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INFLUENCES ON PARENTAL CHOICE
OF CHILDREN'S EARLY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

presented by

Kit Payne

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Family & Child Ecology

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**INFLUENCES ON PARENTAL CHOICE
OF CHILDREN'S EARLY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

By

Kit Payne

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Department of Family and Child Ecology

1994

ABSTRACT

INFLUENCES ON PARENTAL CHOICE OF CHILDREN'S EARLY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

by

Kit Payne

This study examined the extent to which early childhood education program factors related to convenience, image and philosophy influenced parental choice of a particular early childhood education program for their child. A secondary goal was to examine the extent to which family demographics or parental regime influenced choice of an early childhood program that espoused a particular philosophy.

Participants included four female early childhood education program directors, representing three models of program philosophy, and 81 parents with children in their programs. All were volunteers from a midwestern city and a nearby suburb.

Program philosophy was measured by the Programming Preference Check List, a structured choice instrument describing program goals and practices. Parental choice regarding convenience, image, philosophy, and family demographics were measured using the Parent Questionnaire, a criterion referenced instrument designed by the investigator.

Parental regime was measured by the Parental Regime Assessment Scale, a grouped statement instrument that

required parents to rank statements characteristic of several dimensions of parenting.

Discriminant analysis was used to examine clusters of factors that were most predictive of group membership for a particular program. Multivariate Utility Technology (MAUT) was used for initial interpretation of data collected on the Parental Regime Assessment Scale. Percentages of responses across regimes and dimensions of parenting were calculated to examine group trends.

Complex interactions were found between convenience, image, and philosophy considerations and family demographics which correlated with early childhood education program decisions. Single versus partnership parenting, philosophy of program, and level of income were especially predictive of parental program choice. No relationship was found between parental regime and program selection, nor between parental regime identification and perceived goodness of fit with a particular program model.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Need

Families have many choices to make regarding the care and education of their children. Perhaps one of the most important decisions parents make involves in what programs outside the home their children will be enrolled during the early childhood years. In 1991, more than 48 percent of all children under the age of five were enrolled in such programs. This number has increased each year throughout the past decade and is expected to keep getting bigger (Boyer, 1991; Children's Defense Fund, 1991). Thus, more parents than ever are making choices about which early childhood programs their children will attend. Early childhood programs can be differentiated from one another by several factors that parents can examine in making enrollment choices. Convenience (e.g., cost, location and hours of service), image (consideration of the previous choices and recommendations of others), and philosophy (beliefs and goals about learning, instructional strategies, the roles that adults play in conveying curriculum, and so on) are the dominant factors in this array (Galinsky, 1988; Phillips, 1987). Convenience has been widely studied as it

effects parental choice; image and philosophy have not (Hill-Scott, 1987; Pence & Goelman, 1987; Phillips, Scarr & McCartney, 1987; Powell, 1989; Powell & Widdows, 1987).

Just as early childhood programs vary, so too do the families who use them. Among the many variances in families are income level, parental level of education, family size, and whether parents are making decisions about child rearing alone or with a partner. In addition, parents' philosophical approaches to child rearing and decision-making, referred to in combination as parental regimes, are another dimension along which families vary. This study examined a combination of factors that influence decisions that families make regarding early childhood education programs for their children. These included program convenience, image and philosophy, family demographics, and parental regime.

Theory

Many studies have contrasted the experiences and outcomes for young children raised solely in the home, with those of young children enrolled in out-of-home early childhood programs. Of these, most have assessed the educational processes in the early childhood program as separate from those occurring in the home environment. Phillips (1987) urges that research be conducted to focus on the linkages between the home and the early childhood programs in which children participate:

Childrearing has become a collaborative endeavor with children moving back and forth . . . between their homes and (the early childhood program). The effects of these two environments may be additive; they may compensate for each other; or some aspects of one may override aspects of the other . . . there is an important methodological reason to assess the joint effects of (early childhood programs) and family environments. Parents select their children's early childhood program arrangements. It is likely that parents with different values, finances and family structures choose early childhood programs that vary in form and quality (Phillips, 1987, 11-12).

This last statement, while intuitively logical, has yet to be established empirically. One theoretical approach that addresses such complex interactions and provides a framework for investigating the extent to which different types of families choose different types of early childhood programs is that of human ecology.

Human Ecology and the Ecological Approach

The human ecological framework assumes that interrelationships between people and their interpersonal and physical environments are critical to analyses of such processes as decision-making. Complex, continuous exchanges are considered, rather than linear cause and effect relationships within isolated components of the child's or family's life.

Assumptions from the ecological model relevant to the framework for this study include those listed below. They are derived from Bubolz and Sontag (Sourcebook on Family Theories and Research Methods, 1991).

1. The family in interaction with its environment constitutes an ecosystem.

2. Properties of families and the environment, the structure of the environment, and processes taking place within them must be viewed as interdependent and analyzed as a system.

3. Families are semi-open (varying in the amounts and kinds of information about themselves that pass beyond family boundaries), goal-directed, (implementing plans for reasons they can identify), dynamic (acting purposefully to bring about change), and adaptive systems. Adaptation is a continual process in family ecosystems.

4. Families interact with multiple environments. Each family adapts to environments outside the home in unique ways. Information is crucial to organize, activate, and transform family goals and strategies.

5. Environments limit but do not wholly determine human behavior.

6. Families vary in the degree of control that they exert on environments, and in the freedom with which they interact with them.

7. Decision-making modifies the control that families take over their social, cultural and natural environments.

These assumptions have implications for the design of research that examines families. Families cannot be viewed as independent entities, but must be considered as systems embedded in other systems. The degree to which environments

outside the home influence the dynamics of a family will differ. Some families place more consideration on internal harmony, while others strive to define roles and functions that complement and blend into outside systems. In one family, causing adaptation in an interacting system may be a goal, while another family may strive to adapt its members and its strategies to the external system. It is important to consider the types and strengths of outside influences when examining family decisions.

Bronfenbrenner (1989) defines a hierarchy of systems that comprise the context dimension for ecological studies. These include microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems. The **microsystem** is defined as "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by (a) developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features, and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality and systems of belief," while the **mesosystem** is defined as comprising "the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (e.g., the relations between home and school)" (227). The **exosystem** is comprised of those settings that a person may never directly enter, but that never the less affect the person's immediate environment (7), such as a political body that makes decisions about school district boundaries. Each of these systems is embedded or nested within the ones above it, so

that microsystems are nested into mesosystems, and mesosystems into exosystems. All of these systems are in turn embedded in the **macrosystem**. The macrosystem exists "at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies" (26). The decentralized nature of school districts in the United States, wherein local decisions outweigh national consistency in curriculum can be contrasted to a country such as Japan, where schools are much more like each other than different in day to day schedule as well as in curriculum. This illustrates a macrosystem effect.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) urges communicative attempts to establish continuity between mesosystems. He identifies factors that enhance the developmental potential of a setting as including the compatibility of role demands and of goal consensus between settings; open two-way communication between settings that includes the family in the communication network, and personal modes (face-to-face versus printed) of communication between settings (218).

Bronfenbrenner cautions that the dimension of time has been undervalued in ecological studies, and urges consideration of constancy and change not only in the person, but also in the environment. Data obtained from the same group of subjects that examine factors both before and after a particular life transition or "trigger event" are described as fitting a **chronosystem** model. According to

Bronfenbrenner, trigger events and experiences in a person's life, in either the internal or external environment, alter the existing relation between the person and the environment, thus creating a dynamic that may instigate developmental change. A family's interactions with its child's first school experience is defined as one such trigger event (200).

Program Convenience, Image, and Philosophy

As mentioned earlier, programs vary in convenience factors, such as hours of operation, location of the center, and cost. Image considerations may influence some parents. Whether relatives, friends and neighbors have previously selected an early childhood education program for their own children, or have recommended its selection to a parent, are examples of image factors. Early childhood programs also differ along continuums that include theory and philosophy of education. Parental decisions could be expected to take these variables into account. That is, parents are faced with choosing one program model from among many possibilities. Considerable controversy exists over the extent to which convenience, image and philosophy influence parental decisions of specific program models.

Recent approaches question whether one early childhood model can be rated as "best," or whether program models are better examined in terms of goodness of fit: which program

best suits which families. These issues are discussed in depth in the review of the literature that follows.

Decision-Making in the Family

Decision-making models have identified elements in the process of family decision-making as well as classification systems for decision types. Gross, Crandall, and Knoll (1980), for example, describe elements of family decisions as including the **situation**, which involves the type of problem or opportunity under consideration and the psychological climate; the **decision-maker**; and the **decision-making process**. Diesing (1962) delineates five types of decisions. Technical decisions include time-saving techniques such as parents selecting a program because they pass it on their way to work each day. Economic decisions involve resource allocation and prioritization choices, such as parental selection of a higher-priced early childhood program in lieu of a less expensive, but to the parent, a less desirable one. Social decisions deal with conflicts between values and goals. According to Gross, Crandall, and Knoll (1980; 129), these decisions differ from technical and economic ones in that the number of alternatives available are difficult to quantify and specify. A process of adjustment is often required, wherein the goals or values themselves may be modified, in a relatively unconscious manner. Further, these decisions deal not with a resource scarcity, but rather with a conflict over cultural or

societal role expectations and symbolic meanings. For instance, parents may wish to select an ethnically homogeneous or heterogeneous program, based on broad beliefs, as well as on their goals for the child. However, when other elements of each program option is weighed, a shift in beliefs or goals may become evident as parents strive to satisfy more immediate priorities. Legal decisions can be exemplified by rules at the family level, according to Diesing. As with laws, rules add predictability and consistency to decisions that involve checks on the uses of power. Compromises for the sake of the rights of all members may be represented here. When a parent determines to whom the child is to be released from the early childhood program in his or her absence, a legal decision has been made. Political decisions deal with strategies that the family employs to make other decisions. They are procedural in nature and often accompany decisions of other types. The inclusion of more than one participant in the process and the relative weight that each person's opinion carries are political influences. In one family, the child's preferences may be regarded as important to early childhood program choice. In another family, the decision of which program the child will attend may be reached by the parents together, without consulting the child. In a third family, the determination of program may be made by one parent acting alone, in the belief that it is his or her role to make all such determinations.

School placement decisions made by parents include aspects of the three key elements of decision-making (situation, decision-maker, and decision-making process). Such decisions also encompass all five of the decision types identified by Diesing.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to analyze the extent to which the program factors of convenience, image, and philosophy influence parents' enrollment decisions about early childhood programs for their children. These criteria are judged important by early childhood professionals but have been studied in isolation from one another in terms of parental decision-making. Examining these factors in combination represents a significant contribution to the literature. The extent to which family factors related to demographics or parental regime influence parental choice of an early childhood program espousing a particular philosophy was a second focus of the study. A conceptual framework illustrating possible paths that may characterize parental enrollment decisions for particular early childhood education program models is offered in Figure 1.1. The following section provides the conceptual and operational definitions of the variables examined in the study.

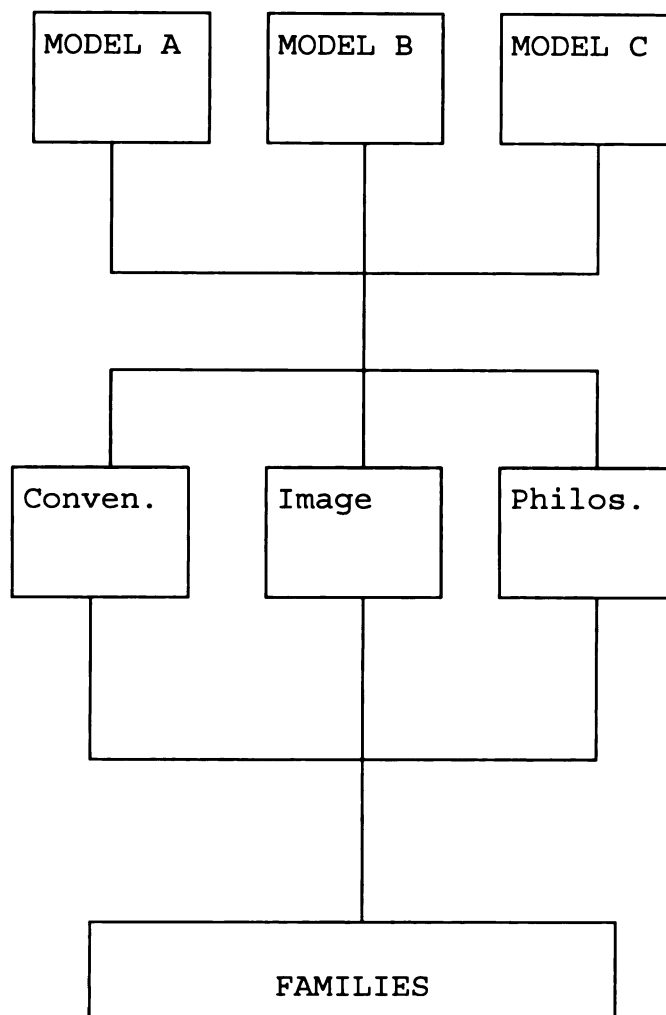


Figure 1.1. Theoretical Framework for the Study

Possible paths that families who differ along such dimensions as Family Regime and a range of demographic variables might take in reaching a decision to enroll a child in a particular model of early childhood education. The extent to which demographics or Family Regime predict the relative importance placed on Convenience, Image or Philosophy of program may influence the decision to select a particular program or program model.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Dependent Variable

The following section provides the conceptual and operational definitions of the dependent variable.

Program Selection is conceptually defined as the choice to enroll a child at a particular educational site when there are alternative sites available to the parents.

Program Selection is operationally defined as actual enrollment by parents of a child in an early educational program as evidenced by program enrollment lists and as noted by parent on Parent Questionnaire.

Independent Variables

The next section provides conceptual and operational definitions of the independent variables.

Parental Regime is conceptually defined as "the set of mechanisms by which a collective pattern in (parenting) process is regulated. . . . In the pivotal position is regime, which is the means by which paradigms, unobservable in themselves, can be translated into observable behaviors" (Constantine, 1986, 16-17).

Parental Regime is operationally defined as a statistical measure derived from parental self-report on the Parental Regime Assessment Scale.

Parent Decision-Making is conceptually defined as a prioritization process employed towards the distribution of

both tangible and intangible resources based on individual and/or collective goals that may or may not be specified.

Parent Decision-Making is operationally defined as a particular set of style/strategy characteristics extracted from written portions of the parent self-report instrument entitled the Parental Regime Assessment Scale, that have been identified by Constantine (1993) and Imig (1993) as correlating to family paradigm/regime typology.

Program Convenience Factors are conceptually defined as those characteristics of the program that are perceived as easing entry due to confluence with family budget, family geographic proximity, family time demands, and so on.

Program Convenience Factors are operationally defined as measures of responses to program characteristics that influenced parents to select a particular program for their children, as reported on the Parent Questionnaire.

Program Image is conceptually defined as a stated or imaged vision of what a program is and of what it ought to be, reflective of the values, social comparisons, and philosophical orientation of the person(s) holding it.

Program Image is operationally defined as measures of strength of influence for parental program selection via social group prior decisions and recommendations, as reported on the Parent Questionnaire.

Philosophy or Program Philosophy. Philosophy or educational philosophy is conceptually defined as a written or verbal description of the educational program from the

perspective of hoped-for gains for children and families enrolled, and/or of developmental expectations.

Program Educational Philosophy/Director Perception of . . . is operationally defined as identification with one of three program models, as obtained via administration of the Programming Preference Check List.

Parental Perception of Program Philosophy is operationally defined as the written response sets to items on the Parent Questionnaire administered by the researcher.

Agreement on Program Philosophy is conceptually defined as the extent to which one person's perception of the meaning of an experience approximates that of another person.

Agreement on Program Philosophy is operationally defined as a comparison of the extent to which parental responses to items about program goals and philosophy reported on the Parent Questionnaire approximates that of the program director using the Programming Preferences Check List.

Demographic Characteristics of Parents/Family is conceptually defined as such personal and family descriptive statistics as age, sex, culture group membership/country of origin, family size, age(s) of child(ren), marital status, socioeconomic status, past experiences with program, employment, level of education, length of time in community, etc.

Demographic Characteristics of Parents/Family is operationally defined as information given through self-report to researcher, on Parent Questionnaire and/or information gleaned from program records, archives, and personnel.

Goodness of Fit is conceptually defined as perception of the degree to which characteristics of an environment match the demands or expectations of persons in interaction with it.

Goodness of Fit is operationally defined as the self-report of satisfaction with the early childhood program that a parent has selected on the Parent Questionnaire.

Overview

This chapter has included an introduction and purpose for the present study. Chapter II is comprised of a review of the literature relevant to this investigation. The research hypotheses addressed, descriptions of the sample, research methodology, and specific measures used are contained in Chapter III. Chapter IV addresses statistical support, or lack of support, for the hypotheses that were under investigation. Chapter V includes a discussion of findings relevant to the study's focus. Personal observations and directions for future research are also given.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of the literature is divided into four main parts. The first section describes theories and research about convenience, image, and philosophy factors that differentiate early childhood program models. In part two, the continuity and discontinuity between home and early educational program settings is examined. The impact of family demographic variables on program selection is discussed in part three. The fourth part concerns family typologies and the relationship of family type to decision-making.

Among the array of complex tasks involved in parenting are the socialization of children, and the introduction and maintenance of children's motivation for participation within the society (Berger, 1991; Cataldo, 1987; Gross, Crandall, & Knoll, 1980). Defining what society is like, and what the child's societal roles will be, is frequently a task of early childhood programs as well (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987; Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1993).

Parents know their children best and are in a position to advocate for their individual children better than anyone

else. On the other hand, teachers know the nature of children in groups and in the age ranges they teach, both through education and through experience (Berger; 1991; Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1993). Only through collaboration can these powerful human models from whom children gain their sense of competence and definition of self complement each other's efforts (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Powell, 1989).

Essential to collaborative education between parents and teachers is the communication of philosophy and goals for children's educational experiences. Support for any endeavor is enhanced by one's understanding of its need. Parents who have a clear conception of the role they wish to play in their child's educational development are likely to be more effective in influencing school success. Informed parents can be assumed to make decisions in different ways, and with different outcomes, than those who have examined fewer factors prior to decisions such as program enrollment for their child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Powell, 1989; Smith, 1968).

While children have many teachers throughout their years in formal education, their parents are a continuous force in the process throughout the years. Programs can strengthen this force by encouraging parent understanding of program goals (Berger, 1991).

Convenience, Image, and Philosophy

Convenience

A history of choosing early childhood educational experiences for one's child based on convenience factors dates back at least to the 19th century. According to Strickland (1982), a "basic relief from childcare" was a primary motivator for parents who sent their preschool aged children to school.

Sending off the little ones to the district school reflected also a customary indifference to the matter of age distinctions and certainly betrayed no belief that little children have different educational needs. . . . The traditional character of the response, together with the lure of free custodial care, doubtless accounts for its popularity among parents

according to Fitts, quoted in Strickland (1986, 325).

Schools had convenience concerns as well, and began to question whether it was their responsibility to provide such free care. As early as 1818, the Boston School Committee took a stance against providing educational placements for children under six, and recommended that, because of the expense involved, "the instruction of small children should be the sole responsibility of parents" (Strickland, 1986, 325).

Caldwell and Freyer, in Spodek (1986), discuss the rise in early childhood experiences in the 1980s as relating to the needs of a growing population of working women who needed care for their children while otherwise occupied. Many studies of early experiences during this era focused on

such factors as age of entry, length of time children spent in the program, or the numbers of adults and other children with whom they interacted, versus the goals or format of program experiences provided. Although these studies were frequently designed to examine programs defined as day care settings versus educational experiences, Caldwell and Freyer point out that the view of day care in this period was as "the modal early childhood environment rather than as a nontraditional alternative" (370), and that the studies seldom distinguished between these categories of experience in a meaningful way: convenience and image factors were likely to be what differentiated them. Length of day, cost, and location were likely to lead parents to choose one alternative over the other. These can be equated with Diesing's technical and economic decisions, introduced in Chapter I. Image issues led to further differentiations among parents as they chose programs in which to enroll their children.

Image

Early childhood programs differentiated by features beyond those of convenience were clearly "class-oriented" in the 1970s and 1980s according to Caldwell and Freyer (1986), in that "only families with a certain pattern of social and economic background were using them" (371). Choosing an early childhood educational experience because of length of day or low cost led to the inference that the parent was

"working class" and/or had little interest in the child's need for quality experiences versus custodial care.

Choosing a program that met for a short period or only two or three days a week, or that was more costly, indicated concern about the desirability of reinforcing the family's social class values and the milieu of place in society

(Caldwell & Freyer, 1986; Strickland, 1986). Such considerations relate to Diesing's description of social decisions, discussed in more detail in a section to follow.

When early childhood program selection is based on opportunities for one's child to interact with others who share the family's social status, goals and values, versus for specific educational opportunities, the enrollment decision can be termed an image decision. Some recent studies have begun to focus on elements of parental choice of early childhood education experience (Stipek, Milburn, Galluzzo, & Daniels, 1992; Rescola, 1991, cited in Stipek, Rosenblatt, & DiRocco, 1994). Economically disadvantaged parents were found to express concerns about ways in which their children measured up against others in the social milieu and to choose programs with an academic emphasis that they perceived would enhance this. Some middle class parents were influenced by similar concerns. Stipek, Milburn, Galluzzo, and Daniels (1992) studied 551 families and concluded that parents' goals and beliefs about appropriate early childhood education influenced their enrollment decisions. Hence, some interactions between

demographics, image considerations, and philosophical approaches began to be suspected. The finding that both economically disadvantaged and middle class parents were influenced by concerns about social comparisons-- image effects--to which they believe their children will be subjected raises new questions. This finding suggests that complex interactions between convenience, image, philosophy and family demographics may have synergistic effects that better describe program choice than do considerations of any one of these factors in isolation.

Philosophy

A program or curriculum model has been defined by Evans (1982) as providing "an ideal representation of the essential philosophical, administrative, and pedagogical components of a grand education plan" (107). Perhaps the best-documented attempt to differentiate among program models is the Planned Variation experiment carried out through Project Follow Through and later extended on a limited basis to Project Head Start (Zigler & Valentine, 1977).

This effort led to a three-way classification system for model comparisons that has been widely utilized over the past decade.

Behavioral-Environmental Model. Behavioral-Environmental models are characterized by such strategies as skills and concept training, coupled with reinforcement

techniques, highly structured schedules of daily activity, and display/demonstration instructional methods. Moreover, the role of the parent in the educational process is frequently seen as a separate and segregated one: the parent is master of the home domain, the teacher is the master in the classroom. Academic and social goals congruent with later school expectations may be seen as an overarching goal of preschool education. Content learning is clearly prioritized over the more ephemeral affective/attitudinal realm.

Maturational-Nativist Models. Maturational-Nativist models seek to maximize child-initiated discovery learning. Teachers are cautious against premature training of children and are alert for signs of readiness, at which juncture the provision of appropriate materials may exemplify the intervention strategy. Creativity is highly valued, albeit within a highly structured, highly predictable time schedule. Teachers and peers encourage, guide, and support the child's learning. Parents are important to children's development, although they may be viewed as lacking essential elements in the home environment and/or skills to do so without school staff guidance. Content and affect are equally valued as leading to competence necessary to negotiate in the broader social world.

Comprehensive-Interactional Model. Comprehensive-Interactional models seek integration between active guidance and individual initiative. Integration across

developmental domains and across traditional subject areas is sought, as well. Time is managed in a planful, scheduled way, but with flexibility to accommodate children's interests and special unforeseen opportunities. Adults provide interpersonal support as well as instruction, usually in the form of guidance, stimulation, modeling and so forth. Parents are viewed as co-participants in the educational process, in both the school and home arenas. Academic orientation is thought to emerge from affect: the child's growing sense of competence and confidence in self-as-learner leads to skills transferable to future educational and social settings. Readers are referred to Table 2.1 for an overview of early childhood program models.

Although models may indeed vary along discrete factors such as those described above, the implication that one model may be "right" or "best" in all settings and for all families has been challenged (Evans, 1982; Lazar, 1988). According to Evans (1982), for example, two fundamental assumptions about models are that: "no one best way exists to educate all children in all social contexts, and different curriculum models are variously well suited for different children (and staff) in different social contexts." Moreover, Evans states that "This move to develop alternative curriculum models was consistent with the value of pluralism in education, conceivably to provide the citizenry with choices among legitimate and comparable educational design" (108).

TABLE 2.1. Theoretical Influences on Early Childhood Programs

Maturationism	Behaviorism	Interactionism
Learning is the result of:		
maturational.	quantitative changes in the organism.	qualitative changes in the organism.
The tempo of instruction is determined by:		
the child.	the teacher.	the child and the teacher.
The role of the teacher is:		
nurturer.	purveyor of knowledge.	stimulator and resource.
Teachers view children's mistakes as a sign:		
that the child is not ready for the content.	of insufficient instruction.	of children's current thinking.
Teachers respond to children's mistakes by:		
withholding further instruction until the child is older.	breaking the task down further or giving the child more practice.	offering children experiences to broaden or alter incomplete or inaccurate concepts or skills.
Current thinking is influenced by:		
the value of play.	the value of teacher-directed activity.	the value of play and children learning by doing.
sensitivity to the uniqueness of the childhood period.	sensitivity to the possibility of altering the course of child development.	the significance of child-early constructed knowledge.
group norms.	task analysis.	integration.

Adapted from Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, Developmentally Appropriate Programs in Early Childhood Education, New York: Merrill/Macmillan, 1993, pp. 16-17, by permission of authors.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) supports these assumptions, as well. He further speculates that factors that may lead to goodness of fit between children, families, and programs include the number of transcontextual dyads across a variety of settings, whether the members' cultural backgrounds allow for the formation and maintenance of such transcontextual dyads, and whether experiences are provided that allow for these dyads to form and to be maintained (214).

According to Soar and Soar (in Spodek, 1982):

The goals of early childhood programs are value statements reflecting different educational philosophies and theories of learning. Thus, each philosophical viewpoint or paradigm has characteristic outcome goals for children (624).

Both short-term objectives and long-term global aims would be expected to differ in discrete program models. Factors such as the teacher's role, the peers' role and the role of parents in the transmission of curriculum would likely differ, as well. Of more interest to the current research are questions about which families are best served by which programs, and whether their decisions about program utilization are influenced by awareness of program factors that dovetail with their images of program philosophy and of program utility for realizing the goals of early education that they hold for their children.

Philosophy has dominated the literature for 20 years, in the guise of program models. Although this is so, program models have seldom been studied in terms of parental

choice for particular early childhood education programs. Moreover, the joint effects of convenience, image, philosophy and family factors related to demographics and parenting styles (regimes) have never been studied in concert. This approach breaks new ground conceptually.

Continuity and Discontinuity Between Home and Early Educational Setting

The Home-Educational Program Interface: Mesosystemic Applications

Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines the **mesosystem** as "a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes a participant . . . (including) between home and school" (209). Further, he describes the instance of transition between one setting and another as an **ecological transition**. In discussing the developmental outcomes of such events, persons who participate in the transition, other than the primary person experiencing it (for example, the child entering a program) are termed **supplementary links**. The parent of the child entering an early childhood education program is one example of a supplementary link. Some factors of importance for supplementary link efficacy are described as **intersetting communication**--messages transmitted from one setting to the other, and **intersetting knowledge**--information or experiences that exist in one setting about the other (210). A **dual transition** "permits the formation of a three-person

system immediately upon entry into the new setting . . . the third party can serve as a source of security, provide a model for social interaction, reinforce the person's developing initiative, and so on" (211). This position has relevance for the early childhood teacher's or program director's role in the mesosystem interaction, program entry. Bronfenbrenner asserts that:

The developmental potential of settings in a mesosystem is enhanced if the role demands in the different settings are compatible and if the roles, activities, and dyads in which the developing person engages encourage development of mutual trust, a positive orientation, goal consensus between settings, and an evolving balance of power in favor of the developing person (212).

Continuity and Discontinuity

Certain types of discontinuity are inevitable between programs and homes. The bureaucratic nature of early childhood settings leads naturally to a different set of goals, and probably a wider set than a family would posit for its child (Litwak & Meyer, 1974). Mothering differs from teaching, although aspects of teaching are subsumed in the mother's role, and vice versa. A study carried out by Hess, Dickson, Price, and Leong (1979) analyzed data collected from 34 teachers and 67 mothers, representing a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Interviews, questionnaires, and observations of structured teaching episodes revealed that teachers valued independence for children, while mothers placed higher emphasis on social

skills. Mothers were also more concerned with mastery of developmental tasks than were teachers. Additionally, mothers used more direct and explicit approaches to teach and expected their authority status to exact compliance from children, while teachers tended to invoke rules as a means of gaining compliance and to be more flexible in requesting it. Although discontinuity in methods is probably the norm, discontinuity in ultimate goals may be less representative of differences between parents and teachers. In fact, exposure to a variety of models and methods may benefit children as they prepare to live in a complex world characterized by diversity (Banks, 1988, 1989; Grant & Sleeter, 1989).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) theorizes that participation in culturally diverse environments has positive developmental effects for children. Adaptation to a range of settings, people, and expectations may positively enhance an individual's social and cognitive competence.

Lightfoot (1978) draws a distinction between **creative conflict** and **negative dissonance** as possible results of children's exposure to homes that differ from programs/schools, and of program personnel who relate to families in varying ways. If power and status inequities are accentuated in communications between home and educational setting, negative dissonance results, and the child's experience is less successful. However, if balance of power and responsibilities is maintained and the family's

role is not diminished, creative conflict can enhance the child's success (reported in Powell, 1989, 36). Powell says elsewhere in his monograph that "goals for children are best achieved if the important adults in their lives agree and are consistent about the way they deal with children. . . . The underlying assumption is that home-program continuity has positive effects on the child" (6).

Significance of Continuity Between Family and Program.

Parent decisions about the type of early childhood program experience their child will receive should take into account the goals and values that the program espouses and acts upon. In order to make informed decisions, parents must become informed consumers. Programs, in return, must both articulate and communicate what their goals and values are. It appears that parental values are an important component of an optimal match between home and program, and that the level of continuity between the family and the program setting can be enhanced when this factor is taken into account (Hill-Scott, 1987; Pence & Goelman, 1987; Phillips, Scarr, & McCartney, 1987; Powell & Widdows, 1987).

The terms **philosophy** and **goals** are used with a great deal of ambiguity by different authors, including those in the field of human ecology. The term philosophy refers, generally, to one's conception "of the principles underlying conduct, thought, knowledge, and the nature of the universe." This definition is extracted from The New World Dictionary of the American Language, which goes on to say

that philosophy encompasses "a particular system of principles for the conduct of life." Goal is defined as "an object or end that one strives to attain." In reviewing the literature, many other terms are encountered that are encompassed by these definitions, and with this caveat, the following reviews are undertaken.

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) conception of belief systems can be equated with philosophy. One aspect of a person's belief system involves the concept of **developmentally-structuring personal attributes**. This includes what he terms "ego-resiliency," or the capacity to actively cope with uncertainty. Further, "ego-control" is described as the ability to regulate impulse expression (223). Although there is scant evidence that these characteristics are environmentally or interpersonally induced, there does seem to be evidence that the potency of parent belief systems affect children's performance on tests of mental ability and of language skills. Generally, mothers who have high expectations for what their children can achieve, and who have high expectations for their own abilities to influence their child's development seem to have children who achieve at a higher level (Tulkin & Covitz, 1975, cited in Bronfenbrenner, 223). Moreover, teachers' interactions with parents seem significantly able to alter perceptions of children's abilities as well as of parents' competence (Bloom, 1986; Clark, 1983; Comer, 1988; Gotts, 1989; Tharp,

1982; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988 . . .). Bronfenbrenner (1989) asserts that:

Parents are known to be the most powerful influence on children's development and the persons most sensitive and responsive to their children's behavior. Hence any changes that parents perceive in their child's characteristics are especially likely to provoke corresponding changes in their own parental behavior toward the child; this altered behavior, in turn, may introduce new forces that affect the child's subsequent psychological growth (218).

Communication instigated by the teacher can be a strong force in what the parent perceives.

Fotheringham (cited in Fisher, 1978, 8) notes that the reason for communication is "to help a receiver perceive a meaning similar to that in the mind of the communicator." Communication is a dynamic, continuous process. Messages sent through this process are filtered through the value system and tempered by the past experiences of the receiver as they are decoded and responded to (Burleson, 1987; Littlejohn, 1983; O'Keefe, 1988; O'Keefe & Delia, 1982).

Bronfenbrenner (1989) presents more convincing arguments that an ecological model is the appropriate one for an examination of teacher-parent interactions as they affect program choice. In stating a principle that relates to the role of personal attributes that affect development in context, he takes the position that:

Attributes of a person most likely to shape the course of human development are modes of behavior or belief that reflect an active, selective, structuring orientation toward the environment . . . the effect of such characteristics . . . depends

in significant degree on the corresponding patterns of response that they evoke" (223).

Following Bronfenbrenner's model (1989), the concepts of congruence of philosophy and efficacy of communication methods that influence parents' program choices and satisfaction with program were examined in the present research as a study of mesosystem interactions, while characteristics of the microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem comprise factors with possible explanatory power for differences noted. The context levels microsystem and mesosystem were defined in Chapter I. Broader contexts with relevance to image of program and to demographic characteristics that may influence decision-making are presented below.

Exosystem:

The exosystem encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person (e.g., . . . for a parent, the relationship between the school and the neighborhood group) (227).

Macrosystem:

The macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems . . . and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems. . . . From this perspective, social classes, ethnic or religious groups, or persons living in particular regions, communities, neighborhoods . . . constitute a macrosystem whenever the above conditions are met (228-9).

Process-Person-Context Model:

The two defining properties of (this model) are that:

1. The design permits assessment not only of developmental outcomes but also of the processes that produce these outcomes.
2. The design reveals how both developmental outcomes and processes vary as a joint function of the characteristics of the person and of the environment, thus permitting the detection of synergistic effects.

Stated more succinctly, the model identifies any **differences in developmental processes and outcomes associated with different ecological niches.**

The principle scientific power of the process-person-context model lies not so much in its capacity to produce definitive answers as to generate new questions by revealing the inadequacies of existing formulations in accounting for observed complexities (200-01).

Bronfenbrenner reiterates his earlier stance (1979) that "the ecology of human development was defined as a scientific undertaking 'in the discovery mode' (pp. 37-38). The aim was not to test hypotheses, but to generate them" (1989, 230).

The next section discusses historical antecedents and recent trends impacting on parental choice and selection of different models of early childhood programs.

Parental Rights and Program Selection

Early in this century, schooling remained largely under the control of the family and the community. Parents were recognized as critical to understanding the needs and learning styles of the child. The Michigan Manual of Child Study, issued by the Department of Public Instruction in

1896, urged Michigan teachers to work closely with parents both in designing instruction and in assessing children's learning. This point of view is forcefully presented:

The complex and ever increasing demands of modern civilization are felt nowhere more keenly than within the sphere of parenthood. . . . Under these circumstances (the mother) is certainly entitled to all the sympathy and assistance that can be given her; the good of the State so requires, and this in itself should prove a sufficient incentive to all whom special training has, in any degree, fitted to render this aid. . . . That the public school has been able to reach even its present degree of usefulness, while mother and teacher have been and are such absolute strangers to each other, has long been a great source of wonder. . . . Community of interest has always been considered one of humanity's strongest ties, and the child's well-being demands most imperatively a certain uniformity of treatment (7).

Family involvement in educational opportunities in the 1990s is characterized by an increased focus on informed choice as many states, including Michigan, contemplate laws to allow selection of sites and programs for public schooling beyond the preschool years. Factors that have influenced such choices in the arena of pre-public-school programs, long characterized by a range of options, are likely to attract interest among those embarking on the administration of public school parent choice components.

In the interim between the two eras discussed above, connections between educational settings and families have fallen in and out of favor as an imperative. Between 1890 and 1920, there was a dramatic shift from rural to urban schools which brought with it a shift in control from the

community to the professional, and corresponding shifts away from parental influence. The separation of school and families was dramatic (Berger, 1991; Pulliam, 1991).

Concerns in the 1960s over public perception of educational achievement in America as lagging behind other developed nations led to another wave of parental interest in school curricula. Parents questioned both program goals and their rights to participate with teachers in decision-making. Berger (1991) asserts that this led to a period when "many parents were interested in participating, although not necessarily in a constructive way" (73).

Concurrently, the value of early education has become widely recognized by the public; this dimension of outside influence has become equated with later, formal schooling. The attendance of children of non-working mothers and mothers of the middle class on career tracks continues to grow.

Census reports unveil a trend toward later parenting; although the number of children per woman is decreasing in the general population, there is a significant increase among women in their 30s. Demographers predict that this trend will continue. This segment of the population is characterized by better education and a generally higher standard of living than the norm. Further, parents of children born in the mother's fourth decade value their children's education highly and expect to be involved in their educational experiences (Baldwin & Nord, 1984; Bing &

Coleman; 1980; Fuller, 1989; Rogers & O'Connell, 1984, and Bureau of Census figures, cited in Fuller, 1989).

Teachers and parents, together, are the major agents of the mesosystem that educational settings and the home constitute for children. One way that these co-educators go about the business of socializing and educating the young is through the conveyance of beliefs and attitudes. As more children spend more time outside the home, programs are likely to become more critical to the process of socialization. Continuity of values, beliefs and attitudes between teachers and parents has been an under-examined issue for the children to whom they are conveyed (Hill-Scott, 1987; Pence & Goelman, 1987; Phillips, Scarr, & McCartney, 1987; Powell, 1989; Powell & Widdows, 1987).

By the 1980s, organizations nationwide were taking a stance that involving parents in educational programs was a critical factor to their success. The 1980 White House Conference on Families approved recommendations that included increased parent involvement in schools (reported in Powell, 1989). The National Association for the Education of Young Children included staff-parent interaction as a component of high-quality, developmentally appropriate programs (Bredekamp, editor, 1987). The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (1984) included well-informed parents as a standard for accreditation. The National Black Child Development Institute (1987) called for public school early childhood programs to involve parents in

decision-making about curriculum and program policy. Since 1970, the Head Start Policy Manual (see, for example, the Head Start Program Performance Standards, 1984) has mandated performance standards for provision of program information to parents, including parent participation. Although it is now widely acknowledged that parent components strengthen program effectiveness; there remains a dearth of studies that identify which models and methods are most effective for which populations, and particularly for families who are not in low-income brackets. Research has investigated parent information and support programs to assess outcomes, with little attention to differences in program function. Outcome research fails to provide data that will help program designers to make decisions about the most effective strategies so that limited resources can be put to maximum use. For this, research on program processes is needed (Davies, 1987; Powell, 1989).

Variations among families who currently choose early childhood programs for their children are much greater than the differences among families who used these programs in earlier eras. As public attention to such trends as developmentally appropriate programming, the controversy over early academics, and research findings on the effectiveness of such process strategies as whole language approach, cooperative learning, and play as an avenue to understanding grows, program choices will continue to grow as an issue. Lay-Dopyera and Dopyera (1987), cited in

NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs document (Bredekamp, editor, 1987), state that: "The lack of understanding about developmentally appropriate practices on the part of many parents . . . is largely the result of the failure of early childhood professionals to clearly articulate what they do and why they do it" (87). Teachers in the field must begin assessing the best ways to present program philosophies and goals to their clients.

The next section of the review of the literature will focus on the roles of culture and other family variables on home-program linkages.

Family Demographic Variables

The widely accepted premise that home-program linkages have positive effects on children, and that home-program continuity is a critical factor places a premium on maximizing parental choice in the selection of preschool programs that are congruent with family values, images that families hold of various program models, and characteristics relevant to perceived program convenience (Hill-Scott, 1987; Pence & Goelman, 1987; Phillips, Scarr, & McCartney, 1987; Powell, 1989; Powell & Widdows, 1987).

Many influences beyond the well-studied socioeconomic status of a family impact upon educational effectiveness. An understanding of the concept of culture may be more relevant to program design. Bronfenbrenner describes the

dimension of culture as including patterns of belief and behavior passed on from one generation to the next through processes of socialization carried out by institutions such as family and school. He classifies this as a macrosystemic element, and points out that cultures and subcultures differ from other macrosystem elements by a further distinguishing feature: "they constitute the highest order, overarching macrostructure that encompass all other, intracultural forms" (1989, 229). Berger (1991) discusses the importance of teachers and parents understanding culture in her book, Parents as Partners in Education:

The term culture is most easily understood when viewed as a way of life. Other descriptive terms are "blueprint for living" and "guidelines for life." Culture includes the way in which life is perceived. It is the knowing, perceiving and understanding one brings to a situation . . . viewing a situation or communication with varying interpretations (101)

Culture-specific expectations for children, as well as for the nature and functions of program settings, seem to correlate to level of continuity experienced by children. Lightfoot (1978) states that discontinuities between families and schools are a function of differing cultural histories and purposes, as well as of variation in structural properties over the two settings. Program staff may assume that all children have been similarly socialized before entry in such values as time orientation, perseverance, and tolerance for delayed versus immediate gratification. Differences in such values, however, are

likely over (and probably within) culture groups, and have extreme relevance to the effectiveness of both communication methods and communicative content. In fact, it appears that expectations for children's behaviors and for teacher-parent partnerships may differ more as a result of ethnicity than of social class (Baratz & Baratz; 1970; Fillmore, 1988; Getzels, 1974; Laosa, 1982; Ramirez & Castaneda; 1974; Tharp, 1982; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Winetsky, 1978).

Many studies have linked educational achievement more to family characteristics than to the single dimension of socioeconomic status. Watson, Brown, and Swick (1983) summarized analyses of a study of achievement by stating that: "Regardless of the income and/or educational level of the home the supported and supportive home was effective in helping the child achieve" (178). Walberg (1984) reported that in 29 controlled studies, 91 percent of the children in programs benefitted when the learning environment in the home improved. Their conclusion also states that the home environment affected the outcome twice as much as did socioeconomic status. Clark (1983) analyzed data collected in a study on family life and school achievement to control for the effects of socioeconomic level. He concluded that family life-style is a stronger indicator of success than is income. Interpersonal communication, encouragement of academics, and frequent dialogues between parents and children were significant factors.

Winetsky (1978) examined the variables of social class, ethnicity and perceived role of the parents versus the teacher, and concluded that the data indicated that children whose families are either not middle class or not Anglo experienced discontinuity of behavioral expectations, regardless of the social class of their preschool teachers (reported in Powell, 1989, pp. 30-31). Moreover, studies supervised by Coleman in the 1960s (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966) and by Jencks in the 1970s (Jencks, Smith, Acland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, Heyns, & Michelson, 1972) reached the conclusion that family variables are more important in predicting academic performance than are school variables.

Programs that serve middle-class populations characterized by diversity of ethnic minorities offer unique opportunities for examining program-school congruence and linkages. As the country's population becomes increasingly diverse, the public is becoming increasingly aware of the need for interdependence or alternatively, mutual understanding, between individuals and institutions.

Preschool programs often serve as gates to the broader society for families in early developmental stages, whatever their ethnic or class background. Experiences as a family differ from those of the individual; the educational experience itself represents a new "culture," by Bronfenbrenner's definition. Experiences as a family in a geographically distant culture, in particular, can be

enhanced or made more stressful by the nature of interactions with teachers.

Family Typologies and the Relationship of Family Types to Decision-Making

Family Paradigmatic Theory

Family paradigms theory represents a view that families differ along discrete measures. Further, no one family type can be assumed the "best" style; rather, interpretation of circumstances that transcend such measures as parenting strategies or decision-making styles and include meaning-in-context are important characteristics of this non-positivistic approach to comparing families (Constantine, 1986; Imig & Phillips, 1989, 1990; Kantor & Lehr, 1975).

Based on Unified Family Process Theory (Constantine, 1986), family paradigms encompass four distinct interpretations of family systems, or **paradigms**, designated as closed, open, random, and synchronous. This theory is described in more detail in Table 2.1. Constantine (1991) illustrates applications of paradigmatic theory in the manner of a taxonomy. He explains that taxons allow comparisons of each family type based on maximally present characteristics that will be absent in pure forms of other types. As an exemplar, the nature of authority in each of the paradigms is explored. The closed family type would rely on a hierarchy of authority to pattern their process. Random, open and synchronous families would differ not only

by absence of such hierarchies, but also from each other. Random families would be characterized by acceptance of every member making independent decisions; open families would rely on negotiated consensus; and synchronous families would rely on tacit and implicit rules: mutual, unspoken consent. Thus, four taxonomic vectors are identified as hierarchy, representing the closed family archetype; divergence, representing the random family; reflexivity, the open family; and alignment, in synchronous families. Imig and Phillips (1989, 1990) caution, however, that there is great structural complexity both among and within families. It may not be possible to classify a given family (or group of families) as representing just one of the four family-type regimes named above. Rather, complex interactions between family members, types of decisions, available resources, and so on may determine the nature of any one behavior. Some of this variation is accounted for in family paradigms theory by target dimensions of control, affect, meaning, and content. Constantine (1986) equates content with knowledge. This family mechanism is the informational dimension that is relatively neutral and objective, and that seeks to define reality (Imig, 1991). Imig (1991) argues that for the modulating mechanism, reality, there are companion mechanisms of relativity (objective-subjective) and representativeness (literal-metaphorical). The functional goal here is knowledge. A distance regulation issue in attainment of knowledge is labeled as directed-

exploratory. To further illuminate family paradigmatic discretion, note that the synchronous family assumes that all members "just know" what reality is. The random family generates and accepts separate realities by intuition and individualized subjectivity. Closed families prefer a directed and structured process of precise reasoning and knowledge transmission, while open families rely on dialectical argument to weave consensus about the nature and content of knowledge (Constantine, 1986; Kantor & Lehr, 1975, both reported in Imig, 1991). The content dimension seems particularly relevant to educational program choices and satisfaction with these programs. In summary, the paradigm level classifications represent families' "world views," the regime level describes the structure of the family, and processes are analogous with strategies, including the ways that families use time, energy, space (similar to information), and the material world to achieve control, affect, meaning, and content.

Family paradigm theorists have become interested in examining the variety of **regime** combinations within samples, and in comparing **regime orientation** with such demographic variables as age, gender, SES, race, ethnicity, and so on. Further, Imig and Phillips (1990) state that, "from an ecological perspective, it would be important to know the 'degree of fit among individual temperament, community culture, and family functioning" (14). In studies designed to these ends, instruments have been developed and tested

that allow discrimination among family types, and conclusions that families indeed differ in significant ways (Imig, 1992; Imig & Phillips, 1989, 1990).

Bloom's Family Style Scales

An alternative method of typing families has been widely utilized by theorists as well as practitioners, as evidenced by its inclusion in myriad research reports, secondary and post-secondary textbooks, and family intervention manuals (Baumrind, 1967, 1968, 1971; Baumrind & Black, 1967; Hoffman, 1970; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Bloom's (1985) identification of variance in "family styles" emerged from a series of studies, examined through the use of factor and cluster analysis to investigate the underlying common structure of several family measures. This investigation resulted in a composite family inventory with high correlation to previous instruments.

Three "family style" scales evolved from Bloom's analyses: Authoritarian Family Style, Laissez-faire Family Style, and Democratic Family Style. (These classifications are otherwise labeled in some writings, with content validity, as a way of comparing and contrasting families. Alternative labels include Permissive to replace Laissez-faire, Autocratic to replace Authoritarian, and Authoritative to replace Democratic, for example.)

Paradigmatic theorists (see, especially, Constantine, Guise, & Okun, 1988) have found empirical support for a

correlation between the family styles described above and the parental regimes discussed earlier. Further, a fourth regime, based on the synchronous paradigm, emerged as theoretically significant when a cluster of questions tapping defining characteristics of this paradigm was noted to be absent from, and was subsequently added to Bloom's style scales (Imig & Phillips, 1992; Constantine, Guise, & Okun, 1988).

Family Decision-Making

Decision-making is an essential component of any functional group, including the family (Bubolz & Sontag, 1991; Constantine, 1986, 1989; Kantor & Lehr, 1975).

Decision-Making Theories. Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980), in their book, Family Decision-making, state that, "Given that decision-making is the means whereby desired outcomes are achieved, it therefore makes sense to try to understand it as fully as possible." Further, they state that "understanding and carrying out effective family decisioning . . . could result in enhanced societal solidarity" (282). The process of making a decision is influenced by such factors as tangible resources possessed by the decision-maker, intangible resources such as self-esteem, and household characteristics such as age, number of children, race, religion, and so on. These complex contextual factors make a difference in the stages through which one passes in arriving at a decision. When goals are

perceived as congruent, discovered consensus results.

Efforts to develop consensus may be the outcome of perceived incongruence of goals. An alternative outcome to incongruence may be conflict or rejection among family members (Scanzoni & Szinovacz, 1980).

Diesing (1962) has classified decisions into five types. Technical decisions have a single goal. The rationality of such decisions is judged on the basis of whether effective means for reaching them are chosen. Work simplification and efficiency, as well as routines, are identified as motives for technical decisions. Such convenience factors as distance from the program and transportation alternatives to a center can be regarded as technical decisions for the family considering program entry.

Economic decisions address the dilemma of multiple goals competing for limited resources. Economic decisions are not limited to money decisions; they are characterized instead by the decision-maker's need to measure the value of resources in relation to each other and to the various goals. The tuition costs of a center have obvious application as an economic (and convenience) factor for the decision to enroll.

Social decisions involve problems wherein value conflicts within or between roles exist. The goals lack specificity, unlike those of technical or economic decisions. Further, backgrounds, values and personalities

of family members are more likely to be taken into account. Image considerations seem representative of this class of decision, especially as the family compares the early childhood program arrangements that neighbors and significant others have made against their own alternatives.

Legal decisions apply norms and standards to practical situations. In the family, rules exemplify legal decisions. Because rules apply to more than the individual, the rules level of legal decisions (as with higher level ones) effects the entire group. Enrolling a child in a program could infringe upon time, mobility, and other types of resource distribution for family members. These would be examples of legal issues under this classification.

Political decisions are decisions about decisions. How decisions are made by the group or individual (procedural or structural decisions) often accompany other types of decisions. A family or an individual within the family may take a strong stance for pluralism versus ethnocentrism, or for authoritarian versus permissive experiences for others in the family, and may base many decisions rules on such underlying philosophical dimensions.

Deising's model (1962) further states that the decision situation can occur in a climate that is competitive, cooperative or neutral. The decision-maker has a particular approach to solving problems, for example, a task-oriented versus human-oriented style. Additionally, the action

dimension, or process of approach to the problem must be considered.

Diesing's model of decision-making illustrates the complexity of examinations of choice. The complexity of the choice itself must be viewed within the complexities of multiple actors, with multiple resources and multiple points of view. Program entry decisions seem likely to have a multiplicity of factors to consider, along continuums of situation, as well as of type, as described above.

The Family Paradigms Approach to Decision-Making.

Paradigms literature includes defining characteristics for decision-making as they relate to variances in paradigms. These are summarized, with further clarifications, in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Characteristics of Family Paradigms/
Parental Regimes

PARADIGM	ORGANIZATION	PRIORITIES	DECISION-MAKING
Closed	traditional hierarchy	stability, group security	formal, top-down authority-based
Random	innovative independence creative	change, individual novelty	informal, bottom-up, individual
Open	adaptive collaboration, flexible	adaptive, active process, efficacy	negotiated, consensual collective
Synchronous	harmonious alignment, efficient	harmony, effortlessness, identification	unnegotiated, independent, automatic

(Adapted from Constantine, Organization Development Journal, 1991)

Hence, Family Paradigmatic Theory proposes not only that families differ in type, but that decision-making

styles and strategies also differ. Moreover, decision-making can be expected to differ as a predictable function of parental regime.

The decision to enter a child in a particular educational program may be influenced by paradigmatic/regime identification, which includes a vision, or image, of who and what members of a family (and the family group) are and ought to be. Paradigms encompass the family's values about family life and the relationship of the family to its environment, hence the paradigmatic approach offers a means of differentiating families along dimensions that include image, philosophy, and convenience as integral parts of the decision-making processes.

Integrating the Literature

Many variables that differentiate among early childhood program models, family demographic features, and parental regime may interact in influencing parental choice of a particular early childhood education program for their child. To date, the literature has not looked at them in an integrated fashion. In examining the theory of parental regimes, distinct interpretations of family systems emerge. Closed, Random, Open, and Synchronous styles differ in both their definitions of and priorities for dimensional roles in parenting. Decision-making, inherent in choices that families make about early childhood educational experiences for their children, follows a different course for each of

the four regimes. A formal, authority-based decision characterizes the Closed regime. An informal decision based on individual needs characterizes the Random regime. A negotiated, consensual decision characterizes the Open regime. An independent, unnegotiated decision characterizes the Synchronous regime. Parents who differ in these stylistic ways may consider information gained from different sources and addressing different content to carry more weight. They may also be more or less likely to place high priority on convenience, image, or philosophy factors. Diesing's classification of decision types dovetails with the paradigmatic view: technical and economic decisions equate with convenience, which may be more important within certain regimes. Social decisions include features that equate with image considerations, and that may impact on philosophy decisions as well. Social considerations can be expected to vary across the parenting regimes. Legal decisions could be expected to vary across the regimes of parenting, as well, as they relate to the nature of hierarchy for prioritizing the needs of various members of the family, and could influence the relative importance of convenience, image, and philosophy. Political decisions are influenced by the nature of the process followed in making a choice, as discussed above in light of the Closed, Open, Random, and Synchronous family regimes.

The value of continuity versus discontinuity of educational experience with home experience may be perceived

differently by parents representing different regimes. For example, a family with a Synchronous world view could be expected to seek continuity, whereas the interest in change and individual novelty that differentiates the Random family may welcome diversity of experiences.

Family demographic variables have previously examined influences on convenience considerations, and theoretical influences on image considerations. Whether they correlate with philosophy decisions as well is a focus of the present research. An examination of the joint influences of early childhood education program convenience, image, and philosophy, and family demographics and regimes is the unique contribution of this research.

Summary

This research examined factors that parents identify as having influenced their program choice. Factors that influence parental choice of early childhood programs in which to enroll their children culminate in consumer decisions. As programs design or implement strategies that attract and inform parents, it seems important that attempts are made to identify, understand, and articulate belief and value stances as adjunct criteria to convenience factors. Moreover, it seems likely that parents would accept suggestions for enhancing and reinforcing program practices if congruence in beliefs were first addressed and if links

between beliefs and specific practices were clearly articulated.

The preceding review of the literature examined several factors that seem likely to influence or reflect parental choice of children's early educational experiences. Convenience, image, and philosophy differences across programs may influence program selection. Ways in which parents are representative of differing regimes and employ differing strategies in making decisions may inhibit or enhance goodness of fit with programs that represent differing philosophies and designs. A complex array of family variables may correlate with the relative benefits of continuity or congruence between the two settings. The following chapter describes the hypotheses that were addressed in the current study and the methods that were used in examining them.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods used in the research. The chapter includes the following sections: (a) Overall design of the Study; (b) Research Hypotheses; (c) Variables; (d) Sampling Procedures; (e) Measures; (f) Data Analysis; and (g) Methodological Limitations.

Overall Design of the Study

This correlational study was undertaken with a two-fold purpose in mind:

1. To determine the extent to which program factors related to convenience, image and philosophy influenced parental choice of a particular early childhood education program for their child.
2. To determine to what extent family factors related to demographics or parental regime influenced parental choice of an early childhood education program espousing a particular philosophy.

The units of analyses were: 1) criteria related to parental perception of convenience, image, and philosophy of the early childhood education program; 2) demographic

characteristics of families in the study; and 3) parenting style within the home as a function of regime identification. Self-report questionnaires were used to collect all information.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested:

H 1= In combination, convenience, image, philosophy, and family demographics will be significant descriptors of parental choice of early childhood education program.

H 2= There is no relationship between parental regime and early childhood education program selection by parents.

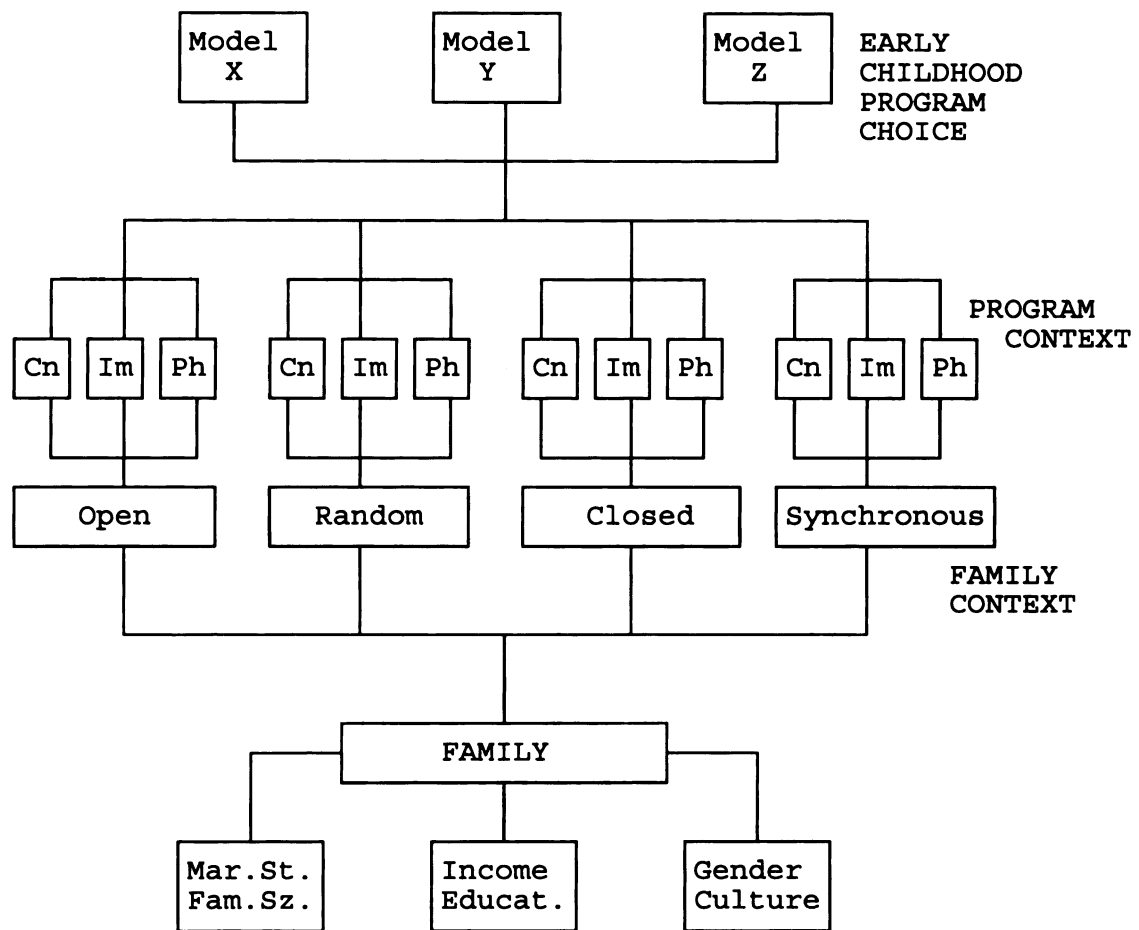
H 3= There is no relationship between parental regime identification and perceived goodness of fit for particular early childhood education program models.

Variables

The **dependent variable** in this study was parental selection of early childhood education programs.

The **independent variables** included: director report of program model; parental report of the influence of program convenience, program image, and program philosophy; demographic characteristics of parents; parental identification with particular Parental Regime; and perceived goodness of fit between parents and program.

Figure 3.1 is offered below to illustrate the complexity of possible paths that parents may follow in



Cn = Convenience
 Im = Image
 Ph = Philosophy

Open, Random, Closed, Synchronous = Parental Regimes

Mar.St. = Marital Status
 Fm.Sz. = Number of children in home
 Income = Household annual income
 Educat. = Level of education completed
 Culture = Cultural/racial identification
 Direction and extent of influences unspecified.

Figure 3.1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

selecting a particular model of early childhood program for their children.

Subjects

Data from four Early Childhood Education Program Directors, and 81 parents with children in these programs, were included in this study.

Programs/Directors. Four program directors were selected to represent three model types: Behavioral-Environmental, Maturational-Nativist, and Comprehensive-Interactional. Two programs were located in the city of Lansing, Michigan; another two were located in Haslett, Michigan, a nearby suburb.

Behavioral-Environmental Model. The director of the program selected to represent the Behavioral-Environmental model reported having held this position for ten years or more. Her preparation for the position included experiences with children's programs and a four-year college degree. She reported that the center, which she owned, provided services for a total of 85 children between the ages of 20 months and 12 years. The center was located in Lansing, Michigan. The building that housed it was near a light commercial business area, within four miles of the state capitol building, and heavy-manufacturing complexes. The director was a Black American.

Maturational-Nativist Model. The Maturational-Nativist program model was represented by two directors and two

programs. The first director reported having held this position for ten years or more. Her educational background included a four-year degree, plus 15 additional hours of college credit. The center that she represented provided care for a total of 72 children between the ages of two-and-one-half and six. This program was housed in a church, located on the outskirts of the downtown area of Haslett, Michigan, a middle-to-upper income suburb of Lansing. The director was a White American. The second representative of the Maturational-Nativist program model reported having held the director's position at this center for between three and five years. This director reported experiences with children's programs and a four-year degree as educational background for this job. The center that she directed provided services for 80 children between the ages of three and six years. The program was held in a church, located in a middle-income residential area of Lansing. This director was a White American.

Comprehensive-Interactional Model. The director who represented the Comprehensive-Interactional model had directed the program for 18 years. The center was located near the Haslett business district. Her educational background included experiences with children's programs, a four-year degree, and a master's degree. This center provided care for 160 children between six weeks of age and second grade. This director was a White American.

Parents. Eighty-one parents participated in the study. Seventy-eight parents were females; three were males. Seventy-eight percent reported being married, 11.1% were single, 8.6% were divorced, 1.2% were separated, and 1.2% lived with a partner (unmarried). Family income ranged from less than \$10,000 to over \$60,000 annually. Fifty-three percent report an income of over \$60,000 annually, 18.5% at between \$40,000 and \$60,000, 11.1% between \$25,000 and \$40,000, 3.7% between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 2.4% between \$10,000 and \$15,000, and 4.9% at less than \$10,000. Employment status was reported as dual income by 56.8% of parents, spouse-only employed by 14.8%, respondent-only employed by 24.7%, and no one in the family employed by 2.5%. Level of education attained ranged from a high school degree, reported by 6.2%, to less than two years of college, reported by 12.3%, to a two-year college degree, 4.9%, more than two years of college, 11.1%, a four-year degree, 24.7%, some college beyond a four-year degree, 16.0%, to a graduate degree, reported by 24.7% of respondents. Eighty percent of the parents were White Americans, 18.5% were Black Americans, and one person was an Hispanic American. Number of children living in the home were reported as one by 30.8% of the parents, two by 44.4%, 3 by 18.5%, and four or more by 6.2%. Respondents reported having lived in their communities for periods ranging from less than a year, 3.7%, to between one and three years, 11.1%, between three and ten years, 39.5%, to ten years or more, 45.7%.

Behavioral-Environmental Model Parents. Eighteen parents with children attending the Behavioral-Environmental model program were included in the study. Seventeen subjects were females; one was a male. Eight respondents reported that they were single parents, ten reported that they were raising their children with a spouse or partner. Eight were married; four were single; four were divorced. One reported being separated from a marital partner, and one additional respondent reported living with a partner (unmarried). Seven respondents from this program reported a family income in excess of \$60,000 per year. Three reported family income as less than \$10,000 per year. Five respondents reported family incomes in the \$25,000 to \$40,000 range, and two in the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range. Nine Behavioral-Environmental Model families reported dual incomes; two reported that no one was employed; seven respondents reported that theirs was the sole family income. The education levels of the Behavioral-Environmental Model parents varied from a high school education (two respondents) to graduate degrees (two respondents). An additional six respondents had four or more years of college education, while eight respondents reported some college education, but less than a four-year degree. Seven of the families represented in this sample had one child, six had two children, and five had three children. Fifteen of these respondents reported a Black American cultural-racial identity; the other three reported themselves to be White

American. Nine families had lived in the community for ten years or more; eight had lived there for between three and ten years. One respondent from this sample had lived in the community for less than one year.

Maturational-Nativist Model Parents. Thirty-one questionnaires were returned by parents representing the Maturational-Nativist model. Thirty subjects were females; one was a male. All respondents were married; all but one reported that a spouse or partner was helping them to raise their child or children. Fifteen of these families reported an annual income in excess of \$60,000; nine reported family income between \$40,000 and \$60,000; three reported income ranging from \$25,000 to \$40,000, and one reported a yearly family income between \$10,000 and \$15,000. Seventeen respondents indicated that only their spouse or partner was employed outside the home. Twelve reported that both they and their spouse were employed, and one reported being the only employed person in the family. Six people reported holding graduate degrees, while 15 others held at least a four-year degree. Five had two or more years of college education. Two respondents reported having completed high school only. Three had attended college for less than two years. Family size was reported as one child only by three respondents. Sixteen reported two children at home; eight reported three children, and four had four or more children at home. All respondents identified themselves as White Americans. Years lived in the community ranged from one to

three (five respondents) to ten or more (13 respondents). Thirteen respondents had lived in the community between three and ten years.

Comprehensive-Interactional Model Parents. Thirty-two questionnaires were returned by parents representing the Comprehensive-Interactional program model. All but one were females. Twenty-eight respondents in this sample reported that they were married and raising their children with a spouse. Three were divorced and raising their children alone, and one was single. One respondent reported sharing custody of a child. Twenty-one families reported an annual income of more than \$60,000. Four reported annual family income in the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range. Three reported annual income levels between \$15,000 and \$40,000. One respondent reported annual income at between \$10,000 and \$15,000, and one at under \$10,000 per year. Twenty-five of the Comprehensive-Interactional respondents reported that both they and their spouse were employed outside the home; four reported that only they were employed; three that only their spouse was. Twelve members of this group held graduate degrees. Twelve more had four or more years of college education. Three others reported two or more years of college. Four had attended college for less than two years. One respondent had completed high school only. Family size was reported as one child only by 15 respondents. Fourteen families had two children, and two families had three children. One respondent indicated that

children from the family lived in more than one home. Thirty-one respondents selected White American to describe their cultural-racial identification; one selected the Hispanic American descriptor. Fifteen respondents reported having lived in the community for more than ten years; 11 for between three and ten years. Four reported that they had lived in the community for between one and three years, and two had lived there for less than a year.

The reader is referred to Table 3.1 for a summary of the preceding information.

Recruitment of Subjects

The following section describes means by which early childhood programs representative of the three models, Behavioral-Environmental, Maturational-Nativist, and Comprehensive-Interactional, were selected, as well as ways in which parents who had chosen these programs for their children were recruited.

Programs/Directors. The directors of 45 early childhood education programs were contacted by mail and invited to participate in the study. These directors were randomly selected from a four-county list of licensed centers provided by the Office for Young Children, located in Lansing, Michigan. The Office for Young Children is responsible for keeping a list of all licensed early childhood centers in Ingham, Clinton, Eaton, and Shiawassee counties. Each director received a letter explaining the

Table 3.1. Parent/Family Characteristics

		Behavioral	Maturational	Comprehensive	Total
Sample Size		18	31	32	N=81
Marital Status	Single	8	0	1	9
	Married	4	31	28	63
	Divorced	4	0	3	7
	Separated	1	0	0	1
	Cohabiting	1	0	0	1
Annual Income	< \$10,000	3	0	1	4
	10-15,000	0	1	1	2
	15-25,000	0	0	3	3
	25-40,000	5	3	1	9
	40-60,000	2	9	4	15
	> 60,000	7	15	21	43
Employed	Self/part.	9	12	25	46
	Self only	7	1	4	12
	Part. only	0	17	3	20
	No one	2	0	0	2
College Educ.	High Sc.	2	2	1	5
	< 2 yrs.	2	4	4	10
	2 years	1	2	1	4
	> 2 yrs.	5	2	2	9
	4 years	2	12	6	20
	4 yrs. +	4	3	6	13
	Grad.deg.	2	6	12	20
Culture/Race	Wht.Am.	3	31	31	65
	Blk.Am.	15	0	0	15
	Hsp.Am.	0	0	1	1
Children in Home	1	7	3	15	25
	2	6	16	14	36
	3	5	8	2	15
	4/+	0	6	0	5
Years in Community	< 1	1	0	2	3
	1-3	0	5	4	9
	3-10	8	13	11	32
	10+	9	13	15	37

Note: Calculated totals for categories in some rows which do not sum N=81 are accounted for by respondents who declined to provide requested information.

study, an information sheet, and the Programming Preferences Check List (PPC). A stamped envelope addressed to the investigator was also included. Thirteen sets of forms were returned initially. Follow-up phone calls and a second mailing yielded another two forms, making the total number of forms returned 15. All of the Programming Preferences Check Lists were analyzed to determine which programs most closely related to each of the three models identified through the PPC. Three programs, one corresponding to each of the three program models, were chosen initially. The strength of association for each model varied: 18.7% for the Behavioral-Environmental model; 64.5% for the Maturational-Nativist model, and 81.2% for the Comprehensive-Interactional model. Because the Behavioral-Environmental model program yielded the least strong association, additional efforts were made to secure a stronger example of that model. These efforts were unsuccessful.

Parents. All four directors gave the investigator permission to distribute Parent Survey packets to all families of enrolled children. Materials were sent home with the children at the end of a day's session. At the outset of data collection, the investigator determined that it would be desirable to have 30 families represent each model in order to carry out statistical analyses at an optimal level of effectiveness. In all, 330 surveys were

distributed. Eighty-one were returned, yielding a 24.5% return rate.

The program designated as the Behavioral-Environmental model had a total enrollment of 50 children in the target age range; in all, over 100 packets were distributed in initial and follow-up attempts to elicit participation from any of the 85 families with children enrolled, regardless of age. A total of 18 survey sets were returned (21.2% return rate). Efforts to find a second program were not successful, meaning this return rate could not be improved.

Seventy-two survey sets were distributed at the first of two Maturation-Nativist model programs. Seventeen sets (23.6%) were returned. In an effort to increase the return rate to 30 for this model, another center director with the same strength of identification (64.5%) with the Maturation-Nativist model was contacted. She distributed packets to the 80 families enrolled in that program. A total return of 14 was obtained by the cutoff date (17.5% return rate), bringing the sample size to 31 for the Maturation-Nativist model.

Eighty-five surveys were distributed at the Comprehensive-Interactional model program. Thirty-two sets were returned, resulting in a 37.6% return rate.

Parents indicated agreement to participate in the research by returning the Parental Regime Assessment Scale, the Parent Questionnaire, and a signed Research Agreement form. Stamped, addressed envelopes were included so

questionnaires could be returned to the researcher. Two weeks following the initial distribution of forms, follow-up flyers were distributed to all parents. These flyers requested that parents complete and return the instruments, and informed them that additional copies had been made available at the center. No names appeared on the questionnaires at any time to ensure confidentiality. Each subject had an identification number assigned to him or her for purposes of the data analysis.

Measures

Programming Preference Check List

The Programming Preference Check List (PCC) (EPIE Institute, 1972) measures early childhood professionals' beliefs related to early childhood program philosophy. The instrument is divided into five sections. Each section focuses on one of the following philosophical questions:

1. Under what conditions can development be facilitated in desired directions?
2. What is the proper relationship between formal schooling and the child's life in the informal, naturalistic world?
3. What are appropriate adult roles?
4. What should be the main emphasis in schooling and child rearing?
5. What are the goals of early childhood schooling?
 - a) general

- b) intermediate
- c) specific

Statements adapted from program models which best exemplify practical applications of three model early childhood programs (behavioral-environmental, maturational-nativist, comprehensive-interactional) are arranged in three columns (X, Y, and Z). Respondents are asked to read through all the statements first to get an overview of the trends in each column. Next, they are directed to go back and check the statements with which they agree.

The PPC is scored by tallying the professional's choices and determining how many statements relate to each program model. It is common for people's responses to represent a mix of model types (EPIE Report, #42). However, the greater number of responses assigned to any one model the stronger the association between that philosophy and the professional's philosophy. These results are generally reported in percentages of total responses made. Thus, a respondent who had 80% of his or her responses fall into the X column would be more strongly associated with the behavioral-environmental model than would a person who assigned 20% of his or her responses to the X column.

As of this time there are no reported reliability measures for this instrument. The PPC has been reviewed for content validity and matches current interpretations of the models described. The reader is referred to Appendix D for a copy of the PPC and the tally sheet used for scoring it.

Parent Questionnaire

The Parent Questionnaire (PQ) was designed to collect data relevant to both family demographics and program features influencing the parent's selection of a particular early childhood program for their child. It is a criterion-referenced instrument, assessed for content validity through a preliminary administration to the four program directors who participated in the study prior to administration to parents. Directors were asked to indicate whether they believed that the items reflected aspects of parental program choice. In addition, they were asked whether parents with whom they've had experience: 1) would find the items on the questionnaire understandable, and 2) would understand the directions for completing the questionnaire. Corrections were made in accordance with their feedback.

In keeping with Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context Model, the Parent Questionnaire is designed to collect information to compare where and when parents learn about the programs they select (e.g., information obtained through conversations with teachers or director, recommendations from other parents, parent's observations of the program, or program literature). This information was not statistically analyzed for the present study.

Respondents use the Parent Questionnaire to report the reasons why they chose particular early childhood programs in which to enroll their children. Items are designed to measure factors relating to early childhood program

convenience, image, and philosophy. Convenience factors include program location, program hours, and program cost. Image factors include whether neighbors, friends, and relatives had previously selected the program for their own children, or had recommended the program to the respondent. Philosophy factors include items related to how much the program philosophy appealed to the parent or was similar to the parent's educational philosophy. A Likert Scale is included on which respondents are asked to indicate how important the program's philosophy was to their selection of the program. A second Likert Scale requires respondents to indicate how satisfied they were with their program choice.

The Parent Questionnaire is also designed to collect demographic data such as employment outside the home, marital status, prior program enrollment, family size, family income, cultural-racial identity and country of origin, level of education, and time in community. These data can be treated as additional factors and covariates in statistical analysis.

Additionally, the PQ is used to collect some qualitative data. Open-ended questions request parents to describe their perception of the program's philosophy and to describe their own educational philosophy. Spaces labeled "other" after some categories of checked items allow for respondents to provide additional comments.

The same parent who selected the early childhood program was asked to complete the Parent Questionnaire.

Initially, scoring the Parent Questionnaire is accomplished by determining frequencies of the quantitative data and preparing Cross Tabs to derive the percentage of respondents who select each item. Likert Scale responses are scored from 1 to 10, 1 being lowest and 10 being highest. Qualitative data is examined for further understanding. It was not analyzed statistically in this study. The reader is referred to Appendix E for a copy of the Parent Questionnaire.

Parental Regime Assessment Scale

The Parental Regime Assessment Scale (PRAS) (Imig & Phillips 1992) purports to measure family regime. The PRAS allows self-report of both perceived **current** parenting (C), and imaged, **ideal** parenting (I), for the purpose of typing families as representative of Closed, Open, Random, or Synchronous Regimes, or combinations thereof. Parents are directed to choose one of four statements as characteristic of both their **current** parenting practices and their **ideal** for parenting practices from ten groups of statements. Each of the four statements in a group, designated as A, B, C, or D, represents one of four Parental Regimes: 1) Closed, 2) Open, 3) Random, or 4) Synchronous. Additionally, responses are scored for relative importance placed on eight dimensions of parenting. These are designated as the Informational (Target) dimensions--Control, Affect, Meaning, and Content, and the Physical (Access) dimensions--Time,

Space/Information, Energy, and Material. The first four groups of statements are designed to measure relative value within Regime for the Informational dimensions above. Group five statements are designed to prioritize these four dimensions. The next four groups of statements are designed to measure relative value within Regime of the Physical dimensions above. Group ten statements purport to prioritize dimensions five through eight. Respondents are directed to assign a value of 10 to one statement, and values of between 0 and 9 to each other statement, in each of the ten groups. Scoring is accomplished by transforming raw scores into four sets of quartile scores. The eight most important dimensions to a respondent receive a value of one; eight others are rated as two; eight receive a three rating; and the least important four dimensions are given the value four. Thus, 32 scores are derived and divided into quartiles by ranking of reported importance.

One parent representing the family completed this instrument. This was the parent who took primary responsibility for selecting the early childhood education program for the family.

The Parental Regime Assessment Scale offered several advantages for the current study. First, it allows comparisons of mixtures of regimes, as well as mixtures along the access and target dimensions, thus suiting it well to the complexity issues inherent in ecological research. Second, data computation programs have been identified and

tested for examination under both nomothetic and idiographic methodology, thus allowing for broader interpretations of results. Quantitatively operationalizing Family Paradigmatic Theory is possible utilizing the established methodology termed MAUT (Edwards & Newman, 1982) for computation and comparison of results. Third, the paradigmatic perspective assumes that people, and therefore families, probably are different in very basic ways. Identification with a particular regime allows examination of some of these basic differences. Moreover, analyses of regime orientation against standard demographic variables such as SES, family size, race, ethnicity, and so on (Imig & Phillips, 1990), offers an opportunity to deposit unique "degree of fit" understanding into the ecological theory bank.

At this time there are no reported reliability measures for this instrument. The PRAS has been reviewed for content validity (Imig, 1994, unpublished data). The reader is referred to Appendix F for a copy of this instrument.

Data Analysis

This study was descriptive, comparative, and correlational in nature. Several analyses of the data were carried out. They are described below.

Univariate Analysis

Cross Tabulation Tables. Initially, cross tabulation tables were prepared to examine joint frequency

distributions in investigating sets of relationships. This method handles both nominal and ratio level factors and variables. This data was derived from the Parent Questionnaire.

Multivariate Analysis

Discriminate Analysis. Data collected from items on the Parent Questionnaire were analyzed using a process of Discriminant Analysis. Since there were multiple variables of interest in this descriptive study of both metric and nonmetric types, the most satisfactory discriminations could be determined in this way. Moreover, discriminant analysis is particularly well suited to examinations and comparisons of groups of known membership (Grosf & Sardy, 1985). This criterion was true of the parents who had selected specific early childhood education programs prior to participation in this study. According to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975), weighting coefficients can be interpreted through this method much as in multiple regression of factor analysis. The mathematical objective of discriminant analysis is to weight and linearly combine the discriminating variables so that the groups are forced to be as statistically distinct as possible. Further, discriminant analysis as a classification technique can come after initial computation. If a set of variables is found to provide satisfactory discrimination for cases within

known group memberships, a set of classification functions can be derived to permit the classification of new cases with unknown membership. A stepwise procedure can then be applied to remove variables selectively, as they are found to reduce discrimination when combined with other selected variables. Thus, several combinations of factors and covariates can be described. Ultimately, single factors and clusters of factors (functions) can be classified by the percentage of variance they account for, in determining program selection. Standard canonical discriminant function coefficients were calculated within the discriminant analysis procedure. The results obtained through this statistic are numerical values that indicate weaker strength of influence with smaller numbers, and greater strength of influences as numbers grow larger. For the purpose of this study, factors analyzed were divided into quartiles for strength of degree of influence and reported as weak, moderate, strong, or very strong.

Multivariate Utility Technology. The Multivariate Utility Technology (MAUT) program was used to score data collected via the Parental Regime Assessment Scale (PRAS). Imig and Phillips (1992) explain that the MAUT is a method of evaluation that had seldom (if ever) been used by family researchers, prior to their application of it. It has been used, however, by a variety of professionals in the fields of environmental design, criminal justice, and others. Data generated by respondents can be managed for both nomothetic

and idiographic purposes. Initially, The MAUT was used to manipulate the data to transform Raw Value Scores (RVSS) into Individual Coefficient Scores (ICSs). For each respondent, the individual RVSS for the four sets of attributes comprising the dimensional group are summed to derive a Total Raw Value Score (TRVS). Each individual RVS is divided by the TRVS for that dimensional group to calculate a coefficient (ICS). This procedure is repeated for all groups of attributes. The eight groups of coefficients are then interpreted to represent the comparative magnitudes of the perceptions held by a family member regarding the dimensional use of regimes.

Nomothetic Analysis was accomplished by calculating mean or quartile scores and then categorizing individual scores as 1 or 0 depending on whether the individual score is above or below the mean or quartile score. Given that there are four regimes per single access or target dimension, the maximum number of possible regime patterns per single dimension is 16. The formula below demonstrates computation for the maximum number of patterns for a set of four variables when considering high or low groupings:

$$\text{Pattern numbers} = (1A \times 1) + (1B \times 2) = (1C \times 4) + (1D \times 8) = 16 \text{ (0-15)}$$

The preceding description/discussion is abstracted from Imig & Phillips, "The Measurement of Systemic Family Paradigms," a paper presented at National Council on Family Relations Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington (1990). The following

discussion of Idiographic Methodology comes from the same source.

Idiographic Analysis was accomplished by a data reduction technique that requires the multiplication of coefficients by coefficients. By multiplying the corresponding coefficients derived from group five with groups one through four, and group ten with groups six through nine, a multiple coefficient score is developed. The highest multiple coefficient scores represent perceptions of what the family is most like. Conversely, the lowest multiple coefficient scores represent perceptions of what the family is not like. Both high and low scores have theoretical and applied meaning for understanding the perceptions of parents, according to Imig and Phillips.

Methodological Limitations

The methodology employed in this study began with a random sampling technique to select centers representative of the three program models identified as Behavioral-Environmental, Maturational-Nativist, and Comprehensive-Interactional. This method did not reveal a program that was strongly characterized as Behavioral-Environmental. Several professionals in the field of early childhood education were contacted in efforts to locate a program with a stronger identification with this model. Six additional program names were garnered in this attempt. None were willing to participate in the study. Eventually a decision

was made to select a program with the strongest but still a relatively weak identification with the Behavioral-Environmental model. Hence, the ability to derive generalizations about this philosophical approach from the present data are limited. Moreover, the low return rate generated from this center further limits interpretation of results. It could be that other programs representing this model would differ in significant ways from this one.

A low return rate from the Maturation-Nativist model program that was initially selected led to a decision to include a second center representative of this model. Thus, results from two centers were combined in analyses of Maturation-Nativism. Differences beyond model identification (e.g., length of time director had held her position, or community where program was located) may have acted as confounding variables, limiting the generalizability of conclusions about characteristics of parental program selection and satisfaction.

Demographic data collected from the programs studied revealed significant differences across the groups, especially in cultural-racial makeup and marital status. The Behavioral-Environmental program was over-represented, and the other two models were underrepresented, by Black Americans (as compared with the general population). It was difficult to determine whether the first program model had more appeal for this cultural-racial group, or whether other unexamined differences (e.g., director's cultural-racial

group membership) led to the skewed nature of these samples. Further examination of the Behavioral-Environmental sample revealed that over half of the respondents (10 of 18, or 56%) reported that they were not married, while all respondents in the Maturation-Nativist groups reported that they were married, as did 28 of 32 (87.5%) respondents representing the Comprehensive-Interactional model. This limited examination of marital status as it affected satisfaction or selection criteria within, as well as across, program models.

Only 3 of 81 respondents (one per model) identified themselves as males. This limited generalizations of all findings to females only.

All parent participants, regardless of program or model, were volunteers. Since cooperation in this research effort was not mandatory, selection bias was a further threat to internal validity.

A further limitation may have accrued from the use of the PRAS instrument, which seemed more appropriate for some subsamples of the research group than others. For example, difficulty in interpreting directions and/or the wording of some items was indicated by a few respondents in written comments. Results may have been biased in favor of subsamples whose educational or experiential backgrounds made the item statements or completion directions on the PRAS more understandable. This may, in turn, have effected response rates or altered the composition of the sample

groups who volunteered to complete, or declined to complete, this measure.

Moreover, the Parent Regime Assessment Scale was difficult to analyze using standard statistical techniques. Limitations were encountered in attempting to fully describe group tendencies. Therefore, it was not possible to enter this data into the discriminate analysis, which made it difficult to include the effects of family regime identification in explaining choice of a particular early childhood education program. Group tendencies were instead reported in percentages. Continuing development of procedures to analyze data obtained with this instrument are underway and may remedy this problem for future studies.

Summary

This chapter has included a discussion of the methods that were used to address hypotheses about variables that influence parental selection of particular early childhood education programs for their children. Variables that were operationalized in the research design were specified. Descriptions of methods for examining interactions between the dependent variable, parental choice of early childhood education program, and independent variables particular to convenience, image and philosophy considerations, family demographic features, and parental regime were included. Also included were descriptions of sampling procedures and characteristics of the directors and parents who

participated in the investigation. Instruments used to collect the data were described. Data analysis techniques employed in the study were also discussed. Limitations that were encountered throughout the research (e.g., problems in recruiting subjects and skewed samples in regards to certain demographic variables) were addressed. Chapter IV reports a complete analysis of the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The main objective of this research was to determine the extent to which program factors related to convenience, image, and philosophy, influenced parental choice of a particular early childhood education program for their child. A second objective was to determine to what extent family demographics and identification with parental regime influenced parental choice of an early childhood educational program espousing a particular philosophy. Chapter IV presents the results of the data analyses. First, results pertaining to convenience, image, philosophy, and family demographics from the Parent Questionnaire (PQ) are presented in answer to hypotheses one. Secondly, results from the PQ and the Parental Regime Assessment Scale (PRAS) instruments are reported in answer to hypotheses two and three. Statistical significance was set at the .01 level where applicable. Standardized canonical discriminant function correlations are reported for factors entered into the discriminant analysis. Statistical results are presented and interpreted for each hypothesis in order of their presentation in Chapter III.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: In combination, convenience, image, philosophy and family demographics will be significant descriptors of parental choice of early childhood education program.

Descriptive Statistics

Program Convenience, Image, and Philosophy

Convenience factors were defined as relating to program location, program hours, and program cost. Percentage scores for the whole sample (N = 81) are reported below.

Sixty-two percent of the sample selected program location as a factor in their decision to seek entry to a particular program. Thirty-eight and three-tenths percent did not choose this factor as important to their enrollment decision at all.

The convenience of program hours was selected as an important factor in the decision to enroll a child by slightly fewer than half of the total respondents (49.4%).

Reasonable cost of the program was deemed important by 43.2% of the sample. Cost was rejected as a reason for enrollment by 56.8% of the total number of respondents.

Program image as a factor in the decision to enroll a child in a particular early childhood education program was examined by asking respondents how influential the prior choices or recommendations of others were.

Parents were influenced by the fact that friends, neighbors or relatives had selected the same program, or by direct recommendations from others to select the program for their own child in 48.1% of the total cases.

Parental perception of program philosophy as a factor in the decision to enroll a child in a particular program was examined. Philosophy scores were derived from a question on the PQ that asked parents to:

Please indicate how important the philosophy, or kind of teaching, was to you, when you selected this program.

This question was accompanied by a scale on which parents were required to mark between 1 (no importance) and 10 (most important thing). Sixty-seven of the 80 parents (83.8%) who responded to this question marked the importance of philosophy at the 8, 9, or 10 level, indicating that philosophy was a very important factor in their choice of an early childhood education program for their child. Summaries of scores representing the influence of convenience, image, and philosophy, separated by program model, are reported in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Influence on Program Choice of Convenience, Image, and Philosophy

	Behavioral	Maturational	Comprehensive	Total
Sample Size	18	31	32	81
Convenience				
Location	11 (61%)	17 (55%)	22 (69%)	50 (62%)
Hours	11 (61%)	10 (32%)	19 (59%)	40 (49%)
Cost	7 (39%)	13 (42%)	15 (47%)	35 (43%)
Image				
Others chose	10 (56%)	16 (52%)	13 (41%)	39 (48%)
Others recm.	8 (44%)	20 (65%)	12 (38%)	40 (49%)
Philosophy (sc. 1-10)				
No response	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (1%)
2	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (1%)
5	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (2%)
6	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (2%)
7	0	3 (10%)	5 (16%)	8 (10%)
8	3 (17%)	10 (32%)	8 (25%)	21 (26%)
9	1 (6%)	9 (29%)	6 (19%)	16 (20%)
10	14 (78%)	7 (23%)	9 (28%)	30 (37%)

Convenience reported as important in decision to enroll.

Image reported as important in decision to enroll.

Philosophy reported in response to how important in decision to enroll on a scale of 1 to 10. For purposes of data analyses, scores 0-7 were clustered and given the value 0, 8s were valued 1, 9s = 2, 10s = 3.

In closer examination of convenience factors, location was more influential than were hours or cost for parents in the Maturational-Nativist (M-N) program and the Comprehensive-Interactional (C-I) program. Location and hours the program was offered were equally important to parents in the Behavioral-Environmental (B-E) program. Cost was the least influential convenience factor for B-E and C-I parents. Hours were least influential for M-N parents.

Image considerations held relatively more influence for Maturational-Nativist program parents than for the other two groups.

Philosophy held the most influence for parents in the Behavioral-Environmental group, and was the least influential to the Comprehensive-Interactional group.

Demographics

Demographic data was collected about the gender and cultural-racial identity of each parent, whether parents were raising their children alone, in a joint-custody arrangement, or with a partner, the income level of the family, the level of education of the respondent, and family size (number of children in the home). Three people in the sample were male (3.7%). Seventy-eight (96.3%) were female. No decisions or conclusions based on gender were possible, given this heavily skewed ratio.

Marked differences in cultural/racial makeup for the particular programs representing models in this study were revealed. Almost all of the respondents in the Comprehensive-Interactional and Maturation-Nativist model programs (98.4%) identified themselves as White American, while 15 of 18 (83%) of the Behavioral-Environmental model respondents identified themselves as Black American. Any conclusions or decisions based on cultural identity must be suspected to be an artifact of program selection.

Percentages of respondents who were raising their children with a partner versus alone differed over the three models of programs included in this study. Dual parenting was the most common type of parenting in each case: 28 of 32

parents (88%) in the Comprehensive-Interactional program; 30 parents (100% of those answering the question) in the Maturational-Nativist program; and 10 of 18 parents (56%) in the Behavioral-Environmental program. Overall, dual parenting was true of 85% of the respondents, leaving a sample size of 11 respondents who were raising children singly, and one in a joint custody arrangement.

The three models differed in proportion of respondents at the various income levels; for example 68% of the Comprehensive-Interactional, 54% of the Maturational-Nativist, and 41% of the Behavioral-Environmental respondents reported making over \$60,000 per year. The lowest-reported incomes were similarly skewed: 18% of the Behavioral-Environmental respondents reported making \$10,000 per year or less, while only one of 31 respondents in the Comprehensive-Interactional program sample, and none in the Maturational-Nativist sample, reported a figure this low. The actual numbers were quite small in all cases, limiting generalizability about low-income families.

Information about levels of education was collected for respondents. Every program was represented by the full range from a high school degree to a graduate degree as the top level attained.

Respondents representing the Maturational-Nativist model had larger families than did those in the other two models. Twelve of 31, or 39% had three or more children at home. Twenty-eight percent of Behavioral-Environmental

respondents reported family size this large. Only three of 32 (9%) Comprehensive-Interactional respondents reported this family size. Summaries of demographic data, separated by program model, are reported in Table 4.2.

Satisfaction with program choice was also examined. Parents were required to rate satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10. Only two parents selected a score of 5, and no one selected a score below that value. One parent selected a score of 6. Six parents (7%) selected a 7. Scores of 8, 9 or 10 were selected by 88% of the parents. These three number valuations all fell above the label "Very Satisfied" on the scale. Table 4.3 reports the score dispersion in more detail.

When considering only the highest scores (ten), parents representing the Behavioral-Environmental program were the most satisfied with their program choice. Parents with children in the Cognitive-Interactionist program were the least satisfied. However, when examining approximately the top quartile of scores (7, 8 and 9), high levels of satisfaction were revealed for all three programs: Behavioral-Environmental, 94%, Maturational-Nativist, 89%, and Cognitive-Interactional, 82%.

Discriminant Analysis Procedure

Examination of the joint effects of the influence of convenience, image, and philosophy and of selected demographic variables on the decision to seek enrollment for

Table 4.2 Parent/Family Characteristics

		Behavioral	Maturational	Comprehensive	Total
Sample Size		18	31	32	N=81
Marital Status	Single	8 (44%)	0	1 (3%)	9 (11%)
	Married	4 (22%)	31 (100%)	28 (88%)	63 (78%)
	Divorced	4 (22%)	0	3 (9%)	7 (9%)
	Separated	1 (6%)	0	0	1 (1%)
	Cohabiting	1 (6%)	0	0	1 (1%)
Annual Income	< \$10,000	3 (17%)	0	1 (3%)	4 (5%)
	10-15,000	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (2%)
	15-25,000	0	0	3 (9%)	3 (4%)
	25-40,000	5 (28%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	9 (11%)
	40-60,000	2 (11%)	9 (29%)	4 (13%)	15 (19%)
	> 60,000	7 (39%)	15 (48%)	21 (66%)	43 (53%)
Employed	self/part.	9 (50%)	12 (39%)	25 (78%)	46 (57%)
	self only	7 (39%)	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	12 (15%)
	part. only	0	17 (55%)	3 (9%)	20 (25%)
	no one	2 (11%)	0	0	2 (2%)
College Educ.	High Sc.	2 (11%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	5 (6%)
	< 2 years	2 (11%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	10 (12%)
	2 years	1 (6%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	4 (5%)
	> 2 years	5 (28%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	9 (11%)
	4 years	2 (11%)	12 (39%)	6 (19%)	20 (25%)
	4 years +	4 (22%)	3 (10%)	6 (19%)	13 (16%)
	Grad.deg.	2 (11%)	6 (19%)	12 (38%)	20 (25%)
Culture/Race	Wht. Am.	3 (17%)	31 (100%)	31 (97%)	65 (80%)
	Blk. Am.	15 (83%)	0	0	15 (19%)
	Hsp. Am.	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Children in Home	1	7 (39%)	3 (10%)	15 (47%)	25 (31%)
	2	6 (33%)	16 (52%)	14 (44%)	36 (44%)
	3	5 (28%)	8 (26%)	2 (6%)	15 (19%)
	4/+	0	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	5 (6%)
Years in Community	< 1	1 (6%)	0	2 (6%)	3 (4%)
	1-3	0	5 (16%)	4 (13%)	9 (11%)
	3-10	8 (44%)	13 (42%)	11 (34%)	32 (40%)
	10 +	9 (50%)	13 (42%)	15 (47%)	37 (46%)

Note: Calculated totals for categories in some rows which do not sum N=81 are accounted for by respondents who declined to provide requested information.

Table 4.3. Reported Satisfaction with Program Choice

	Behavioral N = 18	Maturational N = 30	Comprehensive N = 32	Total N = 80
Score:				
5	1 (6%)	1 (3%)	0	2 (2%)
6	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (1%)
7	0	1 (3%)	5 (16%)	6 (7%)
8	7 (39%)	6 (19%)	8 (25%)	21 (26%)
9	2 (11%)	11 (35%)	13 (41%)	26 (32%)
10	8 (44%)	11 (35%)	5 (16%)	24 (30%)

All percentage totals do not equal 100% due to rounding error.
One Maturational respondent declined to complete this scale.

a child in a particular program was then undertaken. Demographic variables included family income, respondent's level of education, whether the respondent was raising the child alone, in joint custody, or with a partner, and family size (number of children in the home). Scores for satisfaction with program choice were entered as well. In order to enhance comparability, raw scores for separate items used to measure convenience and image were combined to derive overall scores for each of these variables.

All factors listed passed tolerance tests for inclusion in discriminant analysis at the .001 level. Other factors and variables reported above were found to lack explanatory power for group membership. Eight cases of the original sample size of 81 parents had at least one missing discriminating variable. The sample size for this procedure fell to 73. The Behavioral-Environmental (B-E) sample size was 17, Maturation-Nativist (M-N) sample size was 26, and Comprehensive-Interactional (C-I) sample size was 30 for the discriminant analysis. These figures represent 94% of the original sample for the B-E and C-I groups, and 84% for the M-N group.

As a measure of dispersion of scores for each of the three samples and for the entire sample, mean and standard deviation for each of the variables entered into the discriminant analysis are reported in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Means and Standard Deviations, Discriminant Analysis Factors

Behavioral-Environmental Model N = 17								
Variable	Con.	Img.	Phl.	Inc.	Edc.	Prt.	FSz.	Sat.
Mean	1.59	1.00	3.59	4.41	5.35	2.18	1.88	8.82
St. Dev.	1.12	.87	.80	1.84	1.93	1.01	.86	1.38
Maturational-Nativist Model N = 26								
Variable	Con.	Img.	Phl.	Inc.	Edc.	Prt.	FSz.	Sat.
Mean	1.27	1.19	2.65	5.30	5.85	3.00	2.42	8.88
St. Dev.	1.08	.69	1.06	.98	1.87	.00	.90	1.14
Cognitive-Interactional Model N = 30								
Variable	Con.	Img.	Phl.	Inc.	Edc.	Prt.	FSz.	Sat.
Mean	1.67	.77	2.53	5.23	6.33	2.77	1.73	8.43
St. Dev.	1.09	.82	1.19	1.41	1.86	.63	.87	1.04
Entire Sample N = 73								
Variable	Con.	Img.	Phl.	Inc.	Edc.	Prt.	FSz.	Sat.
Mean	1.51	.97	2.82	5.07	5.93	2.71	2.01	8.68
St. Dev.	1.09	.80	1.13	1.42	1.89	.70	.92	1.16

Con. = Convenience

Img. = Image

Phl. = Philosophy

Inc. = Annual Family Income

Edc. = Respondent's Level of Education, post high-school

Prt. = Single, Joint, Dual Parenting

FSz. = Number of children in the home

Sat. = Satisfaction with Program Choice on scale of 1 - 10

Next, a pooled within-groups correlation matrix was prepared to examine relationships between pairs of variables selected to enter in the discriminant analysis. Table 4.5 reports the results.

Table 4.5. Pooled Within Group Correlation Matrix

	Con.	Img.	Phl.	Inc.	Edc.	Prt.	FSz.	Sat.
Con.	1.000							
Img.	.022*	1.000						
Phl.	-.001	-.077*	1.000					
Inc.	-.009	.289*	-.175*	1.000				
Edc.	-.084*	-.105*	-.137*	2.65*	1.000			
Prt.	-.085*	.097*	-.128*	.708*	.316*	1.000		
FSz.	.141*	.166*	.156*	-.043*	-.086*	.038*	1.000	
Sat.	.055*	.009	.148*	.116*	-.090*	.167*	.033*	1.000

* = significant at .01.

Three pairs of factors showed statistically insignificant correlational effects. These were convenience and philosophy (-.001), convenience and income (.009), and image and satisfaction (.009). A few other pairs were also relatively weakly correlated (for example, image and convenience, .022; family size and income, -.043; family size and satisfaction with program, .033; and family size and single versus dual status of parenting, .038). Although they were statistically significant, less relationship was found than with pairs of variables such as those discussed below.

The highest correlation between covariates (.708) was revealed for joint interactions between family income and status of dual versus single parenting. As income fell, so did the probability of raising a child singly. A .316 correlation between level of education and parenting status was the next highest. Respondents who reported higher levels of education were more likely to be raising a child with a partner. Income showed a positive correlation with the influence of image on the enrollment decision at .289. Image was more influential for parents with higher levels of family income.

Also note that philosophy was more highly correlated with satisfaction with program choice than were convenience or image. Univariate F-ratio and level of significance for each of the eight discriminating factors are reported in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Univariate F-ratio Statistics from the Discriminant Analysis for Eight Factors

N = 73

Variable	F-ratio	Significance
Convenience	.9790	.3808
Image	2.0482	.1366
Philosophy	5.8206	.0046*
Income	2.4975	.0896
Education	1.5139	.2272
Single/Partner	8.9541	.0003*
Family Size	4.5446	.0139
Satisfaction	1.2084	.3048

* = Significant at .01

According to this procedure, raising a child as a single parent versus with a partner was the most influential factor in describing early childhood education program choice, followed by program philosophy. Family size was also a highly significant factor in describing group membership. Convenience had the lowest explanatory power for describing group (early childhood education program) membership. Satisfaction and level of education also had relatively low explanatory power for describing group membership (program selection). These values represent comparisons for each variable against Function group 1, explained below.

Standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients were computed to examine the relative influence of the variables and factors entered into the discriminant analysis. This procedure determined two clusters of factors (termed functions collectively), which together accounted for 100% of group membership. Function 1 had greater

discriminating power than did Function 2. Function 1 contained program philosophy, level of annual family income, and single versus dual parenting, which were found to explain 65.74% of the variance in describing group membership. The remaining five variables (convenience, image, family size, level of education, and satisfaction with program choice) were clustered to represent 34.26% of the variance in describing group membership. The figures generated by this statistic indicated lesser influence with smaller number and greater influence as numbers grew larger.

Verbal Description of Strength: For the purposes of this study, the strength of the degree of standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients was categorized in Table 4.7 as weak, moderate, strong, or very strong. The eight scores were divided into quartiles (two assigned to each category).

Table 4.7. Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

N = 73

Factor or Variable	Function 1	Description of Strength	Function 2	Description of strength
Single/partner	.94044	Very Strong	-.02641	Weak
Philosophy	-.52012	Very Strong	.31549	Moderate
Family Size	.39043	Strong	-.25002	Moderate
Income	-.34593	Strong	.46435	Very Strong
Convenience	-.15371	Moderate	-.37777	Strong
Education	-.10040	Moderate	-.17027	Weak
Image	.03442	Weak	.47830	Very Strong
Satisfaction	-.02677	Weak	.35945	Strong

Function 1 group = Single/partner parenting, philosophy and income, accounting together for 65.74% of variance in explaining group membership.

Function 2 group = image, convenience, satisfaction with program choice, family size and level of education, accounting together for 34.26% of variance in explaining group membership.

Function groups are sometimes named for distinction. In this case, however, the Function groups are not easily named beyond identification of the specific variables and factors that they each contain. For example, each group contains factors that describe family demographics; e.g., income in Function 1 and family size in Function 2. Similarly, each contains factors that describe early childhood program models; e.g., philosophy, in Function 1, and image in Function 2. For this reason, they are discussed below as Function 1 and Function 2, with reference to the variables each contains, rather than by single labels that distinguish the groups.

As explained earlier, factors that were categorized as Function 1 had the greatest explanatory power for group (early childhood education program) membership. Together,

whether a parent had a partner for childrearing, philosophy of program, and family income accounted for 65.74% of the variance in group membership. The discriminant scores reported above are computed by multiplying each discriminating variable by its corresponding coefficient and adding together those products. The scores are calculated in such a way that they each have a mean of one and a standard deviation of one. Any single score therefore represents the number of standard deviations that score is away from the mean for all cases on the given discriminant function. Function 1 scores are arranged in order of decreasing importance. According to Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent (1975),

The standardized discriminant function coefficients are of great analytic importance in and of themselves. When the sign is ignored, each coefficient represents the relative contribution of its associated variable to that function. The sign merely denotes whether the variable is making a positive or negative contribution (443).

Function groups 1 and 2 can be seen as new variables, each of which is made up of a group of factors previously viewed as separate effects. In comparing this step to earlier steps in the discriminate analysis procedure, note that in the correlation matrix presented in Table 4.5, only the joint effects of any two variables at a time are illustrated. Table 4.6 examines the relative strength of any one variable, when examined against the first Function. The standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients shown in Table 4.7 reveal synergistic effects

of variables considered in combination. Hence, the combination of the variables, single-dual parenting, philosophy and income can be viewed somewhat like a single variable made up of more than one differentiating factor. The eight variables entered into this procedure can be compared against this new cluster, termed the function group. Additionally, each separate variable within the function group can again be viewed independently. The results generated by the standardized canonical discriminant function procedure revealed that whether parenting singly or with a partner was most predictive of choice for a particular early childhood education program for the parents who participated in this study. Philosophy was the second most powerful predictor of program choice. The negative direction of the philosophy score indicated that philosophy was relatively more influential when fewer parents were involved in childrearing (i.e., for parents who were raising their children alone). Conversely, those parents who shared childrearing with a partner were less likely to choose a program because of its philosophy. Family size was also a strong predictor of group membership. As families grew larger, the importance of the Function 1 variables represented by parenting status (single/partner), philosophy, and income grew smaller. Income, apart from its role in the function group, had a strong negative influence on program choice, indicating that **single** parents with relatively **low** incomes believed that philosophy

considerations were relatively **more** important than did parents who were sharing childrearing with a partner and had larger incomes. Convenience also became **less** influential with lower income or single parenting status, although it was only a moderate influence on program selection in any case.

Function 2 influences were comprised of image, convenience, satisfaction with program, family size, and level of education. Together, they accounted for 34.26% of variance in describing group membership. This cluster of factors had less power collectively in explaining group membership than did the Function 1 factors. Function 1 was almost twice as powerful at 65.74%.

Examining Function 2 coefficients reveals that the influence of image grew stronger as family income grew larger. Convenience was less important to families who were influenced by image. When image was very influential, philosophy was a moderate influence and convenience was the least influential of these three program variables.

Note that both function groups describe group membership regardless of the particular program model. These groups of variables can be said to describe enrollment patterns for the entire sample.

The first hypothesis, which posits that in combination, convenience, image, philosophy and family demographics will be significant descriptors of parental choice of early childhood education program, was supported.

Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between parental regime and early childhood education program selection by parents.

Information about parental regime identification was collected via the Parental Regime Assessment Scale (PRAS). This instrument collected data about both the respondent's perception of **current** parenting beliefs and practices and about their **ideal** beliefs and practices. A decision was made to report the parents' ideal scores. This was because the investigator assumed that parents were more influenced in their decision to enroll a child in a particular program by what program personnel said in written handbooks and in face-to-face discussions than by what personnel actually did in contacts with children. Directors and teachers seemed likely to report their ideals, rather than their current practices, when explaining early childhood education program philosophy to potential clients. The investigator assumed that parent's own ideals may be more significant to their program selection than were their actual practices. Attendance in an early childhood program is not mandated by law as are other levels of education. Parental expectation for some enhancement of the child's alternative ways of spending time was assumed. Enhanced experiences seemed more related to parental ideals than to parental practices.

The Multivariate Utility Technology (MAUT) program was used to score data collected on the PRAS. Initially, raw value scores (RVSs) that parents assigned to each of four

items grouped into ten statement categories were transformed into individual coefficient scores (ICSs). A total raw value score (TRVS) was then derived by summing the RVSs for the sets of attributes comprising each dimensional group for each respondent. Next, each individual RVS was divided by the TRVS for each dimensional group to calculate a coefficient. This procedure was repeated for all groups of attributes. The groups of coefficients were then interpreted to represent the comparative magnitude of the perceptions held by each parent regarding the dimensional use of regimes. Then, individual scores were categorized as 1 or 0 by comparing them against calculated mean quartile scores. Given that there are four regimes per single access or target dimension (four of each), the maximum number of possible regime patterns per single dimension was 16. In order to compare family regime identification across the three groups of parents representing the early childhood education program models, Behavioral-Environmental, Maturation-Nativist, and Comprehensive-Interactional, dimensions rated as 1 (most like the parent) using the methods described above were counted in each of the four parenting regimes: Open, Random, Closed, and Synchronous. Percentage of responses that fell in the top quartile (most like the parent) were then computed for each group. The eight dimensions measured in each of four parental regimes generate 32 different possible scores of 1. However, since

each individual's scores were divided into quartiles, eight scores of 1 per parent resulted.

Tables 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 show totals for PRAS selections scored as values of 1= very important to the respondent for the four regimes across the eight dimensions for parents in the three program models, Behavioral-Environmental, Maturational-Nativist, and Comprehensive-Interactional, respectively. Definitions of dimensions are offered below for ease in interpreting this data (see Constantine, 1986, for more comprehensive definitions):

Cntr = Control: how parents get children to achieve and accomplish.

Aff = Affect: the manner in which care and support are expressed.

Spc = Space: what children are taught about ideas and information.

Cnt = Content: teaching objective understanding of events.

Mtrl = Material: how to relate to possessions and belongings.

Mean = Meaning: the identity of family as taught to children.

Time = Time: what children are taught about the use of time.

Engy = Energy: the pace of interactions with children.

In the Behavioral-Environmental model group, the dimensions of Affect and Space/Information measured as the most important to parents. Meaning had the third highest value, followed by Energy. Affect is a measure of support, love, and care. Space is described in the regime literature (see Chapter II) as relating to ways in which and reasons for which information is shared within a family, as well as to uses and boundaries of physical space. Consideration and

Table 4.8. PRAS Scores, Behavioral-Environmental Model

N = 18

	DIMENSION									
	Cntr	Aff	Spc	Cnt	Mtrl	Mean	Time	Engy	Reg.	Totals
REGIME Open	4	16	13	6	3	6	3	3	= 54	(37.5%)
Random	1	13	15	1	0	5	2	5	= 42	(29.2%)
Closed	3	2	0	0	5	11	5	9	= 35	(24.3%)
Synch	0	0	2	1	0	3	2	5	= 13	(9.0%)
Dimens. Totals	8	31	30	8	8	25	12	22		
%	5.6%	21.5%	20.8%	5.6%	5.6%	17.4%	8.3%	15.3%		

NOTE: Scores of 1 (most like the parent), reported on above table, occurred 8 times per respondent. 8 other responses each received a value of 2, 3, and 4 (least like the parent). Percentages reported were calculated from a total possible 32 respondents x 8 dimensions, or 256 possible points per dimension. Column figures represent the percentage of the total 1s that **could have been selected** for each dimension of parenting, and was a measure of the importance of a dimension, without regard for regime. Regime totals give relative weighting to the kind of regime most like the respondents in a particular model of programming. Regime percentages were figured as the percentage that the regime total was of 256 possible points.

Table 4.9. PRAS Scores, Maturational-Nativist Model

N = 31

	DIMENSION									
	Cntr	Aff	Spc	Cnt	Mtrl	Mean	Time	Engy	Reg.	Totals
REGIME Open	8	28	23	5	0	7	13	15	= 99	(39.9%)
Random	5	27	25	4	0	4	7	12	= 84	(33.9%)
Closed	1	1	1	1	2	17	5	16	= 44	(17.7%)
Synch	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	16	= 21	(8.5%)
Dimens. Totals	14	56	51	13	2	28	25	59		
%	5.6%	22.6%	20.6%	5.2%	0.8%	11.3%	10.1%	23.8%		

Note: Scores of 1 (most like the parent), reported on above table, occurred 8 times per respondent. 8 other responses each received a value of 2, 3, and 4 (least like the parent). Percentages reported were calculated from a total possible 31 respondents x 8 dimensions, or 248 possible points per dimension. Column figures represent the percentage of the total 1s that **could have been selected** for each dimension of parenting, and was a measure of the importance of a dimension, without regard for regime. Regime totals give relative weighting to the kind of regime most like the respondents in a particular model of programing. Regime percentages were figured as the percentage that the regime total was of 248 possible points.

Table 4.10. PRAS Scores, Comprehensive-Interactional Model

N = 32

	DIMENSION									
	Cntr	Aff	Spc	Cnt	Mtrl	Mean	Time	Engy	Reg.	Totals
REGIME Open	12	31	27	13	2	8	13	9	= 115	(44.9%)
Random	3	31	27	8	1	9	3	14	= 96	(37.5%)
Closed	0	0	1	0	1	11	6	12	= 31	(12.1%)
Synch	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	8	= 14	(5.5%)
Dimens. Totals	16	62	55	22	4	30	24	43		
%	6.3%	24.2%	21.5%	8.6%	1.6%	11.7%	9.4%	16.8%		

NOTE: Scores of 1 (most like the parent), reported on above table, occurred 8 times per respondent. 8 other responses each received a value of 2, 3, and 4 (least like the parent). Percentages reported were calculated from a total possible 18 respondents x 8 dimensions, or 144 possible points per dimension. Column figures represent the percentage of the total 1s that **could have been selected** for each dimension of parenting, and was a measure of the importance of a dimension, without regard for regime. Regime totals give relative weighting to the kind of regime most like the respondents in a particular model of programing. Regime percentages were figured as the percentage that the regime total was of 144 possible points.

discussion of ideas are aspects of space/information. Energy is a measure of the direction and use of collective efforts and differs over regimes on the basis of steady/paced versus dynamic/enthusiastic versus relaxed versus adaptable/flexible for Closed, Random, Synchronous, and Open Regimes, in that order. The Random and Open Regimes were most like this group of parents as a whole (66.7%, combined).

Parents who enrolled their children in the Maturation-Nativist model programs in this study placed the highest values on the dimensions of Energy, Affect, and Space/Information. The Open and Random Regimes were most like this group of respondents (73.8%, combined regime scores). Parents who selected the Maturation-Nativist program model for their children showed less consistency in scores for both Regime identification and dimension values than did parents from the other two models.

Parents who chose to enroll their children in the Comprehensive-Interactional model program valued the dimensions of Affect and Space the most highly. The dimension of Energy was third most important. The respondents representing the Comprehensive-Interactional model were most like the Regimes labeled Open and Random (82.4%, combined) and least like the Synchronous and the Closed Regimes (17.6%, combined). There was a relative balance over regimes for the dimension energy, however.

Scores were calculated for the entire sample in the same way as for the individual program model groups in order to examine parental regime and dimension trends. These results are reported in Table 4.11.

The parents who participated in this study valued the dimensions of Affect and Space/Information most highly, followed by Meaning and Energy. Dimension valuing by group (program model) differed only slightly from whole group results. The order of value for the dimensions of Meaning and Energy were ranked third and fourth most important by the Behavioral-Environmental group. Meaning and Energy were valued equally by the group as a whole. They were reversed in rank (Energy third and Meaning fourth) for the Maturation-Nativist group and the Comprehensive-Interactional group. Parents were most like the Open Regime, and then the Random Regime. They were least like the Closed and the Synchronous Regimes. This relative ranking was true for each program sample, as well as for the sample as a whole.

These parents, as a whole, shared Open and Random Regime characteristics, regardless of other differences in groups; e.g., program selection, cultural/racial characteristics, levels of income, levels of education, and so on.

The null hypothesis was supported for relationship between parental regime and early childhood education program models.

Table 4.11. Total Group PRAS Scores

N = 81

	DIMENSION									
	Cntr	Aff	Spc	Cnt	Mtrl	Mean	Time	Engy	Reg.	Totals
REGIME Open	24	75	63	24	5	21	29	27	= 268	(41.4%)
Random	9	71	67	13	1	18	12	31	= 110	(34.3%)
Closed	4	3	2	1	8	39	16	37	= 222	(17.0%)
Synch	1	0	4	5	0	5	4	29	= 48	(7.4%)
Dimens. Totals	38	149	136	43	14	83	61	124		
%	7.6%	20.1%	19.4%	6.3%	4.9%	16.0%	9.7%	16.0%		

NOTE: Scores of 1 (most like the parent), reported on above table, occurred 8 times per respondent. 8 other responses each received a value of 2, 3, and 4 (least like the parent). Percentages reported were calculated from a total possible 81 respondents x 8 dimensions, or 648 possible points per dimension. Column figures represent the percentage of the total 1s that **could have been selected** for each dimension of parenting, and was a measure of the importance of a dimension, without regard for regime. Regime totals give relative weighting to the kind of regime most like the respondents in a particular model of programing. Regime percentages were figured as the percentage that the regime total was of 648 possible points.

Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between parental regime identification and perceived goodness of fit for particular program models.

Parents were quite satisfied with their program choices overall. Satisfaction is a measure of goodness of fit. Examining the highest possible rating, a score of 10, there was variation across models. Comprehensive-Interactional Model respondents selected a 10 only 16% of the time; Maturation-Nativist respondents selected a 10 in 37% of the cases; and Behavioral-Environmental respondents selected a rating of 10 in 44% of the cases. Discriminating to the highest rating of satisfaction, parents in the Comprehensive-Interactional Model were less than half as satisfied as those in the other two models. However, clustering scores of 8, 9, and 10 to examine satisfaction revealed a high level of satisfaction (88.8%) for most respondents, regardless of the program in which they had enrolled a child.

Since parents did not differ in significant ways across models in Parental Regime identification, any relationship to goodness of fit was a moot point. The null hypothesis was supported for this variable in the absence of clear evidence within this study that such a relationship existed.

Summary

A complex array of variables were found to interact in describing parental choice of early childhood education

program. Within the sample of parents who participated in this study, whether or not the partner has a partner in childrearing, program philosophy, and family income were particularly strong descriptors of program selection. As the status of single versus dual parenting and the level of family income varied, so did the importance placed on program philosophy. A discriminant analysis procedure revealed that convenience, image, philosophy, and family demographics, examined in concert, explained more about program selection decisions than examining any one of them separately would.

Some differences in demographic profile were significant. However, the complexity of interactions between these variables and the small and skewed samples for some variables made these difficult to assess or to generalize independently beyond the present samples. Examined in interaction with other variables of interest, however, family demographics, particularly single versus dual parenting, income level, and family size added to the descriptive power of this integrated framework.

Parental Regime identification and dimensional priorities within the regimes were quite similar across the groups of parents. Differences among families in this study that were revealed by this measure were quite small. No clear relationships between regime identification and program choice by parents with children in the separate models of programming were found.

Satisfaction with program choice was generally high, and did not differ significantly across program models or within the entire sample.

A summary of the hypotheses tested in this study and the outcome of the analytical decisions is presented below.

Summary of Hypotheses Tested and Decision Rule
for Research Questions

Hypotheses	Decisions
H 1= In combination, convenience, image philosophy and family demographics will be significant descriptors of parental choice of early childhood program	Supported
H 2= There is no relationship between parental regime and early childhood education program selection by parents.	Supported
H 7= There is no relationship between parental regime identification and perceived goodness of fit for particular early childhood education program models.	Supported

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION, PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND DIRECTIONS
FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Discussion

Theorists and researchers, including Bronfenbrenner, Evans, and Lazar, have questioned whether any one model of early childhood education is "best" in all settings and for all families. They assert that it is likely that different curriculum models suit different families in different contexts. In this study, several variables representing convenience, image, philosophy, and family demographics were seen to interact in complex ways to describe the decision that parents reached about program enrollment for their children.

The results represented a significant departure from conventional thinking about the importance of convenience issues to potential consumers of early childhood program services. Assumptions that parents are reluctant to pay higher costs to ensure perceived quality of experience for their children must be re-examined in light of these findings. Single parents, even those with relatively low incomes, reported the most interest in program philosophy.

These findings could be interpreted in a number of ways. It seems possible that single parents place a higher value on their children's out-of-home experiences with adults who can complement family values and goals than do parents who share child-rearing with a partner. In absence of a partner to share in the transmission of values and knowledge within the home, people outside the home may be sought to share in this process. Some parents seem to interpret philosophy as a primary indicator of program quality. They seem willing to inconvenience themselves to some extent in order to enhance confidence that they have found a quality program for their child.

Parents with children enrolled in the Behavioral-Environmental program were most frequently raising their children alone. This model is characterized by a relatively high value placed on the transmission of knowledge considered important to success in the societies of school and culture. Parents who lack a partner with whom to share socialization of the child may place higher value on placement in a early childhood education program that promises to share in this process.

Parents with children in the Maturation-Nativist program all reported sharing childrearing with a partner. All but one respondent were mothers. Few of them worked outside the home. This model prioritizes play and interactions with peers and adults, relatively free of pressure to achieve or to retain knowledge. The primary

role of the teacher is the provision of an enriched environment to explore. These parents may not perceive any need for help with childrearing.

The Comprehensive-Interactional model purports to seek a balance between direct instruction and child-initiated learning. Constructed knowledge on the child's part outweighs transmitted knowledge that comes from the teacher. The teacher, however, is seen as important in eliciting and clarifying understanding. Hence, this model can be viewed as a middle-point on a continuum that has the other two models on its ends. The parents who responded to this study who had children enrolled in the Comprehensive-Interactional program were the most likely to be employed outside of the home. This was true of both married/sharing childrearing and single/parenting alone respondents. Families in which parents are not as often available to the child may also seek out-of-home support for the socialization process, but in this case may interpret differently what that process should entail. The Comprehensive-Interactional parents in this study also had relatively high levels of education and may have perceived the goals of this program as more like their parenting goals.

The majority of the parents in this study were satisfied with their choice of a particular early childhood program. Parents seemed knowledgeable about programming features that distinguished their choice from other alternatives. This seems to confirm that different families

are best served by different program models. Since satisfaction was measured after parents had had experience with the program, it may also be possible that parents come to support the goals of a program as they learn more about them.

Alternatively, parents who lack options related to the resources of time and money may have greater motivation to adapt or transform their own beliefs and goals in order to perceive a comfortable fit with their program choice.

Another interesting finding involved linkages between seemingly disparate theories that had not previously been examined for congruency. According to Diesing, the location variable constitutes a technical decision, relating to time-saving. The location of the early childhood education program held only moderate importance to parents in this study, as did economic decisions related to financial resource allocation. Aspects of social decision-making, which involve conflicts between values and goals that impact on a choice among alternatives, were influential ones for these parents. According to Diesing, these decisions differ from technical and economic ones in that the number of alternatives available are difficult to quantify and specify. Social decisions deal not with a resource scarcity, as with time or money for the first two types, but rather with conflicts over cultural or societal role expectations and symbolic meanings. One interpretation of the current research findings in light of decision-making

theory is that congruence of goals and values between the parents, others in the parent's social network, and the educational program outweigh resource-allocation considerations.

Concepts explored in Family Paradigmatic theory dovetailed with these findings, particularly in consideration of priorities examined for the dimensions of parenting. Features of parenting regime that differentiated families with young children from one another seemed fewer than those that revealed similarities. The dimensions of Affect and Space/Information were highly valued. Parents valued the effects that they have, and that the early childhood educational experience complements, on their child's emotional well being. Further, examinations of data collected that was not included in the analyses of results confirmed that parents valued the provision of information, both for themselves and for their children.

Some information that was gathered was not included in the data analysis but is included in the discussions below to shed more light on the complexity of factors that may influence early childhood education program decisions. Data collected via the Parent Questionnaire (PQ) revealed that when prospective enrollees were given opportunities to read printed materials that described program features and, to a lesser extent, to talk with program staff or to observe program sessions, they were more likely to select that program as a good fit for their family. Bronfenbrenner

points out that experiences that allow for the formation and maintenance of transcontextual dyads may enhance the perception of goodness of fit. Teachers or directors and parents constitute such dyads within the mesosystem comprised of the early childhood education program and the home. Evidence indicates that program outreach efforts to inform parents of philosophical beliefs seem worthwhile if attracting and satisfying clientele is a program goal. It may be that written as well as face-to-face communication with program personnel begins shaping the philosophy of education that parents hold so that the feature of congruence between family and program becomes a somewhat cyclical issue.

Program hours relate to the paradigmatic dimension, Time. Program cost seems congruent with the Material dimension. These factors proved to be of little importance to the majority of parent respondents when measured on the Parenting Regime Assessment Scale or when measured on the Parent Questionnaire. Parents seemed willing to invest resources of time and material goods to ensure that programs were likely to provide what they perceived as quality experiences for their children. In summary, correlations between findings on the two different parent reporting instruments were revealed, although the Parent Questionnaire had the purpose of measuring program selection criteria while the Parent Regime Assessment Scale was employed as a measure of parenting style.

Personal Observations

The most difficult part of this study was locating an early childhood education program to represent the Behavioral-Environmental model described in the literature. Ultimately, the Behavioral-Environmental model was represented by a program with a relatively weak identification with the philosophical goals and program strategies described in the Planned Variation experiment that produced the instrument employed to measure this stance. Many professionals in the field of early childhood education representing state licensing agencies, school districts, county early childhood offices, and universities were contacted in efforts to locate a program that identified more strongly with this model. Each of these professionals expressed doubt that a program with a strong Behavioral-Environmental identification could be located, particularly one that met other study criteria, such as availability of more than one program so as to allow parental choice of enrollment and age range of children served. Moreover, several of those contacted pointed out that contemporary educational reform movements would likely cause center directors to hesitate to select self-identifying statements representative of this currently often criticized model. Nevertheless, a list of programs with potential for Behavioral-Environmental identification was compiled. Several of them were church-affiliated. None

were willing to participate. A decision was made to include the program with the strongest, albeit a relatively weak, Behavioral-Environmental identification, as measured by initial random administrations of the Programming Preferences Check List (PPC).

The PPC has been widely used for at least 15 years. Distinguishing features of the Maturation-Nativist and the Comprehensive-Interactional models seem to have stood the tests of time for discriminating between distinct early childhood education philosophies. A third model may have evolved over time that integrates features of the Behavioral-Environmental philosophy with characteristics previously unrecognized.

Philosophy was a stronger influence on program choice for the parents who represented the Behavioral-Environmental model than for the other two models in this study. Examinations of statements written in response to an open-ended question requiring that parents describe the philosophy of the program they had chosen revealed consistencies for the group labeled Behavioral-Environmental that distinguished them from parents representing the other two models. Many of these statements also differentiated this program from the Behavioral-Environmental type that the PPC describes.

A content examination of responses revealed some interesting similarities with descriptors selected by the program director on the PPC. For example, parents

representing the Behavioral-Environmental model used such words and phrases as "challenging"; "children will grow . . . academically"; and "(staff) . . . work hard to promote higher education." These comments were in keeping with director-selected descriptors. An emphasis placed on instruction, hierarchical learning episodes, and adult presentation of prepared objectives and materials was revealed in statements chosen by the director, and written by the parents.

Although this program had no affiliation with a church or formal religion as far as could be determined by data analysis or discussions with the program director, several parents cited the importance of religious attitudes or teachings on the part of program staff as influential in their decision to enroll a child. For example, one parent reported that "(the) . . . Program is truly a God fearing, spirit filled program. I am pleased when the teachers take time to talk/pray with my children and I don't have to de-program them when I get home." Another parent described this program as "A Christian environment." A third parent described program philosophy in this way: "To provide a positive learning environment conducive to growth & development of preschool students w/a Christian emphasis." Yet another parent explained her program choice by saying: "God blessed me with this child care facility." Eighty-four percent of the parents believed that their own philosophy was "very similar to the school's."

Although emphasis on academic rigor is an obvious component of the Behavioral-Environmental statements on the PPC, religious beliefs and teachings are not. It seems possible that the director who represented this model may have selected statements that described this philosophical difference, had they been among the options. Further research seems warranted into the evolving nature of a third program model, perhaps with an Academic-Religious philosophical stance.

Image factors were important when parents had a relatively high income level. Marketing services to such families could be enhanced by opportunities for networking with families who already have children in the program.

The groups of parents recruited to represent three models of early childhood education were significantly different from each other in cultural-racial makeup. Black Americans were overrepresented in the Behavioral-Environmental model group (15 of 18 respondents) and not represented at all in the other two models. It was difficult to determine whether the Behavioral-Environmental model had more appeal for Black Americans than did the other models, or whether some other confounding variables led to this skewed composition.

Based on the skewed nature of the samples, findings could not be generalized to the perceptions of fathers versus mothers. Only 3 of 81 respondents were fathers. This may indicate that mothers are more likely to be

involved in decisions about their young children's educational experiences than are fathers.

Attendance in an early childhood education program that parents perceive as sharing goals like their own, both for parenting and for educating their child, seems important. The means by which these ends are best met were perceived in different ways; the fact that these are worthy ends was not. The complex ecology of interactions across the mesosystem of families and early childhood education programs was underscored through analyses of the many factors that interacted in influencing program choice.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this study illustrated the importance that early childhood education programs should place on formulating and articulating statements of philosophy. Optimal means of conveying programmatic ideas should be examined more closely. Studies should also be designed to investigate whether differences in early childhood program philosophy warrant more current classifications, particularly in the case of the Behavioral-Environmental model.

Printed materials and, to a lesser extent, talks with program staff were reported to be effective methods for sharing goals of the program with the parent. This information was not included in the data analysis. However, as the nationwide movement toward schools of choice gains

momentum, these factors may be worthy of study at the early childhood level and at levels of education beyond early childhood as well.

Although personal and family characteristics (gender, cultural/racial identification, family size, income level, level of education, regime and dimension priorities, and so on) were difficult to consider in isolation, in keeping with ecological theory further research into their independent effects is warranted. Efforts to ensure more balanced distribution of demographic variables across program models are urged if replications of the present research are attempted.

The Parental Regime Assessment Scale (PRAS) provided a wealth of idiomatic data that was beyond the purview of this study to examine. Written comments made on this instrument by some of the 81 respondents who completed it indicated that further development in the form of statement rewording is warranted to enhance its usefulness for studying parents with young children. Further descriptive research should be carried out in other early childhood programs to more fully identify variables that relate to parental selection of programs across a range of parenting styles and regimes. This work was only the first step in identifying factors that may link family variables to program selection and to satisfaction with program fit. Further development of statistical methods for examining trends that characterize groups of PRAS respondents could enhance research efforts

that examine interactions between families and educational settings.

Summary

This study utilized Bronfenbrenner's human ecological model in attempting to elucidate the nature of interactions between early childhood educational settings and families. Bronfenbrenner warns that many studies of these system-effects suffer from limitations related to methods that fail to take into account complex ecological differences in the two settings. Further, he points out that outcomes have been studied far more than have settings and events that differ and correspond within families and programs. This study broke new conceptual grounds in presenting a framework for studying the synergistic effects of a complex array of factors. This represented a new approach to attempts to examine some aspects of development-in-context, in keeping with the principles of the ecology of human development expressed in Bronfenbrenner's theory. Mapping new directions for continued examination of this principle was its primary purpose.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PROGRAM DIRECTORS

APPENDIX A

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PROGRAM DIRECTORS

26 July, 1993

Dear Program Director,

I am planning a study that will examine some of the factors that parents consider when they are choosing a program in which to enroll their child/children. As a first step, I am conducting a pilot piece, with the goal of identifying basic differences in program philosophies.

I would greatly appreciate if you, as a Director, would complete the enclosed **PROGRAMMING PREFERENCE CHECKLIST** and return it to me in the enclosed, stamped envelope. I know that it is difficult to find time for paperwork beyond the piles with which you are already burdened in your job! Thank you very much, in advance for helping me with this research.

The checklist is kind of confusing (in my opinion), but is a widely used and already validated one, so I am using it anyway...

Some notes about the procedure for completing it follow:

1. Work **across** the page in choosing **one** response that most reflects your beliefs about early childhood programs (and in some cases, later educational experiences).
2. Please select **only one** answer to check in each cross-page section.
3. Sometimes, there is no descriptor in one or two of the columns. Simply indicate if one of the ones that **is** there reflects your beliefs, or leave it blank if this is not the case.
4. Sometimes, the descriptions are the same in two or all three columns. As above, check one if you believe it to be true.
5. Please try to make a selection in each category. However, you are free to leave no selection chosen, if you can't make sense of what is said, or don't believe any of the selections to be true.
6. **Please call me** if you would like to discuss any of the procedure.

Thanks again for helping me with this.
Sincerely,

Kit Payne 3470 Green Road St. Johns, MI 48879
Phone: 517 669-9197

YOU INDICATE YOUR VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY BY COMPLETING AND RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. ALL ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

24 August, 1993

Dear (Director),

Thanks very much for completing the Director survey form that I sent you. I really appreciate the time that it took. I am hoping that you will agree to help me out with this next step in my research. I've been trying to reach you by phone to ask, but assume that you've been on vacation.

The next step requires that I request assistance from parents, in the form of surveys again. All they would be asked to do is voluntarily complete forms, and return them to me. I have enclosed copies of everything that parents would receive.

If you agree to let me do this, I would like you to complete the **PARENT REGIME ASSESSMENT SCALE (PRAS)** in order to decide whether you think that the parents who have children in your program would find it understandable and "do-able".

When you are completing the **PRAS**, please answer the questions from the perspective of the "parenting role" inherent in preschool programming, rather than from your own perspective as a parent of an individual child. This will give me a chance to compare your answers on the last checklist I had you complete with the kind of information that this instrument measures.

The other Parent Questionnaire should be easier to complete (I think). It is not necessary that you actually complete it. Just look it over and let me know if you think parents would have any difficulty completing it.

Feel free to write any notes or comments right on the surveys.

If you agree to allow me to distribute these to parents, I will bring them to you, with stamped, addressed envelopes so that parents can return them to me. I am also willing to mail them directly to parents if you would like to provide me with a mailing list. You may, however, prefer that I distribute them through school mail, since this enhances confidentiality, and may result in a higher return rate, which would really help me. Since I need at least 30 returned sets, from parents with 2 to 6 year olds, I'm concerned about rate of return.

Call me if you have any questions or concerns, and again thanks for your help, if you decide to continue with this. (This is the **last** thing I would need you to do!).

Kit Payne

3470 Green Road, St. Johns, Michigan 48879

517 669-9197

APPENDIX B

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS

APPENDIX B

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS

INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Kit Payne. I am a student at Michigan State University, with an interest in families, and in ways that early childhood programs can best serve families. I am currently studying some of the factors that parents like about the programs that their children attend. Here are some questions that you may have about participating in this study. I hope that the answers are helpful, and would be glad to talk with you more about them, if you wish. You can call me at (517) 669-9197. Feel free to call collect if this is a long distance call from your home. My address is at the bottom of this page if you would like to write to me.

What is this study about?

I am interested in some of the factors that influence parents as they select early childhood programs in which to enroll their children. One of the questions that I would like to answer is whether most parents like the same kind of program, or whether certain programs are seen as better ones by some parents, while other programs are preferred by other parents. It seems likely that there is no one best kind of program for every parent. I would like you to help me decide if this is true.

How long will it take me to fill out these forms?

The two questionnaires, combined, should take about 20 or 30 minutes to complete. Some people will want to spend a longer time thinking about their answers than others. It is **not** important that you spend a long time on your answers. Often, your first thoughts are the most accurate ones. These are the only forms that you will be asked to complete.

Who will be looking at my questionnaires?

I am the only person who will read these forms. No one but me will know who filled out each form; I will have your name only so that I know to whom things should be mailed. Otherwise, your form will be identified only by a number.

Will I be able to read about the results?

If you would like to read a summary of this study when it is finished, I would be glad to send one to you. You will find a place to check whether you want the results mailed to you later on one of the questionnaires.

What if I decide that I don't want to finish this, after all?

It is entirely up to you whether you want to participate or not. No one but me will know whether you send these forms back. You can decide to stop or withdraw at any time, with no penalty of any kind to you or your child.

Kit Payne
3470 Green Road
St. Johns, Michigan 48879 Phone: 517 669-9197

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION SLIPS

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION SLIPS

RESEARCH CONDITIONS AND AGREEMENT

I have read the letter of explanation and had questions about this research answered. I understand that the researcher may ask to meet with me later, and that I may decline if I wish. I agree to complete the attached surveys, and understand that the results will be used in the study. I further agree that program records for which parents seeking future enrollment have given information in the past may be used.

I agree to these conditions, as long as all the information will be kept confidential and I will remain anonymous (not be mentioned by name in any of the reporting of the study). I have been assured that I can discontinue my involvement with the study at any time without any consequences to myself or my position. I agree that all information gathered in the study can be reported both verbally and in writing as long as all the above conditions are met.

Director's Signature _____

Witness's Signature _____

Date: _____

RESEARCH CONDITIONS AND AGREEMENT

I have read the INFORMATION SHEET and had questions (if any) about this research answered. I agree to complete the attached Questionnaires and understand that the results will be used in the study, and that other program records for which I provided information in the past may also be used, if necessary.

I agree to these conditions, as long as all the information will be kept confidential and I and all members of my family will remain anonymous (not be mentioned by name in any of the reporting of the study). I have been assured that I can discontinue my involvement with the study at any time without any consequences to myself or my child. I agree that all information gathered in the study can be reported both verbally and in writing as long as all the above conditions are met.

Parent's Signature _____

Witness's Signature _____

Date: _____

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning these Questionnaires. Please include this page, as well.

APPENDIX D

DIRECTOR/PROGRAM INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX D

DIRECTOR/PROGRAM INSTRUMENTS

Director Information Sheet

Please complete and return this page, along with the attached checklist. This information will remain confidential, and will be used only for research purposes. Neither your name nor your center's name will be printed in the study.

Date: _____

Your Name: _____

Center's Name: _____

1. I have been the Director at this center for approximately:

- _____ less than 1 year
- _____ one to two years
- _____ two to three years
- _____ three to five years
- _____ more than five, but fewer than ten years
- _____ ten years or more

2. My training or educational background for this job has included:

- _____ experiences with children's programs
- _____ high school courses
- _____ courses at a two year college
- _____ two year degree or CDA
- _____ some courses at a four year college
- _____ a four year degree
- _____ a Master's degree
- _____ some course work beyond a Master's degree
- _____ a Ph.D or Specialist's degree

3. My center provides care and/or educational programming for children between the ages of _____ and _____.

4. Our total enrollment of children numbers about: _____.

5. There are approximately _____ children enrolled who are between the ages of 2 and 6.

6. I would like to read a discussion of the results when the study is finished: yes _____ no _____

PROGRAMMING PREFERENCE CHECKLIST

1. Under what conditions can development be facilitated in desired directions?

X

Y

Z

- ☐ a Main way of shaping development and behavior in desired ways is to manipulate the reinforcement patterns of the environment.
- ☐ b One way to accomplish this is through carefully structured sequences of training or lessons in delimited areas. Skills and concepts properly trained in such situations can be applied by the learner successfully to other (more complex) situations.
- ☐ c Individual dimensions of development can be dealt with separately and are conceived of in terms of terminal behaviors.
- ☐ d A child can be taught practically anything as long as his instructor takes the time to build up the response patterns (from simple to complex) that are required.
- ☐ e Children to move up cumulative learning hierarchy of increasingly complex and higher order capabilities. Successful completion of each stage is prerequisite to moving to the next, although children may engage in learning activities at several stages simultaneously.

- ☐ The best setting for development is one free from emotional blocks and/or attempts to force training prematurely, plus the availability of models and resources to provide needed specific inputs.
- ☐ Reliance on spontaneous choices of activities by the child with a minimum of adult intervention.
- ☐ Dimensions of development are inseparable from one another in the child, but each can be planned for apart from the others, and experiences can be provided that are specific to each.
- ☐ Children to move up a developmental continuum in stages that succeed each other in regular order, but through which children may progress at different paces.
- ☐ Children to move up cumulative learning hierarchy of increasingly complex and higher order capabilities. Successful completion of each stage is prerequisite to moving to the next, although children may engage in learning activities at several stages simultaneously.
- ☐ Development of the cognitive structures which form the basis for all specific knowledge is acquired through "massive general experience" with phenomena of the physical and social world on the part of an active individual.
- ☐ Active guidance and stimulation by another can enhance the developmental process, but must be accompanied by equally strong individual initiative and the exercising of individual options.
- ☐ Individual dimensions of development can be studied and discussed in isolation, but they are so interrelated and interdependent in children that they cannot be successfully trained in isolation from one another.
- ☐ Any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development. . . as long as it is presented in the child's thought forms, or in terms of the child's current way of viewing things.
- ☐ Children to move up cumulative learning hierarchy of increasingly complex and higher order capabilities. Successful completion of each stage is prerequisite to moving to the next, although children may engage in learning activities at several stages simultaneously.

x	y	z
f		<input type="checkbox"/> Children to move up developmental continuum from sensory-motor to pre-operational to concrete operational to formal operational. Functioning accompanied by parallel development in representational ability, including language.
g	<input type="checkbox"/> Programmed instruction (small increments, maximizing chance of success, immediate feedback, branching, self-pacing) a good example of educational practice based on this view.	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervised free play, stress on creativity-activity.
h	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly structured schedule of daily activities. Children's time filled up with lesson presentations, work on programmed materials, etc. alternated with rest, recreation and refreshment periods.	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided discovery, individual inquiry projects cutting across several subject areas, "language-experience" approach to reading and writing, teaching mathematics and language in other content areas. Both individual and group work with much peer interaction and individual responsibility.
i	<input type="checkbox"/> Stress on verbal presentation by teacher accompanied by display or demonstration through pictures or manipulable materials. Worksheets and some manipulable materials for students to use in follow-up to lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Planned and orderly schedule for each day, but with a good deal of flexibility for taking into account children's interests, providing special opportunities and time to complete unfinished projects.
j	<input type="checkbox"/> Stress on verbal presentation by teacher accompanied by display or demonstration through pictures or manipulable materials. Worksheets and some manipulable materials for students to use in follow-up to lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Multimedia materials available for both teacher and student initiated activity. Manipulation and experimentation by students should precede verbalization of conclusions although language accompaniment to and guidance of activities is desirable.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wide variety of materials made available for children to use as means for gaining exposure to ingredients needed to nourish their development. Adults provide materials considered relevant for child's current stage of development.	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal relationships dealt with as integral part of the instructional program, virtually on same footing as the academic subject areas, in the course of helping children work out group work and conflict resolution.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual freedom and leeway as long as they do not interfere with the rights and welfare of others in the group. Opportunities for interpersonal contact, cooperation, group work always present.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal dimensions of development dealt with mostly in terms of need for classroom discipline and organization, and cooperation between teacher and children for instruction. Behavior problems in classroom n learning activities at several stages simultaneously.	

2. What is the proper relationship between formal schooling and the child's life in the informal, naturalistic world?

X

Y

Z

☐ Although children develop in many ways under the influence of forces in the general environment, development can be specifically enhanced through preplanned sequences of lessons, given on adult initiative and utilizing high selected and structured materials.

☐ The fullest and richest development results from providing children with a broad range of experiences and leeway to explore those experiences on their own initiative, coupled with encouragement, guidance, and even challenges from adults and peers. Formal training in specific areas is possible, but is usually done without acknowledging the possible concomitant learning or limitations on transfer to new situations.

☐ The fullest and richest development results from providing children with a broad range of experiences and leeway to explore those experiences on their own initiative, coupled with encouragement, guidance and even challenges from adults and peers. Formal training in specific areas is possible, but is usually done without acknowledging the possible concomitant learning or limitations on transfer to new situations.

☐ Children can and should be pushed to develop, particularly in areas where they are retarded or weak. This can be carried out through intensive training in specific areas of development (e.g., language, cognition, social and interpersonal behavior, etc.).

☐ Children cannot, and should not, be pushed to develop, since they are operating on their own genetically regulated time schedules. They do, however, need exposure to the experiences which will nourish their development and which are carefully matched to their current level. Optimum conditions when a child has been placed, through developmental screening, in a group of peers at same age/maturity level. . .where they stay until ready for next level.

☐ Children will develop a lot on their own initiative, but respond to (and need) inputs from others (adults, peers) which allow for individual choice. Optimum conditions for development when there is a balance between structured inputs and wider general experience.

☐ Specific educational objectives involving one or two dimensions of development can be successfully achieved in highly structured lesson/training situations, with a minimum of follow-up in naturalistic (everyday life) situations.

☐ Achievement of specific objectives in any dimension of development is best promoted by allowing children maximum choice in naturalistic situations, with input matched to interest and readiness levels.

☐ To achieve specific objectives in any dimension of development (or combination) there must be a continual movement back and forth from structured inputs (by adults and materials) and student-initiated activities in naturalistic situations.

3. What are appropriate adult roles?

X

- ☐ a Adults present lessons (either directly or through prepared materials) to children in order to move towards the specific objectives of a program, and allow children choice of play or other activities.
- ☐ b Adults provide reinforcement for correct responses on part of children through verbal praise and concrete rewards such as tokens. Emphasis on positive, rather than negative reinforcement, so if child is wrong, he may be guided to a correct response rather than being told flat out that he is wrong.
- ☐ c Teacher role mainly to tell, communicate, direct, correct and reinforce behavior in desired directions.
- ☐ d Teacher must know how to communicate knowledge to another, and so must be able to organize it for communication.
- ☐ e Parent involvement in specific training of children is not necessary and training best left to trained staff members.

Y

- ☐ After original screening to place children in groups at their present developmental level, adults provide children with exposure to a wide variety of experiences, and offer counsel, support, and guidance while children interact with these experiences. Some presentation of lessons.
- ☐ Adults provide interpersonal support for children's exploration and creativity, but minimize correcting children or telling them their responses are wrong. Most child responses are accepted as "right" for that child and additional experiences are planned to elicit more appropriate or more mature skills.
- ☐ Teacher role analogous to that of the farmer or gardener: to provide nurturing setting and proper "food" for growth and development.
- ☐ Teacher must know how to recognize possible points of stress and possible blocks to growth either to avoid or to remove them.
- ☐ Parents are involved in the development of their children, but group programs provide settings and resources which may not be available at home.

Z

- ☐ Adults prepare an environment for children which contains many interesting and challenging activities, many of which are designed to get children into interactions that will help them progress in specific developmental areas. Adults also make suggestions, raise questions, provide feedback, etc. to promote development.
- ☐ Adults provide interpersonal support for children's inquiry, which includes checking own answers and solutions to problems (i.e., against available data, with peers, with authoritative sources, etc.). Some direct feedback on appropriateness of responses also provided.
- ☐ Teacher role mainly to guide, stimulate, challenge, model, elicit relevant tasks, provide rich experiences--all flexible enough to allow for match between children's present stage of development and new challenge.
- ☐ Teacher must know how to arrange experiences through which children can come to develop ways of promoting their own development.
- ☐ Parent involvement in, and understanding of, instructional procedures is an important part of any early childhood program.

X

Y

Z

- ☐ Parents serve as aides or volunteers with routine management, or very specific teacher-directed tasks.
- ☐ Parents as students, so that their level of literacy may be raised.

☐ Parents as participants in classroom and/or after school training sessions for the purpose of increasing their understanding of child development and improving their child rearing practice.

☐ Parents, and other adults, as co-participants with teachers in the educational/instructional process, especially each in his area of expertise or high interest.

4. What should be the main emphasis in schooling and child rearing?

X

Y

Z

- ☐ Purpose of education is to bring children's behavior under the control of specified stimuli.

☐ Purpose of education is to provide a setting for the unfolding of individual children with a nurturing climate containing activities (including materials) suited to their levels of readiness.

☐ Purpose of education is to help children bring increasingly wider and more complex range of stimuli under their control.

- ☐ Emphasis in schooling on the "covering" of content, which consists largely of answers to questions that have already been worked out (and printed in textbooks, workbooks, and teacher manuals, etc.).

☐ Emphasis on exposure to proper materials and equipment, matching group placement and methods to "readiness" level of child. Keeping track of progress in terms of developmental norms.

☐ Emphasis in schooling on aiding each child to develop strategies for constructing his own cognitive map of the world and for transacting equivalencies with others (guidance in what operations to perform how to check own conclusions).

- ☐ Stress on bringing as many children up to grade level, or higher, in achievement and/or raising I.Q. scores.

☐ Aim to induce readiness for the next level or step and to keep each child as much as possible "on schedule."

☐ Stress on maximizing the developmental value of every situation for every child.

- ☐ Stress on teaching children as early as possible in order to overcome immaturities and facilitate the acquisition of needed knowledge and correct patterns of behavior.

☐ Child unfolds somewhat like flower, thus emphasis is on not interfering with the natural process of growth, while providing needed resources for growth.

☐ Emphasis on increasing the breadth of children's experiences within their present situations in order to enable them to reconstruct their cognitive maps.

- ☐ Move as quickly as possible from the concrete to the abstract (and verbal).

☐ Concrete experiences are of continuing importance throughout schooling.

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5. What are the general goals of early childhood schooling?

a) General

X	Y	Z
<input type="checkbox"/> a To teach young children academic and social skills which will allow them to compete effectively in the public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> To place children in comfortable classroom environments that are conducive to the development of their full potentials. To tailor the program to the needs of the children in each group.	<input type="checkbox"/> To enable each child in the initial years of schooling to build a positive image of himself as learner and give him opportunities to develop active, thinking, and creative ways of coping with the real problems of our culture.
<input type="checkbox"/> b To help disadvantaged children acquire the specific skills that will allow them to progress in school and to compete successfully with other children.	<input type="checkbox"/> To overcome the handicaps of disadvantaged children by learning what each child needs and devising programs which meet his special needs. To help children overcome handicaps which prevent their getting the most out of school.	<input type="checkbox"/> To lay the foundations for academic learning through student involvement in the real world, and to promote achievement in school activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> c To provide specific and intensive instruction in selected areas of deficit in development and learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> To promote continuous, sequential progress of children in learning and in becoming ready to move on to the next level of schooling--especially first grade.	<input type="checkbox"/> To stimulate in each child deep involvement and self-direction in learning. (Educational goals evolve continuously as a result of each child's progress.)
<input type="checkbox"/> d To teach for specific knowledge through verbal instruction and to help each child acquire a positive self-concept, increased motivation to learn, and increased ability to learn on his own and solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> To meet the needs of the children of poverty for attention and affection, open their minds to the world of knowledge, and set them on the road to successful lives.	<input type="checkbox"/> To develop in each child a strong sense of self that is integrated with social demands such that he becomes an effective, non-predatory person capable of making choices, acting autonomously, setting his own course for problem-solving.
<input type="checkbox"/> e To provide training in a cluster of academic skills that make up the social role of the student (e.g., waiting his turn, persistence at tasks, delay of gratification, following directions, understanding assignments).	<input type="checkbox"/> To promote readiness for participation in classroom programs (self-control, appropriate channeling of feelings, ability to follow directions, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/> To help each child become a self-directed learner with a positive self-image, increasing ego strength, enhanced intellectual functioning, inventiveness, and initiative.

b) Intermediate

X

- ☐ a Student should learn to crack the code in reading through sound/symbol associations, methods of word attack, and blending, to make positive and negative statements in language, to use polar opposites, relational concepts, and if-then deductions.

Y

- ☐ Teacher should develop student ability in oral expression, his application of language through creative experiences, proper attitudes and skills for good listening, his specific reading skills (right-left orientation, discrimination, and auditory and visual memory).

Z

- ☐ Teacher should promote students' development in language, reading and writing, and communication skills: in language as a tool for thought; in motoric, symbolic, and verbal representation abilities; in language to express and fulfill desires, and formulate questions and ideas, and exchange meanings with other.

b

- ☐ Student should learn to work and play independently, be at ease about being away from home, and be able to accept help and direction from adults, to live effectively with other children and to value his own rights and the rights of others. He should develop self-identity and a view of selves as having competence and worth. He should realize opportunities to strive and succeed--intellectually, physically and socially. He should sharpen and widen language skills in both listening and speaking, become curious: wondering and seeking answers to questions. Student should strengthen physical skills, using large and small muscles, growing in ability to express inner creative impulses; to turn aggression into hard work, to talk instead of hit, to understand the difference between feeling angry and acting, and to feel sympathy for the troubles of others.



- ☐ Student should learn to work and play independently, be at ease about being away from home, and be able to accept help and direction from adults, to live effectively with other children and to value his own rights and the rights of others. He should develop self-identity and a view of selves as having competence and worth. He should realize opportunities to strive and succeed--intellectually, physically and socially. He should sharpen and widen language skills in both listening and speaking, become curious: wondering and seeking answers to questions. Student should strengthen physical skills, using large and small muscles, growing in ability to express inner creative impulses; to turn aggression into hard work, to talk instead of hit, to understand the difference between feeling angry and acting, and to feel sympathy for the troubles of others.

X

- ☐ c Student should learn how to count to and from specific numbers and to follow directions, how to identify, understand, and use numerals and plus and minus signs and to express numbers in different ways. He should learn basic operations of addition and subtraction; how to solve story problems; and to work with unknowns in algebraic problems.

c) Specific

- ☐ a Student should develop ability to use affirmative and "not" statements in response to questions such as, "What is this?" "Tell me about this _____;" handle polar opposites: "If it is not _____, it must be _____;" use prepositions correctly in statements describing arrangement of objects (on, in, under, over, between, etc.); perform simple if/then deductions, and to use "not" and "or" in deductions, name basic colors plus black, white, and brown.

- ☐ b Student should develop ability to count out loud to 20 by one's and to 100 by ten's without help; to count objects correctly up to ten, recognize and name two vowels and at least 15 consonants; distinguish printed words from pictures, rhyme in some fashion to produce a word that rhymes with a given word; to tell if two words rhyme or not; to complete rhyming jingles and couplets.

Y

- ☐ Student should acquire conceptual skills, assigning of number values, and mastering of the vocabulary of mathematics. He should develop number concepts (number values and numerals), counting ability, and ability to measure. He should recognize geometric forms and the various coins and bills and their relative value.

- ☐ Teacher should provide children with enriching experiences that are real, not symbolic; help children form good habits in work and behavior; give training in following oral directions, allow for creative activities; provide listening formal learning; faster responsibility for taking on one's own projects and for working independently.

- ☐ Student should develop verbal communication: listening and talking, develop conceptual awareness of abstract terms (e.g., relational concepts); motor coordination skills; balance, skipping, jumping rope, etc.; visual-motor skills: cutting with scissors, copying geometric figures; visual perception skills; match colors, patterns, and words; visual memory skills; recall objects' sequences, and word forms; and develop orientation in space; body image, awareness of parts.

Z

- ☐ Student should understand differences in amounts and sizes of things in the physical world, establish a basic framework for orientation in space and time, develop a concept of number through the handling of sets of objects and the study of relationships, extend his understanding of numbers through carrying out measurement operations, learn to communicate through graphs, charts, and numerals.

- ☐ Student should develop facility with abstract symbols (numbers, letters) through familiarity with the physical and human environment, achieved by exposure to participatory experiences and active symbolic communication (verbal and non-verbal); increase his use of thinking processes by stimulation of grouping and the noticing of differences and similarities in objects, functions, personal roles, and personal feelings.

- ☐ Student should develop a repertoire of actions to perform on objects; an ability to predict regularity of cause and effect, and to figure out means towards ends; language to communicate precisely, knowledge of language conventions, and ability to see others' points of view; an ability to classify on similarities and differences; increased mobility of thought; ability to seriate by comparing differences among objects, in the structuring of space and time, in representation ability: symbols and signs.

**Tally Sheet Summarizing Responses to Questions on
Programming Preference**

1. Under what conditions can development be facilitated in desired directions?

	X	Y	Z
a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	<input type="checkbox"/>	---	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	---	---	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What is the proper relationship between formal schooling and the child's life in the informal, naturalistic world?

a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What are appropriate adult roles?

a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(continued)

4. What should be the main emphases in schooling and child rearing?

	X	Y	Z
a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	<input type="checkbox"/>	—	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. What are the goals of early childhood schooling?

a) General

a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Intermediate

a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	—	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c) Specific

a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Totals

—	—	—
X	Y	Z

APPENDIX E

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX E
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ID # _____

Instructions

In order to gather information about how parents make the decision to enroll their children in preschool programs, I would like you to complete this survey. If you would like to ask me any questions about it, or to help you as you complete it, please feel free to call me at 669-9197.

The following questions have no right or wrong answers. The answers that you provide will help to assess what factors parents consider to be important when they select a preschool program for their child. This information will not be seen as criticism of the program; rather, it will be used to make recommendations to other practitioners in the field about ways that they might design components of their programs.

I greatly appreciate your willingness to provide candid answers and opinions about your decision to choose this program. If you find that some of the statements that you are asked to answer do not have a response that is right for you, please select the one that is closest to the way you feel. Feel free to write in additional information after making a selection, if you wish.

Thank you.

Your ID#: _____
 Date: _____

Your Child's Birth Date: _____

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. The intent of this survey is to examine some of your reasons for selecting this particular program for your child.

Please check each item that accurately reflects your opinions or beliefs. Add additional explanations as necessary.

1. I chose to enroll my child in this program for the following reasons:

☐ I couldn't get him or her into my first-choice program.
☐ The location is convenient.
☐ The hours the program is offered suits my needs.
☐ The cost or fee schedule of the program seems reasonable.
☐ Neighbors, friends, relatives have children in the program.
☐ Others recommended it to me.
☐ I've had another child (other children) enrolled in the past.
☐ The philosophy and goals of the program appeal to me.
☐ The philosophy and goals of the program are similar to my own.
☐ Other: (please explain) _____

2. Please estimate the amount of time that you spent observing this program before seeking entry.

☐ Part of a session or less.
☐ All of one session.
☐ Parts or all of more than one session.
☐ No observation of program before seeking entry.

3. Please choose one or more of the following reasons for observing the program before seeking entry.

☐ Not applicable.
☐ There was an observation booth or room.
☐ I thought that it was a requirement of enrollment.
☐ Program personnel suggested that I do so.
☐ Program personnel arranged to meet me there to talk.
☐ I wanted to see what went on in the classrooms.
☐ I was able to see my child interacting with adults, other children, and/or toys and activities.
☐ Other: (please explain) _____

PLEASE CONTINUE...

4. I talked with the program director to discuss my child and/or the program before seeking entry.
 _____yes _____no
5. I was given printed information that described the program's operation and philosophy (goals for the children; position statements about how to best meet those goals, and so on).
 _____yes _____no
6. Please indicate how influential any printed material that you received was to your decision to seek entry into the program:
 _____very important
 _____interesting but not very influential
 _____made no difference
 _____didn't receive and/or read any information
7. From what I have seen and heard, I believe that the educational philosophy of the program can best be described as follows:

8. I have gotten my ideas about the school's educational philosophy from the following sources: (put a check by all that apply)
- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| _____ Talks with the teacher | _____ Talks with other program staff |
| _____ Reading the handbook | _____ Reading an Orientation Packet |
| _____ Reading newsletters | _____ Observing the classroom(s). |
| _____ Friends or other parents | _____ Other: (please explain below) |
| | _____ |
| | _____ |
| | _____ |

PLEASE CONTINUE...

14. I am raising this child:

- ☐ as a single parent
- ☐ part of the time, in a shared-custody arrangement
- ☐ with a spouse or partner who lives in the same house
- ☐ I am not actually raising this child

15. My current marital status is best described as:

- ☐ single, never married
- ☐ married, living with spouse
- ☐ married, but separated
- ☐ unmarried, but living with partner
- ☐ divorced
- ☐ widowed

16. Our family income is approximately:

- ☐ less than \$10,000 per year
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year
- ☐ more than \$15,000 but less than \$25,000 per year
- ☐ \$25,000 to \$40,000 per year
- ☐ more than \$40,000 but less than \$60,000 per year
- ☐ \$60,000 or more per year

17. People from our home who are employed outside the home include

- ☐ myself and my spouse or partner
- ☐ myself only
- ☐ my spouse or partner only
- ☐ no one is employed at present

18. My own level of education is best described as:

- ☐ less than a high school diploma
- ☐ completion of a high school diploma
- ☐ less than two years of college
- ☐ completion of a two year degree
- ☐ more than two years of college
- ☐ completion of a four year degree
- ☐ some college beyond a four year degree
- ☐ completion of a graduate degree

19. My family size is best described as:

- ☐ one child at home, no other children
- ☐ two children at home, no other children
- ☐ three children at home, no other children
- ☐ four or more children at home, no other children
- ☐ children both in my home and in other homes

PLEASE CONTINUE...

If you checked the last option above, please provide this information as well:

20. Please list the ages of your children:

21. My cultural identity is best described as:

- ☐ White American
- ☐ White non-American from _____ (country)
- ☐ Black American
- ☐ Black non-American from _____ (country)
- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Asian non-American from _____ (country)
- ☐ Hispanic American
- ☐ Hispanic non-American from _____ (country)
- ☐ Other: _____

22. I have lived in this community for:

- ☐ less than a year
- ☐ one to three years
- ☐ more than three but less than ten years
- ☐ ten or more years

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY!

Please check here if you would like to receive a copy of a final discussion of the study when it is over: _____

APPENDIX F

PARENTAL REGIME ASSESSMENT SCALE (PRAS)

APPENDIX F

PARENTAL REGIME ASSESSMENT SCALE (PRAS)

Please complete the scale starting on the next page by first answering questions about how you CURRENTLY parent (C). Assign a value of 10 to the ONE choice (A, B, C, or D) which most accurately describes how you actually parent at the present time.

From the three remaining choices, assign a value ranging from 0 to 9 to the second most descriptive choice. Repeat for the third and fourth choices. Continue until you have filled in all of the boxes in the (C) column.

Life being what it is, we don't always parent the way we would ideally like to. Please repeat the process as described above for the column marked (I) = IDEAL. Assign a value of 10 to the ONE choice in column (I) that represents how you would most ideally like to parent. From the three remaining choices, assign an IDEAL value from 0 to 9 to the second most ideally descriptive choice. Repeat for the third and fourth choices.

EXAMPLE

*As a parent, how do you tend to communicate with your child?
I communicate with my child in a . . .*

VALUE	C	I
A - direct and factual manner		
B - tactful and less direct manner		
C - questioning and engaging manner		
D - humorous and understanding manner		

Notice that in each column (C and I) there is only one 10. These values represent the behaviors must CURRENTLY (C) used and the behaviors which I would most IDEALLY like to use as a parent. In column C, the 8 represents the second set of behaviors most currently used as a parent regarding communications. The value of 6 represents the third and the value of 2, the fourth. Ideally, this parent would like to change from a questioning/engaging manner to a direct/factual manner. The C and D choices (both 7s) are about equal. This parent doesn't want to change the degree to which they use tactful/less direct communication with their child.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The choices simply describe groups of possible parenting behaviors. Don't spend too much time answering. Give the first answer that comes to mind. Please don't skip any questions. It is important that you fill in every box.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Group 1) How do you as a parent get your children to achieve and accomplish what is important? By using . . .

VALUE	C	I
A - Unstated agreements and just knowing what to do		
B - Authority, rules, and discipline		
C - Personal freedom, individual competence, and choice		
D - Cooperation, discussion, and mutual agreement		

Group 2) In what manner do you as a parent express your care and support for your children? I do this by being . . .

VALUE	C	I
A - Expressive, responsive, and given willingly		
B - Private, formal, and regulated		
C - Spontaneous, public, and enthusiastic		
D - Limited, reserved, and rarely expressed because we know we care deeply for each other		

Group 3) As a parent, what do you think is the essence or identity of your family that you teach to your children? As a family we are . . .

VALUE	C	I
A - Impulsive, instinctive, and energetic		
B - Traditional, stable, and consistent		
C - Precise, exact, controlled, and harmonious		
D - Practical, tolerant, and relevant		

Group 4) As a parent how do you think you teach your children to objectively understand, without bias, the events and situations they experience in life?

VALUE	C	I
A - By being flexible, questioning, and challenging		
B - By relying on individual strengths, unique explanations, and by being explorative		
C - By being methodical, conservative, and by using time-tested explanations		
D - By being knowing, certain, wise, and assured		

Group 5) As a parent raising children what emphasis do you place on the following areas?

VALUE	C	I
A - Our understanding of the objective world around us		
B - The identity of our family, who we are, and what we stand for		
C - The care and support that we give to each other		
D - That we accomplish, achieve, and do what we want		

Group 6) As parents we teach our children to use and view time in certain ways. What do you think you actually teach your children about time? That time is . . .

VALUE	C	I
A - flexible, modifiable, and accommodating		
B - consistent, predictable, and scheduled		
C - individual, spontaneous, and personal		
D - coordinated, unspoken, and understood		

Group 7) As you interact with your children, what do you, as a parent, think you are teaching your children about ideas and information? That . . .

VALUE	C	I
A - No ideas are too silly or extreme, discussions have few limits, and individual ideas are expected		
B - Certain topics are rarely discussed, controversy is avoided, different ideas are not encouraged		
C - Different ideas are okay, friendly conflict is expected, but should be resolved through communication		
D - We are very rational and think alike without a great deal of discussion and communication		

Group 8) Considering energy levels, as a parent, how do you tend to interact with your children? I interact with my children in a . . .

VALUE	C	I
A - paced, balanced, and consistent manner		
B - dynamic, enthusiastic, and fluctuating manner		
C - harmonious, peaceful, and tranquil manner		
D - flexible, extended, and elastic manner		

Group 9) As a parent what do you think you teach your children about how to relate to material possessions and belongings?

VALUE	C	I
A - Material things are functional and valued because the family works hard for them and deserves the benefits of life		
B - Material possessions are viewed as being both confining and limiting to achieving personal meaning		
C - Belongings are a means of convenience, and serve to assist in family interaction and in achieving personal goals		
D - Possessions are valued because of their aesthetic quality, and should be kept as perfect as possible		

Group 10) *As a parent what do you think you are actually teaching your children about what is most important in life?*

VALUE	C	I
A - Acquiring and using material possessions		
B - The use of family and personal energy		
C - The importance of time and how it is used		
D - The consideration and discussion of ideas and information		

APPENDIX G

UCRIHS APPROVAL

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

June 4, 1993

TO: Kit Payne
3470 Green Rd
St. Johns, MI 48879

RE: IRB #: 93-224
TITLE: INFLUENCES ON PARENTAL CHOICE OF CHILDREN'S EARLY
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES
CATEGORY: 1-C
REVISION REQUESTED: N/A
APPROVAL DATE: June 4, 1993

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS approved this project including any revision listed above.

UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Investigators planning to continue a project beyond one year must seek updated certification. Request for renewed approval must be accompanied by all four of the following mandatory assurances.

1. The human subjects protocol is the same as in previous studies.
2. There have been no ill effects suffered by the subjects due to their participation in the study.
3. There have been no complaints by the subjects or their representatives related to their participation in the study.
4. There has not been a change in the research environment nor new information which would indicate greater risk to human subjects than that assumed when the protocol was initially reviewed and approved.



**OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
AND
GRADUATE
STUDIES**

University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects
(UCRIHS)

Michigan State University
225 Administration Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1046
517/355-2180
FAX: 517/336-1171

There is a maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for complete review.

UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. Investigators must notify UCRIHS promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to contact us at (517) 355-2180 or FAX (517) 336-1171.

Sincerely,

David E. Wright, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

DEW:pjm

cc: Dr. Marjorie Kostelnik

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