument to children, primarily, to check its reliability and to do some analysis of the data secured through the use of the instrument.

Procedure

Parental acceptance was defined by Porter[1] for his study of parents' perceptions of their acceptance of their children. The Porter definition

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[1] Porter, Blaine M., "Measurement of Parental Acceptance of Children", Journal of Home Economics XLVI (1954), pp 176-177.

was rephrased to define parental acceptance as perceived by children. Parental acceptance was defined for the purpose of this study as behavior on the part of the parents which is characterized by unconditional love for the child, recognition of the child as a person with feelings who has a right to express those feelings, a value for the unique make-up of the child, and recognition of the child's need to differentiate and separate himself from his parents in order to become an autonomous individual.

The instrument for this study was adapted from the Porter Scale of Parental Acceptance[1] which was designed for use with parents to measure their perceptions of their acceptance (both behavior and feelings) of their own children. Kidd[2], under Porter's direction, adapted a part of the Porter Instrument to be used to measure children's perception of their parents' accepting feelings.

For purposes of this study the investigator selected from the Porter instrument only those items measuring parental accepting behavior. These items were adapted for use with nine-to-twelve-year-old children. The wording was checked by three judges and the instrument was administered to a group of eight boys and girls of the desired age range to test its suitability for use with children. Wording was revised on the basis of comments of judges and of children.

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[1]Porter, Blaine M., "The Relationship Between Marital Adjustment and Parental Acceptance," (unpublished Ph.D dissertation. Department of Family Relations and Child Development, Cornell University, 1952).

[2]Kidd, Jeanette, "Relationship of Preadolescent Perceptions of Parental Acceptance to their Personal Adjustment," (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Child Development, Iowa State College, 1954).

The validity of the adapted instrument was based upon the following factors which may be regarded as an inferential basis for judging the validity: the method used for selecting and adapting the items and responses, the agreement of judges as to the ranking of responses for each item and the method used to eliminate factors which contribute to unreliability in tests.

The working concept which had been set up by Porter was accepted and utilized. Items were selected from the test items which had been assembled in the Porter Scale of Parental Acceptance.

The adapted instrument was checked against an accepted instrument, the Porter Scale. Three judges and Porter, himself, approved the instrument as having maintained the concepts of parental acceptance expressed in the original instrument.

Ratings of 1 to 5 were assigned to the responses in each item according to the sums of the ratings of five judges.

The split-half technique for estimating reliability was used in this study. The instrument was administered to twenty preadolescent children and the scores used for the split-half test. The items of the instrument were divided into two equal parts, with items from each of the four dimensions distributed as evenly as possible. Reliability coefficient was computed for the scores of the two halves of the test. The split-half reliability coefficients for mothers' scores and for fathers' scores were significant at the one per cent level.

The instrument was administered to a total of twenty children who were between the ages of nine years, three months and twelve years, ten months.

Sixty per cent of the children lived with both parents, thirty per cent lived with their mothers but not their fathers, and ten per cent lived with their grandparents.

The number of children in the subjects' families ranged from one to ten. Seventy per cent of the children were between the oldest and the youngest children in their families; ten per cent were only children; ten per cent were youngest children; and ten per cent were oldest children in their families.

The ages of the children's parents ranged from twenty-five to forty-five years of age. Seventy-five per cent of the mothers were between twenty-six and thirty-five years of age, while eighty-three per cent of the fathers were between thirty-one and forty years of age.

The number of years the families had lived in the community ranged from one year to over ten years. Seventy per cent of the families had lived in the community over ten years; fifteen per cent had lived there from five to ten years; ten per cent had lived there one to five years; and five per cent had lived there one year.

Data collected were analyzed in regard to ages of the children and of the parents, sex of children and of the parents, size of family, child's ordinal position in the family, education of parents, child's residence with one, both or neither of the parents, and length of family's residence in the community. Scores of acceptance in each dimension of parental acceptance were compared with scores in each of the other three dimensions.

Findings

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The coefficient of concordance of agreement of judges was significant at the one per cent level for sixteen of the twenty items in the instrument and at the five per cent level for the remaining four items. The Rho averages for the twenty items were significant at the five per cent level or above.

The split-half reliability coefficients for mothers' scores and for fathers' scores were significant at the one per cent level

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance

When parental acceptance data were analyzed in relation to the categories mentioned previously, the mean scores revealed the following differences in children's perceptions of their parents' accepting behavior: (1) Older children tended to perceive their parents as being more accepting than did the younger children. Both younger and older children perceived their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers. (2) Boys and girls tended to be much alike in their perceptions of their mothers' acceptance, but girls tended to perceive their fathers as being more accepting than did the boys. (3) Girls tended to perceive their fathers and mothers as nearly equal in acceptance whereas boys tended to perceive their mothers as more accepting than their fathers. When the scores for boys and girls were combined, the children tended to perceive their mothers as slightly more accepting than their fathers. (4) Mothers' ages appeared to have little relation to the children's perceptions of their mothers' acceptance of them. The fathers who were thirty-six to forty years and over forty years of age tended to

be seen by their children as being more accepting than the fathers in other age categories. (5) Mothers with college education and the fathers with elementary education were perceived by their children as being more accepting than parents in the other categories of education. (6) Boys and girls living with both parents tended to perceive their fathers as being more accepting than their mothers. Boys and girls living with one parent perceived their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers. Fathers of children from broken homes tended to be seen as least acceptant of all fathers. (7) Residential mobility appeared to have little relation to the children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.

When the significance of differences between mean scores in each of the categories was tested, there were no statistically significant differences between children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them in relation to ages of children and of parents, sex of children and of parents, size of families, children's ordinal position in their families, education of parents, children's residence with both, one or neither of their parents, and length of families' residence in the community.

When scores of each dimension of parental acceptance were compared, parents were seen by their children as being highest in their recognition of the child's need to become independent of his parents and lowest in their ability to accept a child's feelings.

The scores were grouped according to the four dimensions, A - parents' acceptance of child's feelings; B - parents' acceptance of child's uniqueness; C - parents' acceptance of the child's as an

autonomous individual; and D - parents' unconditional love for the child. The t-test of significant differences betwen mean scores revealed differences significant at the five per cent level between mean scores in Dimensions A and B, A and C, A and D, B and C, but no significant differences between the mean scores in Dimensions B and D and C and D.

Conclusions

Regarding the Instrument

The investigator concluded that it was possible to adapt an instrument designed to measure parents' perceptions of their acceptance of their children to an instrument which measured pre-adolescent children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them. According to statistical findings, the instrument was acceptable in validity and reliability. It could be administered to groups of children tocollect data concerning children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them which could be related to various characteristics of children and their families.

Regarding Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance.

The limited number of subjects and the selective nature of the group of subjects do not warrant generalizations of the findings to a wider population. For the children in this study the writer concluded that certain hypotheses are tenable, namely; - Boys and girls are similar in their perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them. Ages of children, length of family's residence in the community and education of parents are not related to children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.

Other hypotheses set forth in this study are not tenable, namely;- Children perceive their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers.

Youngest and oldest children perceive their parents as being more accepting than do middle children. Younger parents are perceived as being more accepting than older parents. Parents of small families are perceived as being more accepting than parents of large families. Parents of children living with both parents are perceived as being more accepting than parents of children who live with one or neither of their parents. Children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance are similar in the four dimensions of parental acceptance.

The writer also concluded that even though the differences between mean scores of children's perceptions of parental acceptance, in relation to previously mentioned characteristics of children and their families were not statistically significant at the five per cent level, interesting trends were indicated in the mean scores which invite further exploration with a larger, more representative sample of preadolescent children.

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[1]All persons mentioned in the acknowledgments are members of the faculty of Michigan State University, except those designated otherwise.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Review of Literature

Family Relationships' Influence on Child's Development

The family is an important contributor to a child's development. The child is born into a world of people. What he does affects others and what others do affect him. The family is the first part of the world that the child encounters. Later such groups as the schools, churches, neighbors, and children in the child's environment influence his development but the family influences often set the stage for the child's encountering other segments of his environment. The family is the keynoter in the child's social development, specifically in the development of attitudes and as a source of experiences for the child. Bacmeister emphasized, "the theme that it (the family) sets is likely to persist as background music through life."[1]

Concepts of Authorities

American society, like most other cultures, has accepted

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[1]R. Bacmeister, "The Family Comes First," Childhood Education, XXV (September, 1948),pp. 8-11.

family life as the best way of living. It is believed that usually boys and girls can be reared most adequately by parents living in a family. Yet we know that some adults are more successful than others in this particular job. Prevey,[1] in her discussion of areas in which parents must function if they are to guide children adequately, concluded that children do need parents, but not just any kind of parents. She listed several functions parents must fulfill for children. She said children need parents who:

1. Are able to provide children with food, shelter, and clothing necessary for adequate physical health and growth.
2. Can give children security. Security includes helping them develop their abilities, assisting them in developing acceptable skills, helping them see the worth of other people, encouraging them when they fail or are afraid to try, and praising them for honest effort even though the result may not be entirely desirable.
3. Will give children affection and friendliness.
4. Will take children into the family circle, give them a place in that circle and let them know they really belong.
5. Can help children grow emotionally.
6. Can help children grow socially.

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[1]E. Prevey, "Children Need Parents," Childhood Education, XXV (January, 1949), pp. 206-209.

7. Will help children develop worthwhile and practical attitudes.
8. Will provide children with experiences in freedom and control.
9. Are cognizant of the fact that children are spiritual beings and will offer them appropriate guidance.
10. Are mature, well-adjusted, have a sense of humor and are up to date.

Glueck[1] contended that parental attitudes have some significance for the destiny of the individual child. He also believed that the mental context of the family does not necessarily assure an intelligent and healthy management of the parent-child relationship. The curriculum context of the family is not the knowledge of the rules of the good life or a parent's ability to preach and enforce these rules that support the promises of a healthy development of children. The important curriculum of the family depends for its success, much more than does the formal school of the classroom, upon atmosphere, upon the subtle and intangible forces, which are implicit in the situations created by the human beings who compose it.

The foremost influences exerted by early family life, according to Thorpe[2], are related to the fundamental needs

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[1] B. Glueck, "The Significance of Parental Attitude for the Destiny of the Individual," Mental Hygiene, XII (October, 1928), p. 723.

[2] L. P. Thorpe, Child Psychology and Development (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1946), pp. 214-216.

of the child. These dynamic, basic influences of the family include: the need for physical satisfaction necessary for well-being of the body, the need for psychological security of a feeling of personal worth, and the need for social competence in winning acceptance of associates. Other important needs include a legitimate sense of freedom to play and to consummate purposeful tasks. Children also need to develop a sense of values and identifications with an acceptable outlook. Thus, the basic influences of family life are: (1) influences relating to physical well-being, (2) influences relating to self security, (3) influences relating to social growth and (4) influences touching the development of moral values.

Modern psychology places heavy emphasis on the socialization process. The socialization process is one by which an individual grows from a dependent infant into an independent and dependable adult. One of the fundamental agencies of socialization is the family. As Teagarden[1] discussed behavior difficulties, she disclosed the accumulating evidence that all manner of behavior deviations can be and often are accounted for by the subleties of the home relationships.

The vital importance of the home for the child's psychological health is evidenced by the widespread interest in the effects of parental attitudes on child development found in publications intended for parents and educators. There seems

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[1]F. M. Teagarden, Child Psychology for Professional Workers (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946), pp. 454-486.

to be an agreement among many authorities that the family exerts a tremendous influence upon child development. The general agreement of authorities seems to be expressed in the statement of Faegre and Anderson, "Granting the extent to which the responsibility for some types of training has been shifted to the school, the home still offers the earliest and in many respects the most thorough education which the child receives . . . . We have seen that the personality of the child is emerging among all the influences of the early environment and is being shaped by them, and that the family represents the world of the child in which, long before he reaches school age, he has been meeting situations and developing ways of reacting to them. Because he is more frequently and more profoundly moved or stimulated by persons than by inanimate parts of its environment, the home with its close associations with a number of personalities, becomes the field in which the child tests out and comes to appreciate the values of certain types of behavior."[1]

Hawkes[2] reported a project of the Agricultural Experiment Station of Iowa State College. This project has as its objective determining factors within the family environment which influence personal and social development. These factors, explains Hawkes, even more influential factors than those of

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[1]M. L. Faegre and J. E. Anderson, Child Care and Training (4th. ed. rev.; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1947), p. 279.

[2]G. R. Hawkes, "Family Influences on Personality," Journal of Home Economics, XLIV (1952), pp. 767-769.

economic conditions and physical environment, operate to influence the development of children living in the family. He also says, "These factors are certainly the subtle and more difficult to measure psychological factors of the interpersonal environment. . . ."

The cooperating workers on the project reported by Hawkes accepted a theoretical core: "Whatever each individual sees, hears, and reacts to is the world or the environment which is real to that individual. . . . For each, however, there is a highly unique interpretation which we can understand only if we see through his eyes as it were. To understand what a relationship means to an individual, we must know what he sees there."

Clinical Evidence

There is agreement among sources other than the ones previously cited that the family exerts a tremendous influence upon the child's development. From clinical studies by Foster,[1] Levy[2], Ross[3], Sewell[4], and Symonds[5] emerged agreements on the

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[1]J. C. Foster, "Unpleasant Dreams in Childhood," Child Development, VII (June, 1936), pp. 77 - 84.

[2]D. M. Levy, "Relation of Maternal Overprotection to School Grades Intelligence Tests," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, III (1933), pp. 26 - 34.

[3]B. M. Ross, "Some Traits Associated with Sibling Jealousy in Problem Children," Smith College Study of Social Work, I (1930), pp. 16 - 22.

[4]W. H. Sewell, "Infant Training and the Personality of the Child," American Journal of Sociology, LVIII (1952), pp. 150 - 159.

[5]P. M. Symonds, "Some Basic Concepts in Parent-Child Relationships," American Journal of Psychology, (1937), p. 206.

following: (1) childhood personalities and behavior problems seem to be related to parental policies and their manner of execution, and (2) the provision of a home in which the child can grow up feeling secure seems to be the basic requisite in the socialization of the child.

Experimental Evidence

The generalizations from clinical studies are supported by experimental studies. Hattwick[1] reports impressive correlations between the behavior of preschool children as determined by teachers' ratings and parental attitudes as measured on the basis of home visits.

Grant, in an unpublished Master's thesis cited by Updegraff[2], reports a similar study in which there was a definite relationship between the behavior of preschool children and patterns of parental behavior. The studies of Radke[3] and Lafore[4] confirmed the conclusions of Hattwick and Grant that the behavior and attitudes of the child were in a large

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[1] B. W. Hattwick, "Interrelations between the School Child's Behavior and Certain Factors in the Home," Child Development, VII (September, 1936), pp. 200 - 226.

[2] R. Updegraff, "Recent Approaches to the Study of the Preschool Child: III Influence of Parent Attitude on Child Behavior," Journal of Consultant Psychology, III (January, 1939), pp. 34 - 36.

[3] M. J. Radke, The Relation of Parental Authority to Children's Behavior and Attitude (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1946), pp. 7 - 8.

[4] G. Lafore, "Practices of Parents in Dealing with Children," Child Development Monograph, XXXI, (1945), pp. 3 - 15.

degree determined by the behavior and attitudes displayed toward him by his parents.

Even though the child of school age is in school a large proportion of the time, he still looks to his home as a chief source of guidance and support, according to Mussen and Conger.[1] Parental behavior and attitudes continue to be important influences on his behavior at home, and also on his adjustment to school and peers. "If a child is to get the most out of his operations in the wider community, he must above all have a secure and dependable home base, one that he can return to confidently for supplies, repairs, and reassurances. If he can be sure of his home, if life there provides emotional security and supports when he needs them, the child learns to absorb neighborhood reserves just as he learned to weather frustration and correction at home, and by the same general techniques that he acquires there."[2] This statement is also supported by Cameron.[3]

The home conditions and their influences on school age children have been investigated by Symonds.[4] He compared a group of accepted and rejected children (those whose parents failed to provide adequate care, protection or affection).

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[1] P. H. Mussen and J. J. Conger, Child Development and Personality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 324.

[2] Ibid.

[3] W. J. Cameron, "A Study of Early Adolescent Personality," Progressive Education, XV (November, 1938), pp. 553 - 563.

[4] P. Symonds, "A Study of Parental Acceptance and Rejection," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, VIII (1938), pp. 679 - 688.

The results of this study indicated that parental acceptance or rejection had broad ramifications on the children's personal and social adjustment.

Hurlock[1] reports Anderson's experimental studies with junior high school and high school students which revealed the same general findings and indications, namely, that the importance of parental attitudes in shaping the young personality was not restricted to the young child only. Carpenter and Eisenberg[2] found highly suggestive relationships between adult personality patterns and their histories of past experiences and exposures to various kinds of parental attitudes. Watson[3] substantiated their findings in his study.

Brown, Morrison and Couch[4] conducted an experimental study, "Influences of Affectional Family Relationships on Character Development," with a group of ten-year-old children. This study revealed that the parents who encouraged the child's self-expression, recognized and rewarded his work efforts promoted self-confidence and the feeling that his ideas were worthwhile.

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[1] E. Hurlock, Adolescent Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1955), p. 425.

[2] J. Carpenter and P. Eisenberg, "Some Relations Between Family Background and Personality," Journal of Psychology, V (Fall, 1934), pp. 102 - 103.

[3] G. Watson, "A Comparison of Effects of Lax versus Strict Home Training," Journal of Social Psychology, V (Fall, 1934), pp. 102 - 103.

[4] A. W. Brown, J. W. Morrison, and G. B. Couch, "Influence of Affectional Family Relationships on Character Development," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLII (October, 1947) pp. 422 - 428.

From the general literature, clinical studies and experimental studies, it seems reasonable to conclude that the family as a socialization agency has an important influence on the child. This influence is reflected throughout his life, sharing importantly in the determination of his personality and the behavior reflected from it.

Parental Acceptance of Children

A common denominator in the parent-child relationships cited in the clinical studies[1] and in several experimental studies[2] was that of parental acceptance and rejection. It appears that the parental acceptance or rejection may have significant relationships to the child's personal and social adjustment.

Parental acceptance of children is believed by some scientists to be a highly important element underlying the whole structure of parent-child relationships. The importance of such relationship is implied in several theories and has influenced many research studies. Research in parent-child relationships and other related fields has often dealt with the abnormal, the deviate and the disorganized individuals. Therefore many of the studies in this area reveal the effects of different forms of non-acceptance.

A review of literature of parental attitudes and behavior revealed few studies which were concerned directly with the

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[1]See page 6, footnotes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

[2]See page 7, footnotes 1, 2, 3, and 4; page 8, footnote 1.

measurement of parental behavior and attitudes. Merrill[1] devised an instrument to measure the stimulus properties of maternal behavior toward preschool children in standardized play situations. In a study of this nature, the investigator must obtain data by observing and recording the behavioral interactions of mother and child.

The Fels Parent Behavior Rating Scales, devised by Champney,[2] provide for evaluation of parent behavior in terms of thirty variables defined as continua characterized by concretely expressed cuepoints which regulate the kinds of ratings assigned by the raters. These scales were designed to be used by home visitors and trained observers who assessed parents' behavior in the home.

The Porter Parent Schedule,[3] a self-inventory type of measuring device, was developed to measure family variables of parental accepting feelings and actions. This schedule included items concerned with parental acceptance, to be answered by both parents.

These studies have made valuable contributions to the development of research techniques and information in this area.

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[1] M. A. Merrill, "A Measurement of Mother-Child Interaction," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLI (January, 1946), pp. 37 - 49.

[2] H. Champney, "The Measurement of Parental Behavior," Child Development, XII (June, 1941), pp. 131 - 167.

[3] B. M. Porter, "The Relationship Between Marital Adjustment and Parental Acceptance," (unpublished Ph D thesis, Cornell University Library, 1952).

However, these two methods, Merrill's Observations and Fels Parent Behavior Rating Scale, are difficult and expensive because they require the employment of very skillfully trained observers. The Porter Schedule has been set up in a form which could be used widely and economically.

Porter,[1] using his schedule of parental acceptance, found a correlation of .441 between parental acceptance scores and marriage adjustment scores for the 100 respondents in his study. Hawkes, Burchinal and Gardner[2] in a study of 512 parents found no significant relationship between marital satisfaction scores of mothers and their acceptance scores. Relationships between these two characteristics for fathers was significant but the association was low. Factors contributing to the differences in the findings of the two studies the investigators believed to be a slight difference in the marriage adjustment scales used, different methods of collecting the data and especially, the difference in the two samples. Porter's sample was composed chiefly of upper and upper-middle class with a high educational level while Hawkes, Burchinal and Gardner's sample was largely middle and lower class, having only high school education or less.

Among the 512 parents a greater degree of relationship

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[1] B. M. Porter, "The Relationship Between Marital Adjustment and Parental Acceptance of Children," Journal of Home Economics, XLVII (1955), pp. 157 - 164.

[2] G. R. Hawkes, L. G. Burchinal and B. Gardner, "Marital Satisfaction, Personality Characterisitcs and Parental Acceptance of Children," Journal of Counseling Psychology, III (1956) pp. 216 - 221.

was found between the personality scores of parents and their acceptance scores than had been found between marital satisfaction scores and parental acceptance scores.

The distribution of parents' scores in the three areas (marital satisfaction, personality characteristics and parental acceptance) pointed to Porter's schedule of parental acceptance as a more valid instrument than either of the instruments used to measure the other two areas. Distribution of scores of parental acceptance showed a clear central tendency with no marked skewness whereas the scores of marital satisfaction and of personality characteristics were skewed markedly in the direction of tendency toward the "right" answers. Thus, if one instrument gets more valid answers than the one with which it is being associated, concluded the investigators, the association among scores probably could not be expected.

Hawkes et al[1] found in their sample of 512 parents that mothers' acceptance scores were significantly different (beyond the one per cent level) from the fathers' in the direction of being more acceptant. These investigators also found that fathers' and mothers' degree of acceptance appeared to be independent of various social characteristics: age, educational level, occupation of fathers, number of children in the family, farm or non-farm background, sex of child, his ordinal position in the family, and working or non-working mothers.

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[1] G. R. Hawkes, L. G. Burchinal, B. Gardner and B. M. Porter, "Parents' Acceptance of Their Children," Journal of Home Economics, XLVIII (1956), pp. 195 - 200.

Fathers' acceptance scores were independent also of number of years of marriage but not so for the mothers. Mothers married more than sixteen years were significantly more acceptant than mothers married less than that period of time.

Porter[1] found a relationship between the educational level of the 100 parents in his study and their acceptance while Hawkes et al[2] did not find such a relationship among the 512 parents of their study. This discrepancy, the investigators believed, might have been due to the higher level of education among the parents of Porter's study than among the 512 parents of the study by Hawkes et al.

Children's Perceptions of Family Relationships

Most of the studies and literature mentioned have been concerned with the parent-child relationship, aimed particularly at the parental aspects and only indirectly toward the child's aspects. Is it important to concentrate on the parent-child relationship as the child sees it? Do children perceive the parent-child relationship as their parents perceive it?

Hawkes says, "To understand the child as a member of a family, you have to examine the child in his family."[3] He also contends that interactions can be studied using the child as a member of the family rather than just a product of the biological union of husband and wife.

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[1]Porter, op. cit.

[2]Hawkes et al, op. cit.

[3]G.R. Hawkes, "Child in the Family," Marriage and Family Living, XIX (February, 1957), pp. 46 - 50.

Several authors described the behavior of children between the ages of nine and thirteen years. Redl's description is typical. He said, "Outwardly, the most striking thing about them is their physical restlessness. These youngsters are usually very energetic. Their hands seems to need almost constant occupational therapy. The return to infantile habits is surprisingly intensive in many areas."[1]

In some areas these youngsters do not return exactly to their infantile habits, but they go back to some of the typical problems of younger childhood. Redl states that the most peculiar phenomena are found in the area of adult-child relationships. Many of the youngsters who obviously love their parents and have reasons to do so, often develop stretches of surprising irritability, distrust and suspicion. They become easily offended and make frequent accusations that adults do not understand them and that adults treat them wrongly. They may be very reckless and inconsiderate of other people's feelings and be quite surprised if their behavior hurts others.

Lack of submission to adult-accepted manners and standards becomes another source of conflict. There is much giggling which seems silly to an adult. Their standards of dress or cleanliness often conflict with the adult standards. Although the preadolescents' manners and standards conflict with those of adults, they often are unashamed. While unashamed in many ways, there are other areas of life where

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[1] F.Redl, "Preadolescents--What Makes Them Tick?" Child Study, XXI (Fall, 1944), pp. 44 - 48.

they become more sensitive rather than crude, e.g. they prefer privacy when undressing rather than being undressed by parents.

The explanation of this peculiar phenomenon of human growth seems to be found in two particular categories, according to Redl. One is an individualistic nature and the second is the influence of group conformacy. During preadolescence the well-knit pattern of the child's personality is broken up or loosened, so that adolescent changes can be built into it and so it can be modified into the personality of an adult. Thus, the purpose of this developmental phase is disorganization and not improvement. The disorganization usually is not permanent but facilitates future growth.

During preadolescence it seems normal for youngsters to drop their identification with adult society and their acceptance of adult standards and establish a strong identification with their peer groups. Mussen and Conger[1] say the parental behavior and attitudes continue to be important in the child's adjustment to his peer groups. This suggests or can be interpreted to mean that the child's behavior and attitudes may be a matter of imitation of both his peers and his parents.

In social psychology, there is experimental evidence indicating that imitation presupposes a process of learning, according to Miller and Dollard,[2] and Murphy, Murphy, and

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[1] Mussen and Conger, loc. cit.

[2] N. E. Miller and J. Dollard, Social Learning and Imitation (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1941), pp. 1 - 326.

Newcomb.[1] Imitation is subjected to some range of conditions which are known to determine the many variations of learned behavior. It is known that people do or do not imitate, depending on what they have learned, what they are capable of learning, and what they are motivated to learn. This fact probably accounts for the variable conditions under which imitation occurs. Newcomb[2] says children are highly selective as to whom they imitate, in what ways and when. No child imitates indiscriminately, and many a parent laments that his child utterly fails to imitate the 'correct' models set before him. There is no tendency-to-imitate in general; imitation is selective.

If imitation is a selective process, then it appears that the exactness with which people imitate and the range within which they do so vary among individuals according to how they perceive attitudes and behavior. Hence, it may be assumed that a child may perceive his parents' accepting behavior or actions differently from the way his parents perceive themselves.

Ausubel[3] and his associates concluded that the use of children's perceptions of parents' attitudes and behavior as independent variables is predicted upon two assumptions.

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[1] G. Murphy, L. B. Murphy, and T. M. Newcomb, Experimental Psychology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 1 - 1121.

[2] T. M. Newcomb, Social Psychology (New York: Dryden, 1950), p. 11.

[3] D. D. Ausubel, "Perceived Parent Attitudes as Determinants of Children's Ego Structure," Child Development, XXV (September, 1954), pp. 173 - 183.

First, although parent behavior is an objective event in the real world, it affects the child's ego development only to the extent and in the form in which he perceives it. Secondly, perceived parent behavior is in reality a more direct, relevant and proximate determinant of personality development than the stimulus content to which it refers.

Ausubel's conclusions suggest the importance of studying children's perceptions of parent-child relationships. An understanding of children's perceptions of parental acceptance is essential to further understanding of the effect of parental acceptance upon the behavior and attitudes of the child.

Because almost no measures of children's perceptions of parental acceptance are available, the author has chosen to adapt an existing measure of parents' perceptions of their acceptance of their children to make it one which can be used to measure children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance.

The Problem

Selection of the Problem

The problem for this study arose from: (1) a conviction that parental acceptance of children functions significantly in the social development and personal behavior of children; (2) a belief that children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance determines, to a great extent, the effect of the parent-child relationship; and (3) a belief that the measurement of children's perceptions of parental acceptance will be useful in further understanding the effects of this parent-

child relationship upon the children's development.

Statement and Scope of the Problem

The central aim of this study was to adapt an instrument which measures parental acceptance of children, as perceived by parents, to an instrument which measures children's perceptions of parental accepting behavior. The original instrument was constructed by Blaine M. Porter, as a part of his doctoral thesis study at Cornell University.[1] The Porter instrument, designed for use with parents, measures parents' perceptions of their acceptance of their children. The measure of parental acceptance in the Porter study included the parents' perceptions of both their behavior and their feelings directed toward their children.

Kidd,[2] under Porter's direction at Iowa State College, adapted a part of the Porter instrument to be used to measure children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance. Kidd adapted only those items related to parents' accepting feelings toward their children.

For purposes of this study, the investigator selected from the Porter instrument, only those items measuring parental accepting behavior.[3] The reasons for selecting the

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[1]Porter, op. cit.

[2]J. Kidd, "Relationship of Preadolescent Perceptions of Parental Acceptance to Their Parsonal Adjustment," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Iowa State College Library, 1955).

[3]Permission was granted the investigator by Dr. Blaine M. Porter to utilize his instrument of parental acceptance for purposes of this study.

items related to parental accepting behavior were the investigator's belief: (1) that children are directly affected by their parents' behavior; (2) that children tend to perceive actions more accurately than feelings; and (3) that an instrument designed to measure children's perceptions of their parents' accepting behavior, together with the Kidd instrument, can be used as a counterpart of the Porter instrument to compare children's and parents' perceptions of parental acceptance. The items of parental accepting behavior were adapted for use with children who are nine to twelve years of age.

In adapting the Porter instrument to measure children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance an effort was made to make the instrument one which: (1) retained Porter's concepts of parental acceptance; (2) could be read and understood by nine-to-twelve-year-old children; (3) could be administered on a group basis; (4) could be scored objectively; and (5) could be used with the Kidd instrument as a counterpart of the Porter instrument, which was designed for use with parents.

After checking the adapted instrument for validity, it was administered to twenty nine-to-twelve-year-old children, primarily, to check its reliability and to explore its usefulness in securing data on children's perceptions of parental acceptance. In addition, the investigator wished to examine the data for trends which might suggest possible relationships between parental acceptance, as perceived by children,

and certain social characteristics of children and their families. Scores of parental acceptance were examined in relation to the age and sex of the children, age and sex of the parents, ordinal position of children in the families, the size of families, education of the parents, children's

residence with both parents, one parent or neither parent, and number of years the children's families had lived in the community. These factors were studied to see if any trends were apparent in their relationship to children's perceptions of their parents' accepting behavior.

Children's perceptions of parental accepting behavior in each of the four dimensions of the definition of parental acceptance were compared with each of the other three dimensions.

Definition of Parental Acceptance

Parental acceptance was defined by Porter for his study of parents' perceptions of the parents' acceptance of their children. The concepts of Porter's definition were used for this study. The Porter definition was rephrased to define parental acceptance as perceived by children. The operational definition of parental acceptance used in this study is as follows:

A. To a child an acceptant parent is one who recognizes his child as a person with feelings and respects the child's right and need to express these feelings.
   1. He does not become emotionally disturbed because the child expresses negative feelings. He realizes that such feelings need to be expressed for the maintenance of good mental health.
   2. He keeps communication channels open by listening with an open mind to the child's side of

the problem when there is conflict, by conceding that he (the parent) is sometimes wrong, and by making a point of accepting and returning positive feelings.

3. He encourages freedom of emotional expression. He shows the child that all feelings are understandable and that it is all right to have them. At the same time he helps the child find ways of expressing his feelings that do not produce guilt.

B. An acceptant parent values his child's unique make-up and does what he can to foster that uniqueness within limits of healthy personal and social adjustment.

1. He accepts the child's limitations. He allows the child to be different from every other child and he feels all right about it.
2. He uses all cues he can to perceive the child's interest and feelings in trying to determine what kind of an individual his child is.
3. He does not attempt to modify greatly the child's basic constitutional structure; i.e. learnings are individualized in accordance with the potential of each child.
4. He refrains from evaluating the behavior and achievement of his child on the basis of a comparison with other children, but rather evaluates behavior in terms of his child's own

growth patterns, interests, and values.

5. He helps the child make the most of his assets by providing opportunities which the child may accept or reject, even when these are not part of the parents' wishes.

6. He helps the child find ways of feeling a sense of accomplishment in the activities in which he has talent and interest.

C. An acceptant parent recognizes his child's need to differentiate and separate himself from his parents to become an autonomous individual.

1. He allows and encourages the child to become increasingly independent. He does not resist growth in this direction and he recognizes that as a child becomes independent of his parents so the parents, too, must learn to become independent of the child.

2. He encourages the child to assume responsibilities for himself and for others. He lets the child carry some things to conclusion, even though he knows the child's course of action will lead him to disappointment.

3. He allows the child to identify with other people as he grows and develops. He does not make the child feel "untrue" for such actions.

D. An acceptant parent feels and behaves in ways which are characterized by unconditional love.

1. He offers support and love at all times. He

shares his child's joys and sorrows and supports him in his failures as well as successes.

2. He lets the child know that he is loved freely. He gives affection generously but does not bargain for love.
3. He loves the child even when he disapproves of the child's behavior.
4. He likes to be with the child and enjoys the things they do together.

From the operational definition, a concise definition of parental acceptance was derived. The concise definition is as follows: To a child an acceptant parent is one who recognizes his child as a person with feelings, who values the child's unique make-up, who recognizes the child's need to become independent of his parents in order to become an autonomous individual and who has feelings and behavior which are characterized by unconditional love for the child.

Basic Assumptions

1. A parent's acceptance of his child is expressed in feelings and behavior which a parent displays toward, about and/or with his child.
2. A child between the age of nine and twelve years is able to perceive the accepting behavior of his parents and to communicate his perceptions to others.
3. A child's perceptions of the extent to which he is accepted are measurable.

4. A child's perceptions of the extent to which he is accepted may or may not be the same as the parent's perceptions of the extent to which he accepts his child.

5. An instrument used to measure parental acceptance of children, as perceived by parents, can be modified to make it an instrument which measures parental acceptance of children, as perceived by the children who are the recipients of the acceptance.

Hypotheses

1. Children perceive their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers.
2. Boys and girls are similar in their perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.
3. Youngest and oldest children perceive their parents as being more accepting than do middle children.
4. Children of younger parents perceive their parents as being more accepting than do children of older parents.
5. Ages of children are not related to children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.
6. Length of family's residence in the community is not related to children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.
7. Education of parents is not related to the extent of parental acceptance, as perceived by children.
8. Children from small families perceive their parents as being more accepting than do children from larger families.
9. Children living with both parents perceive their parents as being more accepting than do children living with one or neither parent.
10. Children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them are similar in the four dimensions of parental acceptance.

CHAPTER II

CONSTRUCTION OF THE INSTRUMENT[1]

Selecting the Items

The first step in the construction of the instrument was the selection, from the Porter Schedule, of items and responses that measured parental accepting behavior, or actions. The Porter Schedule included items and responses measuring parental accepting feelings and actions but only those items relating to the accepting actions were used for this study.

Five items for each of the four dimensions of the operational definition were selected. The total number of items selected was twenty. Each of the items had a total of five responses. Each item and each response was phrased to make it applicable for measuring a child's perception of his mother's accepting behavior. The same items and responses were phrased for use in measuring children's perception of fathers' accepting behavior. Therefore, the total number of items for the combined schedules for mother and father was forty, twenty relating to mother's accepting behavior and twenty relating to father's accepting behavior.

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[1]Copy of the instrument devised for this study is found in Appendix A.

Adapting the Items and Responses

Wording and Phrasing Items and Responses

The Porter Schedule was designed for use with parents. Therefore, it was necessary to reword each item and response in terms of children's perceptions of parental acceptance. In phrasing the items and responses Wang's[1] criteria for writing attitude statements were used as guides. His suggestions are as follows:

1. An attitude statement must not be debatable. It must represent only one opinion which has general acceptance.
2. All statements on a given issue should belong, as nearly as can be judged, to the same attitude variable. Not only must they be relevant to the issue but must belong to the linear continum that is being measured.
3. An attitude statement must not be susceptible to more than one interpretation. It must contain no word or phrase which can be construed to mean different things to different individuals.
4. An attitude statement should be short (rarely over fifteen words in length).
5. Each attitude statement should refer to the attitude being measured rather than refer to the attitude as

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[1]K. A. Wang, "Suggested Criteria for Writing Attitude Statements," Journal of Social Psychology III (August, 1932), pp. 367 - 373.

"it," "they," "some," etc.

6. Each attitude statement should contain only one complete thought. Too many ideas cause confusion in interpreting the attitude and thus increase the chance of high ambiguity.
7. Avoid grouping two or more complete sentences as one attitude statement.
8. An attitude statement should be clear-cut and direct.
9. Use with care and moderation such words as "only," "just" (in the sense of "only"),"merely," etc. Many statements which contain one or another of these words have been found to cause ambiguity or bimodal distributions.
10. Avoid colorless expressions or statements lacking effect. The statement should represent some clearly defined conviction.
11. Whenever possible, write an attitude statement in the form of a simple rather than a complex or compound sentence.
12. When a statement cannot be made in the form of a simple sentence write it as a complex rather than a compound sentence.
13. It is usually better to use active rather than passive voice.
14. In general, use the term of the issue as the subject of the statement.
15. Avoid high-sounding words, uncommon words or expressions, technical terms not ordinarily understood, etc.

Checking the Words

The wording and phrasing of the items and responses were carefully studied by the writer and checked with words understood by nine-to-twelve-year-old children as found in the word books by Thorndike and Lorge[1] and Buchingham and Dolch.[2]

Judges' Checking for Words Understood and Used by Children

After the wording and phrasing of the items and responses had been carefully studied and checked by the writer, all items and responses, together with the operational definition, were submitted to three judges who were well acquainted with nine-to-twelve-year-old children. Two of the judges were members of the Home Management and Child Development Department at Michigan State University and one a staff member of the Lincoln Community Center in Lansing, Michigan. These three judges were asked to critically examine the items and responses from the standpoint of: (1) children's understanding of the words and phrases, and (2) language commonly used by children. The items and responses were carefully studied and criticized by the judges. On the basis of the criticisms and suggestionsof the three judges, a revision of the wording of the items and responses was made.

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[1] E. L. Thorndike and I. Lorge, The Teachers Word Book of 30,000 Words (New York: Columbia University Teachers College, 1944), p. 255.

[2] B. R. Buckingham and E. W. Dolch, A Comoined Word List (New York: Ginn and Company, 1936), p. 185.

Testing Children's Comprehension of the Instrument

To test children's comprehension of the instrument, the test was given to eight children, nine to twelve years old. The children, four boys and four girls, were invited to the University Laboratory Preschool.[1] The following instructions were given to the children:

> "I am preparing several questions to be answered by boys and girls. These answers will help me learn more about how boys and girls see their mothers and fathers. You have been invited to help me check whether or not children can understand the sentences and words of the questions."

The tests were distributed to the children and they were asked to listen to the instructions on the first page of the test as the investigator read them aloud. An example of the items and responses, written on the blackboard, was used to illustrate the marking technique. The children were encouraged to ask questions regarding any word or sentence they did not understand. The time when each child started and finished the questions, and their comments and questions were recorded. Five out of the eight children completed the questions within twenty-five minutes after they had started. The remaining three children completed the questions within thirty-five minutes after they had started.

After the experimenter's notes on the children's comments

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[1]See Appendix B. Letters to Parents.

and questions had been carefully studied, the instrument was revised in light of the children's responses to it.

Judges' Checking for Maintenance of Concepts of Porter's Instrument

The revised items and responses, together with a copy of Porter's original items and responses and a copy of the operational definition, were submitted to three more judges. These judges were two members of the Home Management and Child Development Department and one member of the Psychology Department at Michigan State University. They were asked to critically examine the items and responses, comparing them with the original Porter instrument to determine the extent to which the original concept of acceptance, as used in the Porter Schedule, had been maintained. The criticisms and suggestions of the judges were considered and revisions were made accordingly.

Final Checking for Maintenance of Concepts of Porter's Instrument

The final check for the maintenance of the concepts of the original instrument was done by Dr. Blaine M. Porter, author of the original instrument. Dr. Porter approved the form of the adapted instrument and its proposed use for this study.

Rating the Responses

Weights 1 to 5 were proposed for responses to the items of parental acceptance in Dimensions A, B, and C, 1 being the

least acceptant response and 5 being the most acceptant response.

Weights of 1, 3, and 5 were proposed for the items in Dimension D, 1 to represent the two responses which least satisfied the dimension of unconditional love; 3, the two responses which partially satisfied the dimension of unconditional love; and 5, the one response which most satisfied the dimension of unconditional love.

This weighting was used in studies by Porter[1] and by Kidd,[2] and a similar weighting was used by Likert.[3] These studies indicated that weights arbitrarily assigned to responses were as adequate as ones assigned by highly statistical techniques. Likert orginally used a highly complicated weighting technique but he found that it was no better than the simple one-to-five technique.

The final weight assigned to each response to the twenty items was derived from the ratings of judges who gave ratings of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 to each of the five responses to items in dimensions A, B, and C, and ratings of 1, 3, or 5 to each of the five responses to the items in dimension D.

Four of the judges were members of the faculty at Michigan State University, two being in the Department of Home Management and Child Development, one in the Department of Psychology,

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[1]Porter, op. cit.

[2]Kidd, op. cit.

[3]R. Likert, "A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes," Archive Psychology AA (1932) pp. 1 - 55.

and one in the Department of Social Work. The fifth judge was a member of the State Department of Public Instruction, Lansing, Michigan.

The items and responses, together with the definition of parental acceptance as seen by a child, were submitted to the judges with the following instructions:

> The purpose of this study is to adapt an instrument to measure children's perceptions of their parents' accepting behavior. The original instrument was used with parents to measure their acceptance of their children.
>
> In this instrument are items relating to parental accepting behavior. They are grouped according to the four dimensions of parental acceptance in the definition. Each item has five responses (a, b, c, d, and e).
>
> In dimension A, B, and C, you are asked to number the responses 1 through 5 (1 being the least acceptant response and 5 being the most acceptant response) according to your interpretation of the appropriate dimension.
>
> In dimension D, you are asked to number the responses 1, 3, and 5 (1 being assigned to the two responses which least satisfy the dimension of unconditional love, 3 to the two responses which partially satisfy the dimension of unconditional love, and 5 to the one response which most satisfies the dimension of unconditional love).
>
> NOTE:
>
> Make your judgments in accordance with the dimension of the definition preceding each of the four groups.
>
> For your convenience, instructions will be repeated above each of the dimensions.

The ratings assigned to the responses by the judges were compiled and summations were computed for each response.

The final weights or ratings were assigned according to the sums of the ranks alloted by the judges. Kendall[1] suggests

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[1]M. G. Kendall, An Introduction to the Theory of Statistics (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1950) pp. 260-270.

that this is the "best" estimate of ranks in a certain sense associated with least squares. In fact, the sum of the squares of differences between what the totals are and what they would be if rankings were alike is a minimum when the rankings are estimated by this method.

TABLE I

SAMPLE TABULATIONS OF JUDGES' RATINGS OF RESPONSES AND CORRESPONDING ASSIGNED RATINGS

Judges	Responses				
	a	b	c	d	e
A	1	4	5	3	2
B	1	5	3	4	2
C	1	5	4	3	2
D	1	3	5	4	2
E	1	3	5	4	2
Totals	5	20	22	18	10
Ratings	1	4	5	3	2

When totals are the same, this method gives no criteria of choice as to the ranking of responses. Kendall suggests various possibilities in case of ties: that items be ranked alike, that precedence be given to the subject (response) for which the ratings clustered most closely, or that ratings in the group of ties be squared and precedence given to the groups according to the sums of squares. For this study, the

ratings in groups of ties were squared and the summations of squares were computed. The rating for each response was assigned giving precedence according to the sums of squares. A sample of this is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

SAMPLE TABULATION OF JUDGES' RATINGS OF RESPONSES AND SUMMATIONS OF SQUARES USED WHEN TOTALS WERE EQUAL

Judges	Responses				
	a	b	c	d	e
A	2	3	4	1	5
B	2	3	4	1	5
C	2	3	4	1	5
D	2	4	5	1	3
E	2	5	4	1	3
Totals	10	18	21	5	21
Sums of Squares	20	68	89	5	93
Ratings Assigned	2	3	4	1	5

Thus, in Table 2 the tie in total scores (response c = 21, response e = 21) was resolved when sums of squares resulted in response c = 89 and response e = 93. Precedence was given to the higher sum of squares so that response c was assigned a rating of 4 and response e was assigned a rating of 5. Ratings of 1 to 5 were obtained for the responses to each of the twenty items in the schedule. A ratings of 1 represents

the responses which described the least accepting behavior of the parent and 5, the responses which described the most accepting behavior.

Arranging and Numbering Items in the Instrument

Items from the four dimensions of parental acceptance were so arranged and numbered that each dimension was represented at intervals throughout the instrument. (See Table 3, page 42.)

In view of the odd-even test of reliability which was to be used, the items from the four dimensions were so arranged that as nearly as possible an equal number of items from each dimension would appear in the odd and in the even numbers. (See Table 4, page 42.)

Validity

Brown[1] and Mursell[2] gave the following as essential phases of the process of establishing validity:

1. Set up a working concept of the function or process to be tested.
2. Assemble and select test items which in the experience and judgment of the maker are likely to involve the traits, characteristics or functions as conceived.

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[1] C. Brown, Evaluation and Investigation in Home Economics (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1941), pp. 191 - 195.

[2] J. L. Mursell, Psychological Testing (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1947), pp. 31 - 40.

3. Check the completed test against outside criteria, usually an accepted test of the trait or characteristic. Another acceptable method of validation is to obtain judges' ratings of the items and responses.

The three essential phases of the process of securing validity were executed in this study. The first phase, setting up a working concept of the function or process to be tested, was executed by adapting Porter's operational definition of parental acceptance to meet the needs of this study.[1]

The second phase, to assemble and select test items which are likely to involve the traits or characteristics as conceived, was fulfilled in this study. This phase was first fulfilled in the original instrument by Porter who assembled and selected the necessary test items. The present investigator selected and assembled from Porter's instrument only those items related to parental accepting behavior, or actions.

These were reworded in terms of a child's perceptions of parental accepting behavior. Three judges then critically examined the items and responses from the standpoint of the probability of children's comprehension of them and for language commonly used by children and revisions made on the

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[1]Permission was granted the investigator by Dr. Blaine M. Porter to make an adaptation of his instrument of parental acceptance for purposes of this study.

basis of the judges' criticisms. Also the test was given to eight children, nine to twelve years of age. Revisions in wording were made in light of the children's comments and questions about the test.

The third phase of establishing validity was fulfilled in four ways. First the revised items and responses were checked against an accepted test (Porter's) by three judges who examined the revised items and responses to determine the extent to which Porter's original concept of parental acceptance had been retained. Their suggestions for greater clarification were incorporated in the items and responses. The final revision was submitted to Porter, the author of the original instrument, who approved it from the standpoint of having maintained the original concept of parental acceptance.

Second, ratings of responses were derived from the ratings assigned by five judges. Porter,[1] who devised the original instrument, also presented the items and responses contained in his instrument to five judges all of whom had considerable academic and/or clinical experience. They were asked to rate the responses from 1 to 5 with 1 representing low acceptance and 5 representing high acceptance. "There was no instance in which there was not agreement of at least three out of five judges. The greatest degree of disagreement was by a distance of two scale points, and that occured in only 18.67 per cent of the responses." Porter rested

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[1]B. Porter, "Measurement of Parental Acceptance of Children," Journal of Home Economics XLVI (March, 1954) pp. 176 - 182.

the case of validity on factors which might be regarded as an inferential basis for judging roughly the validity of the scale: the method used for selecting the test items and responses, the agreement of the judges as to the ranking of the responses of each item, and the methods used to eliminate factors which contribute to unreliability in tests. Porter recognized the need for further validation through the use of case studies and/or clinical data.

Third, the measure of concordance of agreement among judges, a method of checking validity suggested by Kendall,[1] was obtained. The coefficient of concordance (W) measures the communality of judgments for the number (M) judges. The coefficient of concordance was computed for each item. The test of significance of the observed value of W was based on the distribution known in statistics as Fisher's Distribution. The coefficient of concordance was significant at the one per cent level for all items in dimensions A, B, and C, and for one item in dimension D. The coefficient of concordance was significant at the five per cent level for four of the items in dimension D.

Fourth, Rho averages for the mean value of the coefficient between the probable pairs of observers was computed. The Rho averages for each item which has a total of five responses and a total of five judges' ratings for each response must be .55 or over if it is significant at the five per cent level. The Rho averages for the twenty

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[1]Kendall, op. cit., pp. 260 - 270.

items of the test rangedfrom .67 to .96. According to the correlation of Rho averages at the five per cent level, the validity may be considered high.

Objectivity

According to Mursell,[1] having four or five responses from which to choose involves a greatly lowered chance element and a higher item reliability.

The amount of subjectivity within the items and responses themselves was reduced by having three judges criticize each item and response. The judges' criticisms and suggestions were used to revise each item and response. The wording was revised again utilizing the comments and questions of eight children, nine to twelve years of age, to whom the test had been given.

The responses for the items of this test were rated 1 through 5, according to summated ratings of five judges. Since these ratings were determined before the test was administered to the subjects, there was no chance for personal interpretation in tabulating the responses given by the subjects.

Reliability

One of the commonly used techniques for establishing reliability is the split-half method which divides the test into halves of equal length by putting the odd numbered items into one half and the even numbered items into the

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[1] Mursell, op. cit., pp. 31 - 40.

other half and computing the split-half correlation coefficient. This method was used for this test. Since there were five items for each of the four dimensions of the definition, the items in each dimension could not be equally divided in the odd-even distribution. However, the items were so arranged in the final schedule that the odd-even distribution divided the number of items from the four dimensions as evenly as possible. Table 3 shows the numbering of the items in each of the four dimensions.

TABLE 3

NUMBERING OF ITEMS IN THE INSTRUMENT ACCORDING TO THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

	Dimensions of Acceptance			
	A	B	C	D
Item numbers in the Instrument	1 8 9 16 17	2 7 10 15 18	3 6 11 14 19	4 5 12 13 20

A summary of the total number of items from each of the four dimensions distributed in the odd-even numbers is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

TOTAL ITEMS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR DIMENSIONS IN THE ODD AND EVEN NUMBERS

	Dimensions of Acceptance			
	A	B	C	D
Total of Odd Numbers	3	2	3	2
Total of Even Numbers	2	3	2	3

After the test had been administered to twenty subjects, the odd and the even scores for the children's perceptions of their mothers' acceptance and of their fathers' acceptance of them were compiled. Summations of odd and even scores for mothers and odd and even scores for fathers were computed. Correlation coefficients were computed for odd-even scores for mothers' acceptance and odd-even scores for fathers' acceptance. The reliability correlation of odd-even scores of mothers' acceptance is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

RELIABILITY CORRELATION OF ODD-EVEN SCORES OF MOTHERS' ACCEPTANCE

Scores	N	Range of Scores	Reliability Coefficient
Odd	20	19-40	.55
Even	20	23-42	

According to the split-half reliability correlation, the reliability of the part of the test concerned with testing mothers' acceptance is acceptable. (A correlation of .50 is significant at the one per cent level.)

The reliability correlation of odd-even scores of fathers' acceptance is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

RELIABILITY CORRELATION OF ODD-EVEN SCORES OF FATHERS' ACCEPTANCE

Scores	N	Range of Scores	Reliability Coefficient
Odd	18	21-39	.593
Even	18	21-38	

According to the split-half reliability correlation, the reliability of the test concerned with testing fathers' acceptance is acceptable. (A correlation of .50 is significant at the one per cent level.)

According to the split-half reliability correlation, the reliability of the instrument is acceptable.

Porter[1] used the split-half method for establishing reliability of his test. A split-half reliability correlation of 0.766, raised by the Spearman Brown formula to 0.865, was obtained on his test. (A correlation of 0.25 is significant at the one per cent level with the number of cases used in his study.)

[1] Porter, op. cit., pp. 176 - 182.

CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

Selection of the Subjects

Children nine through twelve years old were selected as subjects for this study. The decision was made to use children of these ages for several reasons. First, nine-through twelve-year-old children, who normally are classed as fourth, fifth and sixth grades, usually have developed their reading skills far enough to free them from some of the mechanics of reading. Hence, they are able to concentrate on the subject matter. Secondly, it is commonly believed that children at this age have matured enough to have some degree of reciprocity. They are able, according to Newcomb,[1] to perceive some of the relationships between themselves and others who have perceptions of their own. Thirdly, says Newcomb, the pressures of socialization within a culture have not been so inculcated in children of these ages to completely inhibit spontaneous answers.

The subjects for this study were obtained through the Lincoln Community Center. The Lincoln Community Center is a group work and community service agency whose purpose is to

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[1]T. M. Newcomb, Social Psychology (New York: The Dryden Press, 1950), pp. 308 - 312.

provide services in the fields of recreation, social adjustment and civic improvement to youth and adults in the city of Lansing, Michigan. It is sponsored by the Lansing Department of Parks and Recreation, the Lansing Board of Education and the Community Chest of Ingham County, Lansing, Michigan.

The twenty children included in this study were all the nine-to-twelve-year-old children available in boys' and girls' activity groups at the Lincoln Community Center.

Description of the Children and Their Families

Number and Ages of the Children

Twenty children, eight boys and twelve girls, were included in this study. The ages of the children ranged from nine years and three months to twelve years and ten months, with an average of ten years and seven months.

Race

The twenty children included in this study were Negro children.

Grade Placement in School

In school the children were classed in special, third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Five per cent of the children were classed as special students; five per cent were third grade; forty-five per cent were fourth grade; thirty-five per cent were fifth grade; and ten per cent were sixth grade.

Residence with Parents

Sixty per cent of the children lived with both parents;

thirty per cent lived with their mothers but not their fathers (one child lived with mother and grandparents); and ten per cent lived with their grandparents without either parent.

Size of Families and Children's Ordinal Positions

The number of children in the subjects' families ranged

from one to ten, with an average of 5.15 children per family. Seventy per cent of the children were between the oldest and youngest children in their families; ten per cent were only children; ten per cent were youngest children and ten per cent were oldest children in their families.

Ages and Education of the Parents

The ages of the children's parents are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS' AGES IN FIVE-YEAR INTERVALS

Age Intervals	Number of Mothers	Number of Fathers
25 years or under	1	0
26-30 years	8	1
31-35 years	7	7
36-40 years	2*	8
41-45 years	2	1
Over 45 years	0	1
Total	20	18

*One mother older than father.

The ages of most of the children's parents ranged from twenty-five to forty-five years of age. Seventy-five per cent of the mothers were between twenty-six and thirty-five years of age, while eighty-three per cent of the fathers were between thirty-one and forty years of age. Only in one instance was the mother older than the father.

The education of the parents is shown in TABLE 8.

TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS ACCORDING TO EXTENT OF EDUCATION

Education	Number of Mothers	Number of Fathers
Elementary	2	3
High School	12	11
College	6	4
Total	20	18

The education of the parents ranged from elementary school through college. Sixty and five-tenths per cent had had high school education, 26.3 per cent had college education and 13.2 per cent had only elementary education.

Length of Families' Residence in the Community

The number of years the families resided in the community are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES ACCORDING TO LENGTH OF THEIR RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Years of Residence	Number of Families
Less than 5 years	1
1 to 5 years	2
5 to 10 years	4
Over 10 years	13
Total	20

The number of years the families resided in the particular community ranged from one to over ten years. Sixty-five per cent of the families had lived in the community over ten years. Twenty per cent of the families had lived in the community five to ten years; ten per cent had lived there one to five years; and five per cent had lived there one year.

Establishing Relations Before Administering The Test

With Lincoln Community Center Staff

Preliminary arrangements were made with the director of the Lincoln Community Center to include all nine-through-twelve-year -old children who participated in the activity groups at the Lincoln Center. The names of the children, their ages, their parents' names and addresses were procured from the two supervisors of the boys' and the girls' groups.

With the Parents

Two letters were composed and sent to the parents of these children.[1] The first letter was written by the director of the Lincoln Center. The purposes of this letter were to introduce the investigator and to explain to parents that the study had been approved by the staff of the Lincoln Center.

The second letter was written to parents by the investigator. The purposes of this letter were to explain that the investigator was interested in learning more about how children perceived their parents and to assure parents that

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[1]See LETTERS TO PARENTS, Appendix B.

no personal descriptions would be used since there was no desire to find how any one child perceived his parents. An example of the kinds of questions to be asked the children was included in the letter as follows: "I have prepared several questions to be asked of children nine to twelve years old to give us a clearer understanding of how they see some of their parents' behavior toward them. Each child will be asked to choose one answer (a, b, c, d, or e) which tells what happens most often with him or her. This is an example of the kinds of questions:

When I do not want to go to bed at night when others in my family are sleepy, my mother (or father) usually:

a. Sees to it that I go to bed.

b. Tells me it is important that I go to bed.

c. Lets me tell her what I would like to do.

d. Helps me find something that I like to do.

e. Helps me find something I would like to do, which does not bother others."

The example was not one of the items from the test, but rather, a similar one composed for illustrative purposes.

The parents were informed, through the second letter, that the investigator would telephone to secure their permission to have their child or children participate in the study and to give them any further information they desired.

With the Children

To establish rapport with the children previous to the time of administering the test, the investigator visited and

participated several times in the children's activity groups in the Lincoln Center.

Administering the Test to Subjects

The test was administered to twenty boys and girls, nine through twelve years of age, in two groups at the Lincoln Community Center.

The investigator introduced the test to each group of boys and girls by saying:

> I am a student at Michigan State University, and I am interested in learning more about how boys and girls see their parents. You have been invited to help me learn more about children and their parents, by answering some questions that I have prepared. These questions that you are going to answer today are not like most questions you have answered. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. You are the only one who knows what the best answers are for you. Since you are the only one who knows what the best answers are for you, you can answer your questions without being concerned about how your friends are answering their questions.
>
> I will give each of you a set of questions and a pencil. Please leave the set of questions face down until everybody has a copy.

The tests were then distributed to all of the children. The children were asked to turn their tests face up and they were assisted in filling in the information on the face sheet. When this was completed, the directions for the test were read aloud to the subjects as they followed them on their own copies. An example of the questions and responses had been written on the blackboard before the tests had been distributed. This was used to illustrate the marking technique. The children were told to answer all of the questions.

The children were encouraged to ask questions about words which they did not understand and about the marking techniques. If a child did not know which answer to mark, he was told to choose the answer which was closest to what he felt was the best answer for him.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS REGARDING CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE

Analysis of Data

Purposes of the Analysis

The purposes of the analysis of data on children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them collected in this study were threefold. The first objective was to establish the reliability of the instrument adapted for this study.

Secondly, the investigator wished to see how the data on parental acceptance might be related to various social characteristics of the subjects and their families. The data were analyzed to examine children's perceptions of parental accepting behavior in relation to age and sex of the children, age and sex of parents, size of families, ordinal position of children in their families, education of parents, children's residence with one, both or neither of their parents, and length of family's residence in the community.

Finally, the data were analyzed to examine children's perceptions of parental accepting behavior in each of the

four dimensions of the operational definition. This analysis tested the homogeneity of the four dimensions of the characteristic being measured.

Procedure

One of the commonly used techniques for establishing reliability is the split-half method which divides the test into halves of equal length by putting the odd-numbered items into one half and the even-numbered items into the other half and computing the split-half correlation coefficient. This method was used for this test.

Since there are five items for each of the four dimensions of the definition, the items in each dimension could not be equally divided in the odd-even distribution. However, the items were so arranged in the final schedule that the odd-even distribution divided the number of items from the four dimensions as evenly as possible. Table 3 shows the numbering of the items in each of the four dimensions.

Preliminary procedures for analysis of data involved construction of tables. Tables were constructed showing ranges, means and standard deviations of parents' acceptance scores when grouped according to ages of children, sex of children, ages of parents, sex of parents, size of families, children's ordinal position in their families, education of parents, children's residence with one, both or neither of their parents, and length of family's residence in the community. Also ranges, means and standard deviations of parental acceptance scores in each of the four

dimensions of the operational definition of parental acceptance were compiled.

Mean scores in each table were examined for differences. The t-test of significance of differences was computed to examine the significance of the findings regarding children's perceptions of parental acceptance. In the discussion of the findings of the t-test of significance, t-scores of 1.96 represent the point of significance at the five per cent level. Therefore, any t-scores which are less than 1.96 are not significant to the five per cent level.

Findings Regarding Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance[1]

The findings discussed in the following pages regarding children's perceptions of parental accepting behavior in relation to age and sex of children, age and sex of parents, size of families, ordinal position of the children in their families, education of parents, children's residence with one, both or neither of their parents, and length of family's residence in the community are applicable to only the subjects of this study. In view of the small number of children and the selective nature of the group in this study, generalizations to a larger population are not warranted. Scores of parental acceptance in these findings refer to the scores as measured by the instrument devised for this study.

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[1] Only findings regarding children's perceptions of parental acceptance are included in this chapter. Findings regarding reliability are presented in Chapter II.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to Ages of Children

The ages of the children in this study ranged from nine years, three months to twelve years, ten months. They were divided into two groups as shown in the following table.

TABLE 10

NUMBER OF GIRLS AND BOYS IN TWO AGE GROUPS

Ages of Subjects				Number of Subjects		
Years,	months to	Years,	months	Girls	Boys	Totals
9	3	10	10	8	3	11
11	2	12	10	4	5	9

There was a four-month interval between the children who were ten years and ten months and the children eleven years and two months. This interval was used to divide the subjects into two nearly equal groups: younger group (eleven children, nine years and two months to ten years and ten months) and older group (nine children, eleven years and two months to twelve years and ten months).

Differences between the children's perceptions of parental acceptance of children in the younger and older groups are shown in the following table.

According to the mean scores, the children in the older group tended to perceive their mothers and fathers as being more accepting than did the younger group. Both groups tend-

ed to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers.

TABLE 11

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO AGES OF CHILDREN

Ages of Subjects	N	Range of Scores[a]	Mean Scores	S. D.
9 yrs. 3 mos. to 10 yrs. 10 mos.	11	Mothers 42-76	58.90	9.73
	11	Fathers 50-74	57.55	11.90
11 yrs. 2 mos. to 12 yrs. 10 mos.	9	Mothers 47-76	63.44	10.70
	7	Fathers 45-71	60.14	9.70

[a]The greatest possible range of scores which might be obtained with the instrument used in this study was 20-100.

The t-test of significant differences revealed that difference between the mean scores of mothers' acceptance as seen by younger and older children was not significant at the five per cent level ($t = 1.13$). Neither was the difference between the mean scores of fathers' acceptance as seen by younger and older children significant at the five per cent level ($t = .33$).

Redl[1] says that the most peculiar phenomena of children between nine and twelve years of age are found in the area of adult-child relationships. The youngsters who obviously love their parents and have reasons to do so, will develop stretches of surprising irritability, distrust, and suspicion.

[1]F. Redl, "Preadolescents -- What Makes Them Tick?" Child Study XXI (Fall, 1944), pp. 44 - 48.

They tend to be easily offended and make constant accusations that adults do not understand them and treat them wrongly. The data for this study seemed to indicate that the above characteristics might be more prevalent in the younger group than in the older group of children.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to Sex of Children and Sex of Parents

Differences between the perceptions of parental acceptance of children in relation to sex of the children and sex of the parents are shown in the following table.

TABLE 12

RANGES, MEANS, AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO SEX OF CHILDREN

Subjects	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
Girls	12	Mothers 42-76	60.50	10.50
	11	Fathers 50-74	60.20	7.89
Boys	8	Mothers 47-76	60.25	10.45
	7	Fathers 45-69	56.00	8.02

According to mean scores of parental acceptance, boys and girls tended to be much alike in their perceptions of mothers' acceptance but boys tended to see their fathers as less accepting than did the girls.

The t-test of significant differences revealed that the differences between the mean scores of mothers' acceptance as seen by boys and girls was not significant at the five per cent level ($t = .06$). Neither was the difference

between the means of fathers' acceptance scores as seen by boys and girls significant at the five per cent level ($t = .83$).

The boys' perceptions of their fathers' acceptance tended to be in agreement with a study of 730 boys and girls in the fifth grade reported by Burchinal[1] in which the boys believed their parents to be "stricter with" and "harder on" them than did the girls. Girls were more satisfied with the way their parents treated them than were the boys.

When mean acceptance scores for mothers were compared with mean acceptance scores for fathers, it appeared that boys tended to see their mothers as being more acceptant than their fathers.

The difference between the mean scores of fathers' and mothers' acceptance as seen by girls was not significant at the five per cent level ($t = .06$). Neither was the difference between the fathers' and mothers' acceptance scores as seen by boys significant at the five per cent level ($t = .32$).

The range, mean and standard deviation of mothers' and fathers' acceptance scores, as seen by boys and girls combined, is shown in Table 13.

When mothers' acceptance scores as seen by boys and girls were combined and compared with fathers' acceptance scores as seen by boys and girls combined, the mean scores appeared to show that the children tended to regard their mothers as slightly more accepting than their fathers.

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[1] L. G. Burchinal, "What Do Children Think of Their Parents?" Iowa Farm Science, XI (December, 1956), pp. 399-401.

TABLE 13

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES ACCORDING TO SEX OF PARENTS

Parents	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
Mothers	20	42-76	60.40	10.67
Fathers	18	45-74	58.60	11.02

According to the t-test of significant differences, the difference between the mean scores of mothers and fathers was not significant at the five per cent level (t= .50).

The trend in this study toward a lightly higher acceptance scores for mothers was also confirmed in Burchinal's[1] study in which the children stated that their mothers more than their fathers tended to talk over their plans with them, talked over reasons for punishment, and were easier to get along with.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to Size of Family

The families of the subjects for this study included from one to ten children. The sizes of the families were divided into three categories: one, two and three children; four, five and six children; and seven, nine and ten children. There were no subjects from families of eight children.

According to the mean scores, children from families of

[1] Ibid.

one through three children tended to perceive their mothers as being less accepting than did the children from the two larger types of families. The children from families of seven through ten perceived their mothers as more accepting than did the children from the two smaller type families. Thus, there appeared a tendency for children from smaller families to see their mothers as least accepting and children from larger families to see their mothers as most accepting.

TABLE 14

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO SIZES OF FAMILIES

Size of Family	N	Range of Scores	Mean Score	Standard Deviations
1-3 Children	6	Mothers 42-69	57.00	10.59
4-6 Children	7	Mothers 48-76	60.60	10.24
7-9-10 Children	7	Mothers 48-76	63.10	10.50
1-3 Children	6	Fathers 45-74	59.50	10.21
4-6 Children	7	Fathers 52-69	57.40	6.68
7-9-10 Children	5	Fathers 49-71	58.00	8.58

Paternal acceptance presented a different and less clearly marked tendency. According to the mean scores, the children from families of one through three tended to perceive their fathers as slightly more accepting than did the children from larger families, while children from the families of four through six tended to see their fathers as slightly less accepting than did children of either the smaller or larger families.

According to the t-test of significance, the differences between the means of parental (mothers' and fathers') acceptance scores in small, medium and large families were not significant at the five per cent level. The t-scores for children's perceptions of their mothers' acceptance, according to size of families, were as follows: t = .57 for difference between mean scores for mothers of families of one to three and mothers of four to six children; t = .97 for difference between mean scores for mothers of one to three children and mothers of seven to ten children; and t = .42 for difference between mean scores for mothers of families of four to six children and mothers of seven to ten children.

The t-scores for differences in fathers' acceptance, according to size of families were as follows: t = .39 for difference between mean scores for fathers of families of one to three children and fathers of four to six children; t = .24 for difference between mean scores for fathers of families of one to three children and fathers of seven to ten children; and t = .12 for difference between mean scores for fathers of families of four to six children and fathers of seven to ten children.

Bossard's[1,2,3] reports of the patterns of large and

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[1] J. H. S. Bossard, Parent and Child (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), pp. 99 - 100, and 114.

[2] J. H. S. Bossard, The Sociology of Child Development (2nd ed. rev. New York: Harper, 1954), pp. 1 - 743.

[3] J. H. S. Bossard, and W. P. Sanger, "The Family System -A Research Report," American Sociological Review XVII (February, 1952), pp. 3 - 9.

small families have revealed that they are markedly different and their effects on the child are likewise different. Bossard[1] found that the small family is characterized by planning in terms of size of family, spacing of children, child-rearing methods, and education of the children. Parenthood is intensive, rather than extensive, thus putting emphasis on each child's individual development. The small family is controlled by democratic methods, with cooperation between parents and children. Bossard also stated that because the family group is limited, there are likely to be many more tensions and resentments.

The same author, Bossard,[2] found the large family to be different in almost every way in its pattern of living from the small family. As a result, the large family produces an entirely different type of home climate and has different effects on the individual members. In the large family, emphasis is placed on the group rather than the individual. Control is authoritarian, and is often in the hands of the older siblings. There is little nagging and overprotection of any member and little pressure to live up to standards set by the parents.

Although the foregoing characteristics of the small and large families were found, Bossard concluded that the family size does not affect the activities of each member of the family and the combinations of the different members within

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[1]Bossard, op. cit., pp. 84 - 89.

[2]Ibid.

the family group. However, the role each plays in the family and the effects each has on the individual depends not so much on the closeness of the kinship as upon the needs of each individual member and the satisfactions each member derives from relationships with other family members.

Bossard's statement of the greater tensions and resentments in the limited family group might explain the tendency toward slightly lower acceptance scores of mothers of small families in this study. In large families, Bossard found little nagging or overprotection of any member and little pressure to live up to standards set by parents. These characteristics of the large family might contribute to a child in such a family perceiving his parents as more acceptant.. This was the tendency seen in the slightly higher acceptance scores of the mothers of the large families in this study.

According to the range of mean scores of the findings of this study, it appears that the size of the family had very little effect on the children's perceptions of their fathers' accepting behavior.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to Children's Ordinal Positions in Their Families

When the subjects were classified according to their ordinal position in their families there were: two only children, two youngest children, fourteen middle children, and two oldest children.

TABLE 15

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO THE ORDINAL POSITIONS OF CHILDREN IN THEIR FAMILIES

Ordinal Position	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
Only	2	Mothers 53-67	60.00	
	2	Fathers 56-69	62.00	
Youngest	2	Mothers 52-64	58.00	
	2	Fathers 53-63	58.00	
Middle	14	Mothers 48-76	61.60	16.83
	12	Fathers 49-74	59.50	7.89
Oldest	2	Mothers 42-47	44.50	
	2	Fathers 45-50	47.50	

According to the mean scores, only children and middle children tended to perceive their parents as being more acceptant than did youngest and oldest children. The only and oldest children tended to perceive their fathers as being more acceptant than their mothers, while middle children perceived their mothers as being more acceptant than their fathers. The youngest children perceived their mothers and fathers as being equally acceptant.

When the parental acceptance scores were grouped according to the ordinal position of children in their families, the numbers of only, youngest and oldest children were very limited. The t-test of significance was calculated only for difference between the mean scores of fathers and of mothers of children in the category of middle children, since the numbers of children in the other categories were so limited.

The differences between means of such limited scores do not reveal any significant statistical finding nor do such limited scores make possible statistical comparisons with the scores in other categories.

For children whose ordinal position was classified as middle, the t-score for difference between the means of their perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' acceptance was .40. The differences between mean scores of middle children's perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' acceptance was not significant at the five per cent level.

The trends indicated in the mean scores showed only children and middle children tending to perceive themselves as being more accepted by their parents than did the oldest and youngest children. Except for the findings regarding the youngest children, these findings are supported by other studies. Hurlock[1] says that the home environment of the only child is generally more democratic and more stimulating than that of the larger family. Dyer[2] and Stuart[3] report that because there is no sibling rivalry in the home of only children their home life is spared some of the tensions that are common in homes where there are several children. As a result they are likely to feel more

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[1] Elizabeth Hurlock, Adolescent Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1955), p. 442.

[2] D. E. Dyer, "Are Only Children Different?," Journal of Educational Psychology XXXVI (May, 1945), pp. 297 - 302.

[3] J. C. Stuart, "Data on the Alleged Psychopathology of the Only Child," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology XX (1926), pp. 441 - 445.

accepted.

Sears,[1] in her study of children's ordinal position in the family, concluded that by the time the second or middle child arrives, parents are less anxious and more experienced in their role as parents. As a result, the relationship with the second or middle child is different. Lasko[2] says even when a third or younger child arrives, the second or middle child's relationship with the mother has been found to remain unchanged and is characterized by emotional warmth.

Hawkes and others[3] in their study of parents' acceptance of their children found that mothers who had been married sixteen years or more were more accepting of their children than were mothers who had been married less than sixteen years. Since each of these mothers had a child who was between nine and twelve years of age, the investigators assumed that the mothers who had been married longer probably had children in their families who were older than their nine-year-old child. To summarize the previous information, the mother who has two or more children may have learned to accept her younger child as a result of the experience of rearing the other child or children in her family.

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[1] Ruth R. Sears, "Ordinal Position in the Family as a Psychological Variable," American Sociological Review XV (June, 1950), pp. 397 - 401.

[2] J. K. Lasko, "Parent-Child Relationships: Report from the Fels Research Institute," American Journal Orthopsychiatry XXII (February, 1952), pp. 300 - 304.

[3] G. R. Hawkes, Lee Burchinal, Bruce Gardner, and Blaine Porter, "Parents' Acceptance of their Children," Journal of Home Economics XLVIII (march, 1956), pp. 195 - 200.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to the Ages of Parents

The range of the mothers' ages was from the category of thirty years and under to the category of over forty.

TABLE 16

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF MATERNAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO MOTHERS' AGES

Mothers' Ages	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
30 Years and under	9	47-76	61.30	10.80
31-40 Years	9	42-76	59.11	10.41
Over 40 Yrs.	2	54-69	61.50	

According to the mean scores, the mothers whose ages were thirty years and under and those whose ages were over forty years were perceived as being more accepting than the mothers who were thirty-one to forty years of age.

The range of scores for the mothers of the different age groups was widely distributed, but the range of mean scores was fairly close for the mothers of all groups. This suggests that the subjects perceived little difference in their mothers' acceptance in relation to mothers' ages.

Because of the limited number of mothers in the over-forty group, the differences between mean scores of this group and the mean scores of mothers in the other two age groups were not computed.

According to the t-test of significance, the differences

between mean scores for children's perceptions of their mothers whose ages were thirty years and under and mothers whose ages were thirty-one to forty years was not significant at the five per cent level. The t-score was .39. When scores were grouped according to ages of mothers, there was no significant difference in children's perceptions of their mothers' acceptance at different age levels.

While ages of mothers, as such, appeared in this study to be independent of mothers' acceptance, a finding also borne out by Hawkes et al,[1] age is usually associated with two characteristics: the older mother usually has been married longer and she has children older than nine to twelve years. The first of these characteristics has been shown by Hawkes et al to be positively correlated with higher acceptance. The second characteristic, tended to be associated in this study with higher acceptance, as shown by the slightly higher acceptance scores for parents of middle children (see Table 14).

The range of fathers' ages was from the category of thirty-five years and under to the category of over forty years, as shown in Table 17.

According to mean scores, the fathers who were thirty-six to forty and over forty years of age were perceived as being more accepting than the fathers who were thirty-five years and younger. The younger fathers, those under thirty-

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[1] Hawkes et al, op. cit.

five years of age, were perceived as being least accepting.

TABLE 17

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PATERNAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO FATHERS' AGES

Fathers' Ages	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
35 Years and under	8	45-74	54.40	7.81
36-40 Years	8	49-71	62.90	6.63
Over 40 Yrs.	2	52-64	58.00	

The significance of differences between mean scores for fathers over forty years of age and the mean scores for fathers classified in the other two categories were not computed because of the limited number of fathers in the category of over forty years of age.

According to the t-test of significance, the differences between mean scores for children's perceptions of their fathers' acceptance in the thirty-five and under group and the thirty-six to forty group approached significance at the five per cent level. The t-scores for the differences between children's perceptions of their fathers who were thirty-five years and under and fathers who were thirty-six to forty years of age was 1.94.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to the Education of Parents

When the subjects were classified according to the educ-

ation of parents, the range and mean scores and standard deviations were as shown in the following table.

TABLE 18

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF MATERNAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO THE EDUCATION OF MOTHERS

Education of Mothers	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
Elementary	2	48-60	54.00	
High School	12	42-76	58.10	9.94
College	6	52-76	67.20	9.03

According to mean scores, those children whose mothers had college education tended to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than did the children whose mothers had elementary or high school education. The mothers who had elementary education were perceived as being least accepting of all the mothers.

Because of the limited number of mothers who had only elementary education, the significance of differences between mean scores for these mothers and the mean scores for mothers who had high school and those who had college education was not computed.

According to the t-test of significance, the differences between mean scores for children's perceptions of their mothers who had high school education and those who had college education was not significant at the five per cent

level. The t-score for the difference between mean scores of children's perceptions of acceptance of mothers who had high school education and those who had college education was 1.81.

The paternal acceptance scores, classified according to the fathers' education, are shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19

RANGES AND MEANS OF PATERNAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO THE EDUCATION OF FATHERS

Education of Fathers	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores
Elementary	3	52-71	62.00
High School	11	49-74	58.45
College	4	45-69	56.25

According to mean scores, there was a pattern of decreasing acceptance scores for fathers associated with increasing education of fathers. The fathers who had an elementary education were perceived as being more accepting than the fathers who had either high school or college education.

The significance of differences between means of scores for children's perceptions of their fathers' acceptance according to education, were not computed. When the scores were grouped according to education of fathers, there were such limited numbers of scores for two categories, elementary and college education, that statistical comparisons

would not have been meaningful.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to Their Residence with Both, One or Neither of Their Parents

Sixty per cent of the subjects (nine girls and three boys) lived with both parents.

TABLE 20

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, AS SEEN BY CHILDREN LIVING WITH BOTH PARENTS

Subjects / Sex	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
Girls	9	Mothers 42-76	59.22	10.71
Boys	3	Mothers 60-67	62.33	
Girls	9	Fathers 50-74	60.33	9.00
Boys	3	Fathers 59-69	64.33	

In families where children lived with both parents, both boys and girls tended to perceive their mothers as being less accepting than their fathers. The mean scores of boys' perceptions were higher than were the mean scores of girls' perceptions of their mothers and fathers. The boys perceived their mothers and fathers as being more accepting than did the girls.

The t-test of significance of differences between mean scores for girls' perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' acceptance of them revealed no significant differences in

the girls' perceptions at the five per cent level. The t-score was .22.

The t-test of significance of differences between mean scores for boys' perceptions of their fathers' acceptance and of their mothers' acceptance of them was not computed because of the limited number of scores for boys' perceptions.

When scores for boys' and girls' perceptions of their parents' acceptance were combined, the mean scores showed a tendency for mothers to be perceived by children living with both parents as lower in acceptance than the fathers.

Thirty per cent of the subjects lived with one parent (mother). Of the six children who lived with their mothers, only four of them knew their fathers well enough to rate them. The remaining two subjects (one girl and one boy) did not rate their fathers because they did not know their fathers well enough to rate them.

TABLE 21

RANGES AND MEANS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, AS SEEN BY CHILDREN LIVING WITH ONE PARENT

Subjects / Sex	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores
Girls	3	Mothers 53-76	64.33
Boys	3	Mothers 47-72	52.67
Girls	2	Fathers 56-63	59.50
Boys	2	Fathers 42-52	47.00

When the subjects lived with one parent, the girls tended to perceive their mothers and fathers as being more accepting than did the boys. Mothers tended to be perceived by both girls and boys as being more accepting than fathers. When subjects living with mothers only were compared with those living with both parents, it appearedthat girls living with mothers tended to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than did the girls living with both parents; and boys living with mothers tended to perceive their mothers and fathers as being less accepting than did the children living with both parents.

The number of scores per category was too limited to apply the t-test of significance to test the significance of the differences between these children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.

Two subjects (boys) did not live with either of their parents. They lived with their grandparents. Although the two boys lived with their grandparents, they knew their parents well enough to rate them.

TABLE 22

RANGES AND MEANS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, AS SEEN BY CHILDREN LIVING WITH NEITHER PARENT

Subjects / Sex	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores
Boys	2	Mothers 52-76	64.00
Boys	2	Fathers 49-53	51.00

These two subjects tended to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers. The number of scores per category was too limited to apply the t-test of significance of differences between these children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.

These boys tended also to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than did the boys who lived with both or one of the parents, and their fathers as being more accepting than did the boys who lived with mothers only, but less accepting than did the boys who lived with both parents.

Of all of the girls in this study, those living with only their mothers perceived their mothers as being more accepting than did the girls living with both parents. Of the boys, those living with both parents tended to perceive their fathers as being more accepting than did the boys who lived with mothers only or with grandparents. Thus, the boys who were living with their fathers tended to perceive their fathers as more accepting than did the boys who did not live with their fathers. Mothers of sons living with both parents or with grandparents tended to be perceived as more accepting than were the mothers of boys living with mothers only, as perceived by their sons.

Sixty per cent of the subjects lived with both parents and forty per cent of the subjects lived with one or neither of their parents.

According to mean scores, the fathers of children living with both parents were perceived by their children as being more accepting than fathers of children living with one or

neither parent. Mothers of children living with one or neither parent were perceived by their children as being more acceptant than mothers of children living with both parents. The fathers of children living with one or neither parent were perceived as being least accepting.

TABLE 23

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, AS SEEN BY CHILDREN LIVING IN UNBROKEN VS BROKEN HOMES

Subjects	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
Broken Homes	8	Mothers 47-76	61.00	8.09
Unbroken Homes	12	Mothers 42-76	60.00	9.41
Broken Homes	6	Fathers 45-63	53.50	7.74
Unbroken Homes	12	Fathers 50-74	61.33	8.09

The t-test of significance of differences between mean scores for children's perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' acceptance of them in relation to unbroken and broken homes revealed no significant differences at the five per cent level. The t-score for differences between mean scores for mothers of children living with one or neither parent and mothers of children living with both parents was .19. The t-score for differences between mean scores for fathers of children living with one or neither parent and fathers of children living with both parents was 1.87. Although neither of the t-scores were significant at the five

per cent level, the t-score for differences between mean scores of the two groups of children's perceptions of their fathers approached the five per cent level of significance.

The causes of the broken homes are unknown to the investigator. Nye[1] contends that the type of broken home is a factor of importance in determining the home climate and the adjustment between parents and children.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance in Relation to the Length of Families' Residence in the Community

The subjects were classified according to the number of years their families had lived in the Lincoln Center Community. The number of years of the families' residence in the community were divided into two categories: one to ten years and over ten years.

TABLE 24

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCORES, ACCORDING TO THE LENGTH OF FAMILY'S RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Length of Residence	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
1 to 10 Years	7	Mothers 42-76	58.10	10.08
Over 10 Years	13	Mothers 47-76	61.70	9.46
1 to 10 Years	7	Fathers 49-69	58.00	7.41
Over 10 Years	11	Fathers 45-74	53.90	9.01

According to the mean scores, the mothers who had lived

[1] I. Nye, "Adolescent-Parent Adjustment: Age, Sex, Sibling Number, Broken Homes and Employed Mothers as Variables," Marriage and Family Living XIV (November 1952), pp. 327 - 332.

in the community over ten years tended to be perceived as being more accepting than did the mothers who had lived in the community from one to ten years.

According to mean scores, the fathers who had lived in the community for over ten years and the fathers who had lived in the community from one to ten years tended to be perceived by their children as being almost equally accepting. Mean scores indicated that all of the fathers and the mothers who had lived in the community from one to ten years tended to be perceived as quite similar in their acceptance, whereas, mothers who had lived in the community over ten years tended to be perceived by their children as being more acceptant than were any of the other parents.

When the scores were grouped according to length of families' residence in the community, the t-test of significance revealed no significant differences between scores for children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance. The t-score for difference between means of children's perceptions of their mothers who had resided in the community from one to ten years and mothers who had resided in the community over ten years was .68. The t-score for difference between two similar categories of fathers was .22.

According to mean scores, the residential mobility of the subjects' families appeared to have little or no relations to children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them. The finding is not supported by theory pro-

posed by various writers. Carrington,[1] who states that residential mobility is one of the characteristics of our modern industrial system, believes the effects of residential mobility are evident, in that a change of residence breaks the continuity of life as expressed in the tangible tokens of family possessions. Hurlock[2] says, "To each member of the family, the family becomes less important, there is less to be proud of, less to be loyal to, and less to perpetuate." Seemingly, with every move, there are problems for every member of the family that would not exist had the move not occured. For parents of the mobile family, there are adjustments to new working conditions, new community organizations, new social life, new church affiliations, and practical adjustments to living in a new community where business must be patronized.

Heaton[3] stated that the children of the mobile family must make new adjustments to schools and their academic, recreational and social programs. New friendships must be established, and this may be difficult for the newcomer when cliques are already established.

It is likely that such disrupting elements in family living as are described above might well interfere in the

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[1] E. M. Carrington, "The Family in the Changing Social Order," Educational Forum IV (August, 1940), pp. 191 - 197.

[2] Elizabeth Hurlock, Adolescent Development (2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1955), p. 450.

[3] M. H. Heaton, "Sororities and School Culture," Journal of Educational Sociology XXI (1948), pp. 527 - 535.

parent-child relationships which the child perceives to be acceptance.

Children's Perceptions in Each Dimension of Parental Acceptance

The findings thus far discussed were based upon parents' total acceptance scores for all four dimensions of acceptance measured. The operational definition of parental acceptance was divided into four dimensions; A, acceptance of feelings; B, value of unique make-up; C, recognition of need to differentiate; and D, expression of unconditional love. Each dimension was represented by five items, making a total of twenty items for each parent. The scores for each dimension were examined for differences.

The possible range of scores for each dimension is five to twenty-five. The scores of boys' and girls' perceptions of mothers' and fathers' acceptance in each dimension were combined as shown in Table 25.

TABLE 25

RANGES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SCORES IN EACH DIMENSION OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE

Dimensions	N	Range of Scores	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations
A	38	6-25	12.07	4.39
B	38	9-22	14.94	3.81
C	38	12-25	16.92	6.50
D	38	9-25	15.57	5.09

The mean scores for boys' and girls' perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' acceptance of them in each of the dimensions increased in this order: A, B, D, and C. According to the mean scores, the children perceived their parents as being most accepting in dimension C, parents' recognition of the need to differentiate, and least accepting in dimension A, parents' acceptance of feelings.

The t-scores for differences between mean scores for each of the four dimensions of parental acceptance are shown in Table 26.

TABLE 26

T-SCORES FOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEAN SCORES OF EACH DIMENSION OF PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE

Dimensions	Dimensions		
	B	C	D
A	3.02*	5.49*	3.89*
B		2.60*	.60
C			1.54

*Significant at the five per cent level.

When the scores were grouped according to the four dimensions of parental acceptance, the t-test of significant differences between mean scores revealed significant differences at the five per cent level between mean scores in dimensions A and B, A and C, A and D, and B and C. The t-test of significance revealed no significant differences between the mean scores in dimensions B and D, and C and D.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Scope of the Problem

Parental acceptance was defined for the purpose of this study as behavior on the part of parents which is characterized by unconditional love for the child, recognition of the child as a person with feelings who has a right and need to express these feelings, a value for the unique make-up of the child, and recognition of the child's need to differentiate and separate himself from his parents in order to become an autonomous individual.

The problem of this study included: (1) adapting an instrument which can be used to measure children's perceptions of their parents' accepting behavior; (2) checking its validity; and (3) administering the instrument to children, primarily, to check its reliability and to do some analyzing of data secured through the use of the instrument.

Procedure

The instrument to measure children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them was adapted from the Porter Parental Acceptance Scale, constructed to measure parents'

perceptions of their acceptance of their children.[1, 2]

Twenty items concerning parental accepting behavior were selected from the Porter instrument to be included in the instrument adapted for this study. These twenty items, each with its five responses, were rephrased and reworded to make them understood by children nine to twelve years old and to make them applicable to children's perceptions of fathers' and mothers' acceptance of their children. To appraise the suitability of the adapted instrument for use by children, the wording was checked by three judges, well acquainted with nine-to twelve-year-old children, and the instrument was administered to a group of eight boys and girls of the desired age range.

The adapted instrument was also checked by three competent judges and by Dr. Blaine Porter, the author of the original instrument, for assurance that in the adaptation, the concepts of parental acceptance expressed in the original instrument had been maintained.

Five judges rated the responses in Dimensions A, B and C 1 to 5, and in Dimension D 1, 3 or 5, 5 being the most acceptant response. These ratings for each response were summated and each response was assigned a rating 1 to 5 or 1, 3 or 5 according to the sums of the ratings of the judges

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[1] B. M. Porter, "The Relationship Between Marital Adjustment and Parental Acceptance." Unpublished Ph D Thesis, Cornell University Library, 1952.

[2] B. M. Porter, "Measurement of Parental Acceptance of Children," Journal of Home Economics XL (March, 1954), pp. 176 - 182.

for each response.

The items were arranged and numbered in the instrument so as to have items from each of the four dimensions of parental acceptance distributed throughout the instrument and also so that, as nearly as possible, each dimension would be equally represented in the odd-even numbers, since the odd-even test of reliability was to be used.

Objectivity, validity and reliability were established for the instrument in several ways. Subjectivity was reduced by having the wording checked by three judges and the instrument tested upon a small group of children. Also five responses to each item increased item reliability.

In establishing validity, the working concept which had been set up by Porter was accepted and utilized. Also items were selected from the test items which had been assembled by Porter. The adapted instrument was checked against an accepted instrument, the Porter Scale of Parental Acceptance, in the following ways:

(1) Three judges and Porter, himself, approved the adapted instrument as having maintained the concepts of parental acceptance expressed in the original instrument.

(2) Ratings to responses were assigned according to the summation of five judges' ratings. Concordance of agreement of judges and Rho averages for mean values of coefficient between probable pairs of observers were computed.

The odd-even test of reliability was applied to mothers' scores and to fathers' scores.

The instrument was administered to a total of twenty children who were between the ages of nine years, three months and twelve years, ten months.

Data collected were analyzed for relationship of parental acceptance to ages of children and of parents, sex of children and of parents, size of families, children's ordinal position in families, education of parents, children's residence with one, both or neither of the parents and length of families' residence in the community. Parental acceptance scores in each of the four dimensions of parental acceptance were compared with the scores of each of the other three dimensions as a test of the homogeneity of the four dimensions.

Findings

Regarding the Instrument

Validity

1. The coefficient of concordance was significant at the one per cent level for all items in dimensions A, B, and C, and for one item in dimension D. The coefficient of concordance was significant at the five per cent level for four of the items in dimension D.
2. The Rho averages for the twenty items of the instrument ranged from .67 to .96 which was well above the five per cent level (.55) of significance. According to these correlations and those mentioned above, in number one,

the validity of the instrument is acceptable.

Reliability

The reliability coefficients for the split-half check of the items revealed that the reliability of the instrument is acceptable at the one per cent level. According to this analysis, the reliability of the instrument is acceptable.

Regarding Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance

No statistically significant relationships were found between parental acceptance and the various social characteristics of children and their families. The following trends are described in terms of the mean scores:

1. When parental acceptance scores were classified according to the ages of the children, the older children tended to perceive their parents as being more accepting than did the younger children. Both younger and older children tended to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than fathers.
2. When parental acceptance scores were classified according to the sex of children, boys and girls tended to be much alike in their perceptions of mothers' acceptance but girls tended to perceive their fathers as more accepting than did the boys.
3. When parental acceptance scores were classified according to the sex of the parents, the girls tended to perceive their fathers and mothers as nearly equal in acceptance. The boys tended to perceive their mothers

as more accepting than their fathers. When scores of boys' and girls' perceptions were combined, the mean scores showed the children tended to perceive their mothers as slightly more accepting than their fathers.

4. When scores were grouped according to small, medium and large families, children from small families tended to see their mothers as least accepting, while children from large families tended to see their mothers as most accepting. Fathers of small families tended to be seen by their children as most accepting and the fathers of middle-size families to be seen by their children as least accepting. According to mean scores, children from families of four to six children and seven to ten children tended to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers.

5. When scores were classified according to children's ordinal position in their families, the only and middle children tended to perceive themselves as being more accepted by their parents than did the oldest and youngest children.

6. When scores were arranged according to ages of mothers, the range of mean scores was fairly limited. This suggested that the children perceived little difference in their mothers' acceptance according to the ages of the mothers. Mothers thirty-one to forty years of age tended to be seen by their children as least accepting. The fathers who were thirty-six to forty and over forty

years of age tended to be perceived as being more accepting than younger fathers. This difference approached the five per cent level of significance. Fathers under thirty-five tended to be seen by their children as least accepting of the fathers.

7. When the parental acceptance scores were classified according to the education of the parents, the mothers with college education tended to be perceived by their children as being more accepting than the mothers with elementary or high school education. The fathers with elementary education tended to be perceived by their children as being more accepting than fathers with high school or college education.

8. When parental acceptance scores were classified according to children's residence with both, one or neither of their parents, the boys living with both parents tended to perceive their mothers and fathers as being more accepting than did the girls in other families. Boys and girls living with both parents tended to see their mothers as less accepting than their fathers.

According to mean scores the girls living with one parent, the mother, tended to perceive their parents as being more accepting than did the boys. According to the mean scores, both boys and girls in these families tended to perceive their mothers as being more accepting than their fathers.

The two boys living with relatives other than their own parents tended to perceive their mothers as being

more accepting than their fathers. Also they tended to perceive their mothers as more accepting than did the boys living with both or one of their parents and their fathers as more accepting than did the boys living with mother only.

Of all the girls in the study those living with one parent, the mother, tended to see their mothers as more accepting than did the girls living with both parents. (No girls in this study lived with neither parent.)

Boys living with both parents tended to see their fathers as more accepting than did the boys living with one parent or neither parent. This difference approached the five per cent level of significance. Fathers of children from broken homes tended to be seen as least accepting to all parents.

9. When parental acceptance scores were grouped according to length of family's residence in the community, the residental mobility of the children's families appeared to have little relation of the children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them. Stability of residence (over ten years in the community) tended to be positively related to mothers' acceptance.

10. When scores of each dimension of parental acceptance were compared, parents were seen by their children as being highest in recognition of child's need to become independent of his parents and lowest in ability to accept a child's feelings.

The t-test of significance of differences between mean scores of the four dimensions revealed significant differences

at the five per cent level between mean scores in dimensions A and B, A and C, A and D, and B and C. There were no significant differences between mean scores in dimensions B and D, and C and D.

Interpretations

According to means of scores for children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them, there were differences in the children's perceptions in relation to selected characteristics of children and their families. However, the t-test of significance of differences between mean scores of children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in mean scores.

The above findings may be attributed partially to the limited number of subjects included in this study and partially to the fact that there may have been no real differences in these children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them in relation to the characteristics studied.

The limited number of subjects included in this study affected testing the significance of differences of scores in two ways. The investigator believes that the t-test of significance of differences of mean scores for a larger sample may reveal different findings. Also a larger sample may include more subjects in the various categories and, thus, enchance the possibilities of checking the significance of differences between scores which were impossible

in this study due to the insufficient number of scores in some classifications.

Limitations of the Study

1. Within the limits of this study, the validity of the instrument was established. However, the validity bears further investigation.

2. One isolated incident might have distorted the subjects' response to the questions. For example, a child might have had a conflict with both or either parent just previous to the time the instrument was administered. This, of course, is a limitation which applies to most cross-sectional kinds of research.

3. A subject may have had to choose between two or more responses if a parent were perceived to exhibit one behavior as much as another.

4. Another limitation is that the subject may not select an accurate or truthful response. Jerkins[1] says that a subject may answer inaccurately when the accurate response would embarrass, incriminate or is not expedient to him. This is a limitation which applies to all data collected by questionnaire.

5. The findings from such a limited number of subjects should not be generalized for groups other than the group in this study.

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1. J.G.Jerkins, "Characteristics of the Questionnaire as Determinants of Dependability," Journal of Consultant Psychology, V (1941), pp. 164 - 170.

Conclusions

Regarding the Instrument

1. It is possible to adapt an instrument designed to measure parents' perceptions of their acceptance of their children to an instrument which measures pre-adolescent children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.
2. The above mentioned instrument is comprehensible to nine-to-twelve-year-old children and can be administered to several children simultaneously.
3. The instrument is acceptable in validity and reliability.
4. The instrument can be used to collect data concerning children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them which can be related to various characteristics of children and their families. Such use of the instrument with a large, random sample can yield information which may contribute to better understanding of parental acceptance and its relation to children's development.

Regarding the Children's Perceptions of Parental Acceptance

The following conclusions regarding children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them as it is related to certain characteristics of children and their families can be applied only to the subjects of this study. The limited number of subjects and the selective nature of the group do not warrant generalization of the findings to a wider population.

For the children in this study the writer concludes that:

1. Although inspection of mean scores indicated that children tended to perceive their mothers as more acceptant than their fathers, as had been hypothesized, the hypothesis is not tenable, according to the results of the statistical t-test of significance of differences.
2. The hypothesis that boys and girls are similar in their perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them is tenable.
3. The hypothesis that youngest and oldest children perceive their parents as being more accepting of them than do middle children is not tenable, according to the results of the statistical t-test of significance of differences.
4. According to children's perceptions, younger parents are not more accepting than older parents except in the case of younger fathers (35 years and under) who tend to be perceived as less accepting than older fathers and least accepting of all parents.
5. Age of children is not significantly related to children's perception of their parents' acceptance of them.
6. Length of a family's residence in the community is not related to its children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them.
7. Education of parents is not related to the extent of parental acceptance, as perceived by children.

8. The hypothesis that children from small families perceive their parents as being more accepting than do children from larger families is not tenable, according to the results of the statistical t-test of significance of differences.

9. The hypothesis that children living with both parents perceive their parents as being more accepting than do children living with one or neither parent is not tenable, according to the statistical t-test of significant differences.

10. The hypothesis that children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance of them are similar in the four dimensions of parental acceptance is tenable only for dimensions B and D, and C and D. According to the statistical t-test of significance of differences, the differences between mean scores in dimensions A and B, A and C, A and D, and B and C are significant at the five per cent level. Therefore, this phase of the hypothesis is not tenable.

Suggestions for Further Study

The investigator offers the following suggestions for further study:

1. The validity of the instrument warrants further investigation. The investigator suggests that further validation of the instrument be done through checking against data secured through case studies and/or other methods of collecting data.

2. The instrument was administered to a small group of children for this study. The investigator suggests that, after further validation of the instrument, it be administered to a large random sample. By administering the instrument to a large random sample the findings may provide broader and more realistic implications of children's perceptions of their parents' accepting behavior. Thus, generalizations to a wider population will be warranted.

3. The investigator also suggests a study comparing children's perceptions of their parents accepting behavior with the parents' perceptions of their own acceptance of their children. A study of this nature would provide correlations of children's and their parents' perceptions of parental acceptance. If these were studied in relation to children's behavior one might gain insight as to what the significant determinants are in the parent-child relationship as it affects personality development of children. The writer believes that parental acceptance has significant effects upon children's development and that children's perceptions, more than parents' perceptions, of parental acceptance determine the effects of the relationship.

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS' ACCEPTANCE

FAMILY RELATIONS INVENTORY

Number _____

I am a boy _____ .

I am a girl _____ .

I am _____ years old.

My birthdate is _____ .

I am in the _____ grade.

I have _____ older sisters.

I have _____ older bothers.

I have _____ younger sisters.

I have _____ younger brothers.

	Under 25 yr.	26-30 yr.	31-35 yr.	36-40 yr.	41-45 yr.	Over 45 yr.
My mother's age is						
My father's age is						

I live with my mother. Yes _____ No _____

I live with my father. Yes _____ No _____

I live with other relatives. Yes _____ No _____ Who? _____

My mother attended: Elementary School ____ High School ____ College _____

My father attended: Elementary School ____ High School ____ College _____

My mother's work is: _____

My father's work is: _____

My family has lived in this community:

FAMILY RELATIONS INVENTORY

DIRECTIONS:

Your answers to the following questions will help us learn more about how boys and girls feel about their mothers. There are no "right" and "wrong" answers to the questions. You are the only one who knows what the best answers are for you. Try to choose the answer that you really think is most like what your mother usually does. Give the one answer for each question by circling the letter of the answer you think is best.

Example: When I do not want to go to bed at night when others in my family are sleepy, my mother usually:

a. Sees to it that I go to bed.
b. Tells me it is important that I go to bed.
c. Lets me tell her what I would like to do.
d. Helps me to find something that I like to do.
e. Helps me to find something I would like to do, which does not bother others.

1. When I act silly, my mother usually:

a. Tells me she knows how I feel.
b. Pays no attention to me.
c. Tells me not to be silly.
d. Makes me stop.
e. Tells me it is all right to feel silly, but helps me find other ways of showing how I feel.

2. When I misbehave while my friends are being good, my mother usually:

a. Sees to it that I do as my friends do.
b. Tells me it is important to be good when I am with my friends.
c. Lets me tell her what I would like to do.
d. Helps me find something that I like to do.
e. Helps me find something that I would like to do, which does not bother the others.

3. When there are two or more things to do and I must choose only one, my mother usually:

a. Tells me which one to do and why.
b. Talks it over with me.
c. Tells me what is good and bad about each, but lets me choose for myself.
d. Tells me that she is sure I can make a good choice and helps me to see what is good and bad about each choice.
e. Chooses for me.

4. When I obey my mother, she usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

5. When I misbehave in front of my mother's friends, she usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

6. When I decide something without asking my mother, she usually:

a. Punishes me for not asking her.
b. Tells me she likes for me to decide for myself if I can see which is a better choice.
c. Thinks it is all right to decide for myself.
d. Asks me to talk it over with her before I decide.
e. Tells me I must ask her before deciding.

7. When I am not able to do something as well as other children, my mother usually:

a. Tells me I must try to do as well as the other children.
b. Tells me to keep trying.
c. Tells me that no one can do everything well.
d. Reminds me of the things I do well.
e. Helps me do the best I can.

8. When I am making noise at a time when my mother wants peace and quiet, she usually:

a. Gives me something quiet to do.
b. Tells me that she wishes I would be quiet.
c. Makes me be quiet.
d. Lets me tell her why I am making noise.
e. Sends me somewhere else.

9. When I do not agree with my mother about something that is important to her, she usually:

a. Tells me I am wrong when I do not agree with her.
b. Makes me stop arguing.
c. Listens to what I think about it and changes her mind if she is wrong.
d. Tells me maybe we can do it my way another time.
e. Tells me that she is doing what is best for me.

10. When I cannot do something which my mother thinks is important, she usually:

a. Tells me I must do better.
b. Helps me to do the best I can.
c. Asks me to tell her more about the things which I can do.
d. Tells me that no one can do everything.
e. Tells me to keep trying.

11. When I want to do things with my friends rather than with my family, my mother usually:

a. Tells me to do things with my friends.
b. Thinks I am grown up enough to do things with my friends.
c. Plans something special so I will want to be with my family.
d. Tries to keep me away from my friends as much as possible.
e. Tells me to keep trying.

12. When my mother and I do things together, she usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

13. When I say mean and hateful things to my mother, about her, she usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

14. When I say I like someone (teacher, friend or relative) beside my mother, she usually:

a. Tries to keep me away from that person.
b. Lets me be with that person.
c. Does something special for me to remind me how nice she is.
d. Tells me about that person's faults.
e. Helps me to make and keep the friend.

15. When I do not care about something that interests other children, my mother usually:

a. Tries to show me why it is important to be interested in the same thing as the other children.
b. Reminds me of the things in which I am interested.
c. Tells me it is all right if I am not interested in the same things.
d. Sees to it that I do the same things as other children.
e. Helps me find ways of doing the best I can with my interests.

16. When I say angry and mean things to my mother, she usually:

a. Tells me it is all right to feel that way, but helps me find ways of showing how I feel.
b. Tells me I should not say such things to her.
c. Pays no attention to me.
d. Tells me she knows how I feel.
e. Makes me stop.

17. When I kick, hit and knock my things about, my mother usually:

a. Makes me stop.
b. Tells me it is all right to feel that way, but helps me find other ways of showing how I feel.
c. Tells me I should not do such things.
d. Tells me she knows how I feel.
e. Pays no attention to me.

18. When I like to do something that my mother thinks is not important, she usually:

a. Lets me do what I like to do.
b. Asks me to tell her more about what I like to do.
c. Helps me find ways to do the best I can with the things I like to do.
d. Does everything she can to make me stop doing what I like to do.
e. Tries to get me to do some other things.

19. When I want to do something which my mother is sure will make me unhappy, she usually:

a. Lets me do what I want to do.
b. Does not let me do it.
c. Suggests that I do not do this.
d. Helps me so I will not be very unhappy.
e. Tells me what is likely to happen.

20. When I do things that my mother does not want me to do, she usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

FAMILY RELATIONS INVENTORY

DIRECTIONS:

Your answers to the following questions will help us learn more about how boys and girls feel about their fathers. There are no "right" and "wrong" answers to the questions. You are the only one who knows what the best answers are for you. Try to choose the answer that you really think is most like what your father usually does. Give the one answer for each question by circling the letter of the answer you think is best.

Example: When I do not want to go to bed at night when others in my family are sleepy, my father usually:

a. Sees to it that I go to bed.
b. Tells me it is important that I go to bed.
c. Lets me tell him what I would like to do.
d. Helps me to find something that I like to do.
e. Helps me to find something I would like to do, which does not bother others.

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1. When I act silly, my father usually:

a. Tells me he knows how I feel.
b. Pays no attention to me.
c. Tells me not to be silly.
d. Makes me stop.
e. Tells me it is all right to feel silly, but helps me find other ways of showing how I feel.

2. When I misbehave while my friends are being good, my father usually:

a. Sees to it that I do as my friends do.
b. Tells me it is important to be good when I am with my friends.
c. Lets me tell him what I would like to do.
d. Helps me find something that I like to do.
e. Helps me find something that I would like to do, which does not bother the others.

3. When there are two or more things to do and I must choose only one, my father usually:

a. Tells me which one to do and why.
b. Talks it over with me.
c. Tells me what is good and bad about each, but lets me choose for myself.
d. Tells me that he is sure I can make a good choice and helps me to see what is good and bad about each choice.
e. Chooses for me.

4. When I obey my father, he usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

5. When I misbehave in front of my father's friends, he usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

6. When I decide something without asking my father, he usually:

a. Punishes me for not asking him.
b. Tells me he likes me to decide for myself if I can see which is a better choice.
c. Thinks it is all right to decide for myself.
d. Asks me to talk it over with him before I decide.
e. Tells me I must ask him before deciding.

7. When I am not able to do something as well as other children, my father usually:

a. Tells me I must try to do as well as the other children.
b. Tells me to keep trying.
c. Tells me that no one can do everything well.
d. Reminds me of the things I do well.
e. Helps me do the best I can.

8. When I am making noise at a time when my father wants peace and quiet, he usually:

a. Gives me something quiet to do.
b. Tells me that he wishes I would be quiet.
c. Makes me be quiet.
d. Lets me tell him why I am making noise.
e. Sends me somewhere else.

9. When I do not agree with my father about something that is important to him, he usually:

a. Tells me I am wrong when I do not agree with him.
b. Makes me stop arguing.
c. Listens to what I think about it and changes his mind if he is wrong.
d. Tells me maybe we can do it my way another time.
e. Tells me that he is doing what is best for me.

10. When I cannot do something which my father thinks is important, he usually:

a. Tells me I must do better.
b. Helps me to do the best I can.
c. Asks me to tell him more about the things which I can do.
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a. Tells me to do things with my friends.
b. Thinks I am grown up enough to do things with my friends.
c. Plans something special so I will want to be with my family.
d. Tries to keep me away from my friends as much as possible.
e. Tells me to keep trying.

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a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
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14. When I say I like someone (teacher, friend or relative) beside my father, he usually:

a. Tries to keep me away from that person.
b. Lets me be with that person.
c. Does something special for me to remind me how nice he is.
d. Tells me about that person's faults.
e. Helps me to make and keep the friend.

15. When I do not care about something that interests other children, my father usually:

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b. Reminds me of the things in which I am interested.
c. Tells me it is all right if I am not interested in the same things.
d. Sees to it that I do the same things as other children.
e. Helps me find ways of doing the best I can with my interests.

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c. Pays no attention to me.
d. Tells me she knows how I feel.
e. Makes me stop.

17. When I kick, hit and knock my things about, my father usually:

a. Makes me stop.
b. Tells me it is all right to feel that way, but helps me find other ways of showing how I feel.
c. Tells me I should not do such things.
d. Tells me he knows how I feel.
e. Pays no attention to me.

18. When I like to do something that my father thinks is not important, he usually:

a. Lets me do what I like to do.
b. Asks me to tell him more about what I like to do.
c. Helps me find ways to do the best I can with the things I like to do.
d. Does everything he can to make me stop doing what I like to do.
e. Tries to get me to do some other things.

19. When I want to do something which my father is sure will make me unhappy, he usually:

a. Lets me do what I want to do.
b. Does not let me do it.
c. Suggests that I do not do this.
d. Helps me so I will not be very unhappy.
e. Tells me what is likely to happen.

20. When I do things that my father does not want me to do, he usually:

a. Seems to love me much more than usual.
b. Seems to love me a little more than usual.
c. Seems to love me the same as usual.
d. Seems to love me a little less than usual.
e. Seems to love me much less than usual.

APPENDIX B

LETTERS TO PARENTS

March 1, 1956

Mr. & Mrs._____
330 South Lawn
East Lansing, Michigan

Dear Mr. & Mrs. _____:

It's been a long time since we have had any communication with each other. After these many years, we are asking once again for cooperation from you and your child in helping a student learn amout children.

I should like to introduce to you Miss Mary Myhand, a graduate assistant in child development at M.S.U. She wishes to ask help from you and _____.

Miss Myhand is developing, as part of her research for her Master's Degree, a questionnaire designed to learn more about how children see their parents in relation to themselves. She wishes to make this questionnaire one which can be read and understood by children nine to twelve years old. She feels that the questionnaire needs to be tried with a few children this age to see how well it is comprehended. She then will revise it according to their comments before she uses it to collect data for her study. Do you think you and _____ would be willing to help in this trial run?

To do this, he and several other children about his age, would come to the nursery school, (now located in the east wing of the Home Management Building on East Circle Drive), on Saturday, March 10, at 9:30 a.m. To answer the questionnaire would take about 30 minutes. After they have finished, the children may stay to play for a while if they wish.

Miss Myhand has been a graduate assistant in our department since September, 1954. She did her undergraduate work at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. She works well with children and I feel sure her relationship with them in this experience will be very satisfactory.

She will appreciate your cooperation in briefly explaining to _____ what is being asked of him and inquiring as to his willingness to participate. Miss Myhand will call you Monday or Tuesday, March 5 or 6, for your answer and to give any further explanation which you or _____ may wish.

I hope he will be able to come. It will be a pleasure to see _____ again.

Sincerely yours,

Bernice Borgman
Associate Professor in charge
of Child Development Program

Miss Mary Myhand
Graduate Assistant,
Child Development.

12 March 1956

Dear Parent:

Our institution has given permission to Miss Mary V. Myhand of Michigan State University to make a controlled study of child-parent relationships in the Lincoln Center. Should your child be included in this study, I should like you to know that we have fully approved of it, since there will be no publicity of individual findings.

The pupils to be chosen would be selected from our many club groups.

Very sincerely,

Morrison L. Ryder
Executive Director

MLR/dw

Dear Parent:

In my study of children, I am interested in learning more about their relationships with their parents. Several studies have been done to help parents see themselves as mothers and fathers, but little has been done to help us understand how children really see their parents. At present, I am preparing a study which I believe will add to a better understanding of how children see some of their parents' behavior.

I have prepared several questions to be asked of children, 9 to 12 years old, to give us a clearer understanding of how they see some of their parents' behavior toward them. Each child will be asked to choose one answer (a, b, c, d, or e) which tells what happens most often with him or her. This is an example of the kinds of questions:

When I do not want to go to bed at night when others in my family are sleepy, my mother usually:

a. Sees to it that I go to bed.
b. Tells me it is important that I go to bed.
c. Lets me tell her what I would like to do.
d. Helps me to find something that I like to do.
e. Helps me to find something I would like to do, which does not bother others.

With your permission, I should like to have your child help me by answering the questions I have prepared. There is no desire to find out how any one child sees his parents. Your child will be one of a group of children who will give us a sample of what children think. No names of children or personal descriptions will be used in this study.

I will call you on _____ to find out if you would like to have your child help us in this study and to give any further information which you may wish.

Yours truly,

Mary Vivian Mynand
Mason Hall, 28
Michigan State University
Phone No. ED 2-1571

MM:jk

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