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A COMPARISON OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AMONG
MOTHERS OF ONLY AND NON-ONLY CHILDREN

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A COMPARISON OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AMONG
MOTHERS OF ONLY AND NON-ONLY CHILDREN

By

Jo Ellen Bush-Glenn

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AMONG
MOTHERS OF ONLY AND NON-ONLY CHILDREN

By

Jo Ellen Bush-Glenn

Researchers finding differences among only and non-only children frequently explain their findings through assumed characteristics of the parent-child relationship. The purpose of this research was to explore the common assumption that parents of only children have higher parental expectations than parents of non-only children. The sample consisted of 20 mothers of only children, 32 mothers of two-child families, and 26 mothers of large families. These mothers completed a questionnaire measuring general parental expectations, educational expectations, number of children's extracurricular activities, and attitudes toward self-reliance in children. Analysis of the data revealed no significant differences among mothers of only and non-only children in any of these areas. While there were non-significant trends indicating slightly higher expectations among mothers of onlies, little support was found for the suggestions made in the literature regarding intensified parental expectations, excessive involvement in extracurricular activities, or unrealistic attitudes about children's readiness for self-reliance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	4
Birth Order and Only Child Research	4
Social Characteristics	6
Personality Attributes	7
Intellectual Characteristics	8
Explanatory Mechanisms	10
Research on Parental Expectations	13
II METHODS	16
Subjects	16
Research Questions	20
Research Design	21
Instrumentation	21
Data Analysis	23
III ANALYSIS OF RESULTS	25
Introduction	25
Parental Expectations	25
Extracurricular Activities	30

	Page
Attitudes Toward Self Reliance	32
IV DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS	34
Parental Expectations	34
Extracurricular Activities	37
Attitudes Toward Self-Reliance	38
Summary	39
Suggestions for Future Research	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43
APPENDIX A LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION	47
APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRE	49

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Sample	19
2 Expectations of Mothers of Only and Non-Only Children	26
3 Expectations of Mothers by Family Size	28
4 Extracurricular Activities of Only and Non-Only Children	31
5 Extracurricular Activities by Family Size	31

INTRODUCTION

In a recent review of the only child literature, Falbo (1984) describes a population trend that predicts a growing percentage of one-child families in the United States within the near future. This number is estimated to be about 30 percent of families forming during the 1980s. The direction of this trend, if not the magnitude, is also described by other authors. Blake (1981), for example, reports a 67 percent increase in single births among women aged 30-34 between 1970 and 1978. Crase and Crase (1979) conclude their discussion of the family-size statistics with the statement, "chances are the average couple [in the United States] in 1990 will have only one child" (p.97).

This reported increase in families with only children has led to a surge of interest in the characteristics of only children. Common negative stereotypes often associated with the only child center around personality or character defects and include describing the only child as selfish, maladjusted, dependent, temperamental, spoiled, and attention-seeking (Blake, 1981; Crase and Crase, 1979; Falbo, 1982; Veenhoven and Verkuyten, 1989). More recent research, however, has challenged these stereotypes and, while findings have been

inconsistent, only children are much more likely to be described in positive terms, especially regarding achievement, intelligence, and relations with parents.

The positive qualities discovered in only children are most often explained by aspects of the parent-child relationship, particularly that of parental expectations (Cruse and Cruse, 1979; Cropley and Ahlers, 1975; Polit and Falbo, 1987; Veenhoven and Verkuyten, 1989). Only children are thought to perform better academically due to the high expectations their parents have set for them. Parents of only children are thought to have higher expectations of their one child because their attention is not divided by the presence of other children. While this idea is often presented as a possible explanation, it has not yet been fully examined in the research.

There are several reasons why an examination of the parental expectations of only children is of some practical significance. The first is the reported trend toward more one-child families. As only children become more and more common, it is increasingly important to understand the experiences through which they develop optimally. Secondly, if parents do indeed expect more from their only children, one might ask at what point these expectations interfere with optimal development. David Elkind is one child development professional who has dealt with the phenomena of excessive parental and societal expectations in much of his writings.

In his book, The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon (1981), he outlines the potential dangers of the increased stress placed on children in today's society. These concerns are expressed by other child professionals as well and are being increasingly publicized. A recent New York Times article on early childhood education warns about submitting children to early academic pressure and suggests that today's smaller families is a possible explanation for why such pressure occurs (Hechinger, 1989).

It is with this phenomenon of parental expectations that the present research is concerned. The purpose of the study was to compare the expectations of mothers of only children with the expectations of mothers of non-only children in order to determine if the two groups vary along the dimensions cited in previous research. Information gleaned from this study will be potentially useful in determining the validity of some of the assumptions frequently made by those interpreting only child research findings. The significance of this research also lies in its potential for adding to knowledge about the parenting experience, especially with regard to the only child.

Chapter I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Birth Order and Only Child Research

A review of the research conducted on only children reveals that, until relatively recently, it has fallen primarily under the category of birth order research. In their quantitative review of the only child literature, Falbo and Polit (1986) point out that since 1925, more than 200 studies have been conducted that either focus on the only child directly or consider the only child within the context of birth order or family size. Satisfying conclusions drawn from this research have been nearly impossible to make due to methodological differences and inconsistent findings. Early researchers frequently discovered a relationship between ordinal position and various behavioral, personality, or intellectual characteristics; however, they often interpreted these findings after the fact and without having adequate information to draw reliable conclusions (Adams, 1972; Kammeyer, 1967). The result has been what Kammeyer calls "a disparate, disconnected, aggregation of research findings.....that has tended to be non-theoretical" (1967, p.73).

An additional difficulty with much of this research has been its failure to distinguish the only child from other birth categories. Only children have been most commonly grouped with firstborn children. Moreover, some studies do not specify where only children have been grouped and others eliminate only children from their analysis altogether. Not distinguishing between only children and children from other birth categories makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the characteristics that might be unique to only children. Therefore, for the purposes of this review, an effort will be made to clarify whether the variables have been associated with only children and firstborns or just only children.

Being an only child has been linked to a host of variables that include social, personality, and intellectual characteristics. The findings from these research studies have been varied and, in many cases, contradictory. For example, in Lichtenwalner's and Maxwell's (1969) research on the creativity of preschool children, they found that firstborn and only children demonstrated greater creative ability than did later born children. Conversely, Staffieri (1970) found later born college students to score higher on creativity than did firstborns and onlies. This example points out the inconsistency within much of the research on birth order or only children. Methodology and age of subjects are two aspects that are especially varied. Factors that need to be controlled are socioeconomic status, child's age,

child's sex, birth position, family size, family intactness, and the voluntariness of having only one child. Falbo and Polit (1986) attempted to overcome this incomparability by conducting a meta-analysis of over 115 studies including only children as subjects. Their results show that when onlies were compared to non-onlies they surpassed them in the areas of achievement, intelligence, character, and positive parent-child relationships. When birth position and family size were controlled, only children were indistinguishable from firstborns or children from small families (two children).

Social Characteristics

Several studies have been conducted to describe the social characteristics of only children. Connors (1963) found college-age only children to have a significantly lower need for affiliation and a higher expectation of affiliative reward than firstborns or later borns. In Adam's (1972) review of birth order research, only children were described along with firstborns as more affiliative, more dependent, more conforming, and more responsible than later borns. Schachter (1964) also linked firstborns and onlies together in his research on popularity. He found firstborn and only college students to be both more influenced by others in their choice of friends and less popular than later borns. Falbo's (1976) research compared adult onlies and non-onlies and she found onlies to be more cooperative, independent, and trusting. Snow, Jacklin, and Maccoby's (1981) study of 33-month-old

children revealed that only children scored higher on measures of peer sociability than either firstborns or later borns. Additional social characteristics associated with only children include outgoingness (Davis, 1937), social sensitivity (Blake, 1981), assertiveness (Snow, Jacklin, and Maccoby, 1981), and recognition of emotional expression (Kalliopuska, 1981).

Personality Attributes

The personality characteristics of only children have also been a frequently studied area of research. In Polit and Falbo's (1987) quantitative review of the research on only children and personality development, they report that of sixteen personality categories in which only children have been compared to non-only children, there are only two that show reliable and significant differences. They are achievement motivation and self-esteem -- with onlies scoring higher than non-onlies. Gecas and Pasley (1983), however, found no support for their hypothesis of a relationship between birth order and self-concept in their study of adolescents. Similar results were obtained by Polit, Nuttall, and Nuttall (1980) in their study of adult only children. They found no differences between onlies and non-onlies on measures of personal adjustment including life satisfaction, self-esteem, or locus of control. Other personality characteristics studied in relation to only children include egocentrism (Jiao, Ji, and Jing, 1986), intrapsychic tension

(Welch, 1976), maturity and life satisfaction (Blake, 1981), delinquency, maladjustment, initiative, authoritarianism, and responsibility (Adams, 1972).

Intellectual Characteristics

The category of characteristics researched most frequently regarding only children and birth order has been that of intellectual characteristics. Ching (1982), reporting on studies conducted with only children in China, describes the decidedly superior intellectual capacities of only children, including imagination, language ability, productive thinking, and academic achievement. In the area of verbal ability, similar results were supported by the work of Cropley and Ahlers (1975), Davis (1937), Polit and Falbo (1988), and Glass, Neulinger, and Brim (1974). Runco and Bahleda (1987) found that only children scored significantly higher on tests of divergent thinking than did non-only children. In their study of academic behavior in first grade, Skovholt, Moore, and Wellman (1973) found that only boys (but not girls) were rated higher in academic behavior than the non-only boys. Numerous studies have also been done associating only children with such cognitive characteristics as eminence, higher educational attainment and aspirations, and greater occupational prestige (Adams, 1972; Blake, 1981; Falbo, 1982; Glass, Neulinger, and Brim, 1974; Heer, 1985; Polit, Nuttall, and Nuttall, 1980).

In the specific intellectual category of intelligence, the findings have been riddled with inconsistencies and contradictions. The most frequently cited research on birth order and intelligence has been the work of Zajonc and Markus (1975). Their analysis of various collections of data shows that although intelligence seems to be inversely related to family size, the only child appears to be an exception to this trend and, in fact, performs at a level more comparable with the firstborn in a four-child family. Zajonc and Markus explain this exception by postulating that the only child suffers from the lack of siblings to tutor. Other authors have refuted this explanation claiming that other factors not controlled for in the Zajonc and Markus data could account for this finding, particularly family intactness since only children are more likely to live in single-parent families (Falbo, 1978; Steelman and Doby, 1983).

A meta-analysis of the research conducted on only children and intelligence shows a reliable and significant advantage for only children over non-only children; however, when compared to firstborns and children from small families, the differences are small and nonsignificant (Falbo and Polit, 1986). This finding is generally supported by Blake's (1981) discussion of the research on only children. The need for more thorough research on intelligence, including more appropriate control variables, is expressed by Heer (1985).

Explanatory Mechanisms

Reviewing the literature on only children also reveals that virtually all of these research studies are descriptive rather than explanatory in nature. That is, the primary concern has been with discovering ways in which only children differ from children with siblings. Differences have been explained using various assumptions regarding the experiences of being without a sibling or the nature of parent-child interactions within a single-child family. Falbo and Polit (1986) divide these "explanatory mechanisms" into three major categories: (1) deprivation or the absence of siblings, (2) only child uniqueness, and (3) the parent-child relationship. They come to the conclusion that the one mechanism supported by their meta-analysis is the parent-child mechanism since only children were not found to be disadvantaged by the absence of siblings and also were not found to be unique as compared to firstborns and children from small families. The parent-child relationship could account for both the differences discovered between onlies and non-onlies and the similarities between onlies, firstborns, and children from small families. They conclude that the latter groups must share a specific type of relationship with their parents suggesting that "only child development can best be understood in terms of the experiences only children have with their parents, not in terms of the experiences only children have never had with siblings" (Polit and Falbo, 1988, p. 285).

If the parent-child mechanism does indeed account for the differences between onlies and non-onlies, a question to be asked is, 'what is the nature of this relationship and how does it work to create these differences?' This inquiry has been addressed in the literature primarily on the basis of conjecture. Many researchers interpret their findings on the basis of assumptions regarding the parent-child relationship in a single-child family. For example, only children are described as experiencing: less "affectional deprivation" (Conners, 1963), greater overprotection, heightened parental anxiety (Falbo and Polit, 1986), more verbal and physical stimulation (Lichtenwalner and Maxwell, 1969), excessive association with adults (Arlow, 1972), more encouragement in the educational sphere, more concern about their achievement (Glass, Neulinger, and Brim, 1974), a more concentrated intellectual environment (Zajonc and Markus, 1975), increased contact with parents (Cropley and Ahlers, 1975; Snow, Jacklin, and Maccoby, 1981)), a higher value placed on them as individuals (Kidwell, 1978), excessive parental expectations (Cruse and Cruse, 1979; Falbo and Polit, 1986; Gecas and Pasley, 1983; Hawke and Knox, 1978; Veenhoven and Verkuyten, 1989), greater attention and guidance, (Kalliopuska, 1981; Polit and Falbo, 1988), less parental regulation (Kloepper, Leonard, and Huang, 1981), and less diluted "personal parental inputs" (Blake, 1981).

There are only a few studies in which the actual parental

relationships of only children have been studied and Falbo and Polit (1986) include these in their meta-analysis of only child research. Their findings indicate that only children do tend to have more positive relationships with their parents than children with siblings.

A frequently cited assumption regarding parent-child relationships in the single-child family is the one regarding high, excessive, or unrealistic expectations. Crase and Crase (1979) hypothesize that couples with more than one child may divide their expectations among all their children while the parents of only children have put "all their eggs in one basket". Dr. Murray Kappelman (1975) contends in his book on parenting the only child that "parents of an only child have limited themselves to one investment. From this singular investment must come many dividends..." (p. 68). He conjectures, as do several other authors including Falbo and Polit (1986), that these intensified expectations may also stem from parents' own unfulfilled or unrealized ambitions - a kind of "vicarious achievement" (Falbo and Polit, 1986, p. 311). There has been some evidence that first-time parents tend to underestimate the time it takes for a child to successfully achieve certain developmental milestones (Waddell and Ball, 1980, as cited in Falbo and Polit, 1986). These higher expectations have been thought to account for the higher motivation to achieve consistently found in only children (Falbo and Polit, 1986; Polit and Falbo, 1987).

Research on Parental Expectations

Research dealing with parental expectations has focused primarily on its effect on academic achievement and IQ. An early study by Moss and Kagan (1958) found that maternal encouragement of intellectual development or "maternal acceleration" did seem to facilitate children's preschool intelligence test performance, but only for boys. Conversely, Crandall, Dewey, Katkovsky, and Preston (1964) found only limited evidence to support their hypothesis that various factors of parental attitudes and behaviors would influence their children's performances on achievement tests. When there were associations, they were found most frequently for mothers and daughters rather than sons. With regard to parental standards, mothers who set high standards for their daughters' intellectual achievement efforts had daughters who performed better on reading and arithmetic achievement tests. In a review of the literature on parents' educational expectations and children's academic achievements, Seginer (1983) concludes that the studies reviewed generally support an association between parents' expectations and academic achievement. Parents' expectations are typically defined in these studies as the number of years of schooling they expected their children to achieve, occupational expectations, or predictions of report card performances. She proposes that the process through which parents' expectations influence achievement is primarily in the form of achievement supporting

behaviors including providing support, challenge, and encouragement.

It is the assumption of intensified parental expectations for only children with which this study is concerned. A review of the only child literature has not revealed any research that has dealt with this factor beyond the developmental milestones discussed above. If parents are investing all their aspirations and dreams in their only child in the hope that s/he will fulfill real or imagined multiple abilities or talents, this is likely to show up in ways that are not necessarily reflected in developmental milestone expectations. The current study explores the question of how the number of children in the family affects the parents' perceptions of their children's talents, abilities, and achievement potential and the parent's role in encouraging these characteristics. More specifically, the study will address the following questions: (1) How do the parental expectations of only children compare with the parental expectations of non-only children?, 2) How will parents' perceptions of the appropriate number of extracurricular activities vary with regard to the number of children in the family?, (3) How will these expectations vary when measures of socioeconomic status, family size, and child's sex are taken into account?, and (4) Will attitudes toward self-reliance in their children vary with sibling status? A closer look at these questions will hopefully enable researchers to

more accurately interpret findings that have, until now, been interpreted on the basis of assumptions regarding the experience of being an only child.

Chapter II

METHODS

Subjects

The subjects for this study were mothers with children between the ages of five and six years old living in the area of Lansing, Michigan. The subjects were chosen controlling for the gender of the parent and the child's age. The sampling method used was a non-probability quota sample of available subjects.

A letter requesting their participation in the study was sent to the homes of approximately 230 mothers of children between the ages of five and six via their children's schools. Four local private children's centers with kindergartens and one local public elementary school agreed to assist with this process. The letter was accompanied by a form that mothers were asked to fill out. This form included the mothers' names and three questions designed to group the volunteers into one of four different categories: 1) mothers with only one child who do not expect to have more, 2) mothers with only one child who do expect to have more, 3) mothers with two children (small families), and 4) mothers with three or more children (large families) (see Appendix A for letter and form). The

aim was to fulfill a quota of at least 25 mothers within each category for a total of one hundred mothers. Due to the low number of volunteers in categories 1 and 2, these two groups were collapsed into one category.

The actual number of subjects who volunteered and returned a completed survey resulted in a total of 78 respondents. Twenty of these were mothers of one child, 32 were mothers of two children (small families), and 26 were mothers of three or more children (large families). Ninety-six percent of these mothers identified their families within the ethnic category of "WHITE/CAUCASIAN". Their ages ranged from 23 to 47 with a mean age of 35.4 ($SD = 5.1$). The mean ages for the three groups were quite similar: 36.1 for mothers of only children, 34.7 for mothers of small families, and 35.9 for mothers of large families.

The descriptive data also revealed that this particular sample of mothers was, for the most part, highly educated and financially well-off. Mothers' years of education ranged from 9 to 24 years with a mean of 15.95 ($SD = 2.89$), about the equivalent of a college bachelor's degree. For those mothers reporting information on their spouses, the years of education ranged from 11 to 25 with a mean of 17.43 ($SD = 3.46$), about the equivalent of a college master's degree. The median level of combined annual income was between \$50,000 and \$54,999, while the most frequently occurring income category was \$75,000 or above. Seventy-one percent of these families

earned a combined income of over \$40,000 a year. T-tests performed on the data revealed no significant differences among the mothers with regard to their educational attainment, their spouses' educational attainment, or income category. Analysis of variance was also conducted with the mothers grouped by number of children and no significant differences were found for these three factors. Equivalence of the three groups was therefore assumed.

A partial explanation for the high levels of income in this sample may be found when examining the employment status data. Seventy-three percent of the mothers reported themselves as employed either full-time (55 percent) or part-time (18 percent) while 22 percent described themselves as full-time homemakers. For those mothers reporting information on their spouses, 96 percent were employed full-time, three percent were employed part-time, and one percent were in school.

The majority of these mothers were married for the first time and living with their spouse (76 percent). Ten percent were remarried, nine percent were divorced or separated, three percent were single (never married), and three percent were co-habiting (living with a partner, but not married).

Table 1 summarizes the sociodemographic data for this sample of mothers. Statistical analyses conducted on the data revealed only one variable in which the values differed significantly among the three groups of mothers. A Chi-square

Table 1 - Sociodemographic Characteristics of Sample

Variables	Total Sample (N=78)	One-Child Families (N=20)	Small Families (N=32)	Large Families (N=26)
Mother's Age				
Mean	35.44	36.11	34.72	35.85
SD	5.12	6.32	5.08	4.21
Mother's Education				
Mean	15.95	15.73	15.67	16.46
SD	2.89	2.67	2.79	3.20
Spouse's Education				
Mean	17.43	17.03	16.89	18.23
SD	3.46	3.38	3.64	3.28
Median Income Category	\$50,000- \$54,999	\$45,000- \$49,999	\$50,000- \$54,999	\$55,000- \$59,999
Maternal Employment				
% Full-Time	55.1	65.0	75.0	23.1
% Part-Time	17.9	5.0	9.4	38.5
% Full-Time Homemaker	21.8	15.0	15.6	34.6
Marital Status				
% Married First Time	75.6	70.0	68.8	88.5
% Remarried	10.3	5.0	12.5	11.5
% Divorced or Separated	8.9	15.0	12.5	0
% Co-Habiting	2.6	5.0	3.1	0
% Single	2.6	5.0	3.1	0

test indicated that number of children and employment status were not independent; however, a high percentage of expected cell frequencies less than five rendered this an unreliable test for these data (Chi-square value = 26.958 [$p=.0007$]; Phi-coefficient = .3456).

All mothers were asked to answer portions of the questionnaire keeping their five- or six-year-old child in mind, and additional descriptive data regarding these particular children were also gathered. Exactly half of the children were female and half were male. Thirty-eight of the children were either first-born or only children, 27 were second born, and thirteen were categorized as later-born.

Research Questions

The research questions this study addresses are as follows:

1. How do the expectations of mothers of only children compare with the expectations of mothers of non-only children among a sample of mothers with children between the ages of 5 and 6?
 - a. How will these expectations compare when family size is considered (i.e. among the three categories of subjects)?
 - b. How will these expectations compare when measures of socioeconomic status, family intactness, and child's sex are taken into account?
2. How will mothers' perceptions of the appropriate number of extracurricular activities for their children vary with the number of children in the family?
3. How will mothers' attitudes toward self-reliance in children vary with the number of children in the family?

Research Design

The preceding research questions were studied using a non-experimental survey research design. The research took place in a natural home setting with no attempts to control the environment. The time reference of the design was cross-sectional and data was collected within a local area with individual mothers as the unit of analysis.

Instrumentation

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data for this study. The questionnaire was sent to the volunteer mothers via their children's schools. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires from the schools on a specified date. (See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire and the accompanying letter.)

The instrument itself consists of three sections. The first section is designed to measure parental expectations. For the purposes of this study, parental expectations are conceptually defined as the parents' feelings and opinions about their children's talents, abilities, and achievement potential and their role in encouraging these characteristics. It consists of 45 opinion items in which the respondent is asked to circle one response on a 5-point scale ranging from "STRONGLY AGREE" to "STRONGLY DISAGREE". Every third item serves as a "filler" item to prevent respondents from comprehending the intent of the set of items and having this influence their responses. The remaining thirty items have

been selected because they reflect aspects of parental expectations as conceptually defined. Some have been taken from the Parents' Opinion Survey (POS) developed by Luster (1985), while the remaining items were created for the purposes of this study by the researcher. A reliability analysis conducted on this thirty-item scale revealed an acceptable internal consistency rating (Cronbach's alpha = .75). Since omitting any of the items did not substantially improve internal consistency, all thirty items were retained. Also included in section one are three items measuring parents' educational expectations for their children (from the POS). A page of extracurricular activities on which respondents were asked to identify those activities in which their children were involved within the past twelve months concludes this portion of the survey. Thus, section one yielded a general parental expectation score, three separate scores for educational expectations, and a score for the number of extracurricular activities checked.

The second section of the instrument contains 18 items designed to measure parents' attitudes toward self-reliance. These items were taken from the Attitude Toward Self-Reliance scale developed by Ojemann (1934, as cited in Shaw and Wright, 1967). Only eighteen of the original items of this scale were chosen for inclusion and these were adapted and updated for the purposes of the current research. For these items, respondents were asked to read a statement about an ability

or a responsibility that children might be expected to be ready for at different ages and then decide at what age they think the average child should be ready to do these things. Blanks are provided for the respondents to write the age to the nearest half-year. The responses to these questions were used to compare the differences in average ages selected by the three categories of subjects. It was assumed that these average ages would reflect attitudes toward self-reliance in children. In other words, mothers choosing younger ages would presumably expect children to be self-reliant at earlier ages.

The third section of the instrument was designed to measure various sociodemographic variables used to describe the sample and to serve as controls in the analysis of the data. These items include marital status, sex of child, family size and composition, employment and education information, and income. Items regarding the current number of children in the family and the mother's anticipation of future children for families with only one child were asked to divide the respondents into their respective categories. Questions regarding the mother's age and ethnicity were also asked for descriptive purposes.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data generated by this study included both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample and the distribution of

responses. In terms of the inferential methods involved, the nature of the research questions dictated that a test of significant difference be used to make a comparison between the groups of parents. Since the major independent variables are qualitative (only versus non-only and family size) and the dependent variables are quantitative (parental expectations, number of extracurricular activities, ages at which self-reliance is expected), the method used was an analysis of variance with an F-test for significance ($p < .05$).

Chapter III

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analysis conducted on the data generated by the questionnaire. These results will be reported as they relate to the research questions outlined in the preceding chapter. Conclusions and implications resulting from these analyses will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Parental Expectations

Question #1 - How do the parental expectations of mothers of only children compare with the parental expectations of mothers of non-only children? Parental expectations were measured with the thirty-item scale and three questions about educational expectations.

Analysis of variance was used to compare the mean scores on the thirty-item scale for the two groups of mothers. Scores on this scale could potentially range from 30 to 150. The actual range for this sample was 81 to 128. The mean score for mothers of only children was 105.6 (SD = 8.11) and the mean score for mothers of non-only children was 100.7 (SD = 10.22). These results show a trend in the expected

Table 2 - Expectations of Mothers of Only and Non-Only Children

Variables	Total Sample (N=78)	Mothers of Only Children (N=20)	Mothers of Non-Only Children (N=58)
Expectation Scale			
Mean	101.92	105.60	100.65
SD	9.91	8.11	10.22
Educational Expectations - Item #1			
Mean	6.64	6.60	6.43
SD	0.78	0.50	0.86
Educational Expectations - Item #2			
Mean	4.92	5.05	4.88
SD	1.21	1.19	1.23
Educational Expectations - Item #3			
Mean	5.91	6.25	5.79
SD	1.10	0.85	1.15

direction, however, the F-value was 3.84 ($p = .054$) and non-significant at $p < .05$. These results are summarized in Table 2.

Educational expectations were investigated via a series of three questions that asked how much education mothers would like their child to have, what they thought was the minimum level of education their child must receive, and how much education they actually expected their child to complete. These items were scored from 1 to 7 with 1 representing 8 years of education and 7 representing more than 4 years of college (see page 58 in Appendix B). Of these three items, only the last one approached significance for the two groups of mothers, with mothers of only children having slightly higher expectations regarding how much education they actually expected their children to receive (F-value = 2.64 [$p = .11$]). These results are also summarized in Table 2.

Parental expectations were also compared among mothers who were divided by family size: one-child families, small families (two children), and large families (three or more children). Analysis of variance was used and these results are summarized in Table 3. The mean score on the thirty-item scale was 105.6 (SD = 8.11) for mothers of one-child families, 102.3 (SD = 10.88) for mothers of small families, and 98.7 (SD = 9.15) for mothers of large families. Again, there was a trend in the expected direction, however the F-value was 2.95 ($p = .058$) and non-significant at $p < .05$.

Table 3 - Expectations of Mothers by Family Size

Variables	Total Sample (N=78)	One-Child Families (N=20)	Small Families (N=32)	Large Families (N=26)
Expectation Scale				
Mean	101.92	105.60	102.28	98.65
SD	9.91	8.11	10.88	9.15
Educational Expectations - Item #1				
Mean	6.47	6.60	6.31	6.58
SD	0.78	0.50	0.93	0.76
Educational Expectations - Item #2				
Mean	4.92	5.05	4.66	5.15
SD	1.21	1.19	1.29	1.12
Educational Expectations - Item #3				
Mean	5.91	6.25	5.63	6.00
SD	1.10	0.85	1.26	0.98

When the educational expectations of these three groups of mothers were compared, no significant differences were found. Interestingly, the only pattern found in the mean educational expectations of the three groups was that mothers of small families consistently scored lower on all three items, however, the differences were quite small. These results are also included in Table 3.

Several statistical procedures were also performed in order to take into account the potential effects of socioeconomic status, family intactness, and child's sex on parental expectations. T-tests were conducted in which the sample was divided based on family intactness (intact versus not intact) and on the child's gender. Both tests revealed no significant differences with regard to parental expectations for any of the groups created. Correlations were also performed to discover if there were any associations between parental expectations and the variables used to measure socioeconomic status: mother's education, spouse's education, and family income. The only significant finding was a negative correlation of $-.34$ between parental expectations and mother's education. Multiple regression analysis was then used to determine if only child status was related to parental expectations when mother's education was controlled. This analysis revealed that only child status was related to parental expectations even when mother's education was controlled ($t = -1.92$, $p = .058$). Mother's education was

also significantly related to parental expectations when only child status was controlled ($t = -3.07$, $p = .003$). Together these two variables accounted for 15 per cent of the variance in parental expectations.

Extracurricular Activities

Question #2 - How will mothers' perceptions of the appropriate number of extracurricular activities for their children vary with the number of children in the family?

Extracurricular activities in which the children of these mothers were involved during the past twelve months ranged from 0 to 6. The mean for the entire group was 2.2 (SD = 1.58). Analysis of variance was conducted to compare the groups of children with regard to number of extracurricular activities. First, families were grouped by only versus non-only status and the means for these two groups were 2.7 (SD = 1.79) and 2.1 (SD = 1.49) respectively. These differences were non-significant (F-value = 2.05, $p = .16$). When mothers were grouped by family size, the means were 2.65 (SD = 1.79) for one-child families, 1.84 (SD = 1.22) for small families, and 2.35 (SD = 1.74) for large families. These differences were also non-significant (F-value 1.77, $p = .18$). Again, it is interesting to note that small families had their children involved in the least number of extracurricular activities. These results are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

Number of extracurricular activities was also compared to a number of other variables that were thought to be of

Table 4 - Extracurricular Activities of Only and Non-Only Children

Extracurricular Activities	Total Sample (N=78)	Only Children (N=20)	Non-Only Children (N=58)
Mean	2.2	2.7	2.1
SD	1.6	1.8	1.5

Table 5 - Extracurricular Activities by Family Size

Extracurricular Activities	Total Sample (N=78)	One-Child Families (N=20)	Small Families (N=32)	Large Families (N=26)
Mean	2.2	2.7	1.8	2.4
SD	1.6	1.8	1.2	1.7

potential relevance, including expectations, mother's age, mother's education, family income, marital status, child's gender, and birth order position. The only variable with a significant relationship to extracurricular activities was mother's education with a correlation of 0.25 ($p < .05$). The differences in number of extracurricular activities by child's gender also approached significance ($f\text{-value} = 2.79$, $p = .098$). Males were involved in an average of 1.9 ($SD = 1.42$) activities while females were involved in an average of 2.5 ($SD = 1.68$) extracurricular activities.

Attitudes Toward Self-Reliance

Question #3 - How will mothers' attitudes toward self-reliance in children vary with the number of children in the family?

The self-reliance items were analyzed item-by-item and as a total group. Analysis of variance was conducted on each self-reliance item with the mothers divided by only versus non-only status and there were no significant differences among the two groups on any of the items. The only item that approached significance was item #17 for which mothers were asked to decide at what age children should be included in family decision-making. Mothers of only children answered an average age of 8.2 ($SD = 3.5$) and mothers of non-only children answered an average age of 6.9 ($SD = 3.1$). The F -value was 2.4 ($p = .126$).

When mothers were divided by family size, no significant

differences among the three groups were found for any of the items. Differences in the average ages for the three groups were very slight and there also did not appear to be any type of consistent pattern.

The self-reliance items were also totaled and analysis of variance was conducted on these totals with the mothers grouped by both only versus non-only status and family size. Again, no significant differences were found for any of the groupings created.

Chapter IV

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this research was to examine the assumption that higher parental expectations account for many of the differences consistently found in only children, particularly in the area of achievement motivation. In order to accomplish this objective, parental expectations were investigated within the contexts of the mothers' attitudes toward encouraging achievement, their expectations regarding educational achievement, to what extent they provided challenge and direct instruction in the form of extracurricular activities, and their attitudes regarding self-reliance in children. In this chapter, each of these domains of parental expectations will be discussed individually.

Parental Expectations

An examination of the results for the thirty-item scale measuring general parental expectations showed a definite trend consistent with the assumption of higher expectations among parents of only children. The difference in the mean scores for mothers of only and non-only children was 5 points, a small but marginally significant difference. Moreover, this

difference for mothers of only children did not disappear when family size was controlled, contrary to Falbo's and Polit's (1986) finding that only children were virtually "indistinguishable" from children from small families when family size was controlled. Again, the difference was small but still marginally significant. The interesting point to note here is that the trend was definitely in the expected direction; mothers of only children had the highest expectations at 105.6, mothers of small families the next highest expectations at 102.3, and mothers of large families had the lowest at 98.7. These differences were so slight, however, that it seems unlikely that they could substantially affect the child-rearing environment or that they are excessive to the point of interfering with optimal development. It is possible that with a larger, representative sample these differences might be more accentuated, thus supporting the assumption of higher expectations among mothers of only children.

Controlling for the variables that might potentially affect parental expectations revealed that mother's education was also significantly related to parental expectations. The correlation was $-.34$, indicating that as mother's education increased, parental expectations decreased. This finding was unexpected, although not surprising when additional factors were considered. One possible explanation might be that the more highly educated mothers were more aware of recent trends

in child development or educational circles. As was mentioned in the introductory statement, concern over the potential dangers of excessive parental, academic, and societal pressures on young children has become increasingly publicized. These mothers might have been reacting to this trend and adjusting their expectations accordingly. Another possible explanation is related to the comments in the literature suggesting that intensified expectations stem from parents' own unfulfilled ambitions (Falbo and Polit, 1986; Kappelman, 1975). Less educated parents may intensify their expectations in the hopes that their children will achieve more than they have.

No significant differences were found regarding educational expectations when mothers were grouped both by only versus non-only status and by family size. Only the last item asking how much education mothers actually expect their children to complete approached significance. When mothers were divided by only versus non-only status, expectations of actual academic achievement were slightly higher for mothers of only children than for mothers of non-only children (see Table 2, page 26). When mothers were divided by family size, expectations of actual academic achievement were higher for both mothers of only children and large families than for mothers of small families. In fact, mothers of small families had lower expectations for all three educational expectation items. This unusual pattern makes it difficult to draw any

conclusions from these data as related to family size.

Extracurricular Activities

It was expected that mothers with higher expectations for their children would want to provide challenging experiences for their children by encouraging involvement in extracurricular activities. In fact, Kappelman (1975) warns that only children tend to become involved in an excessive number of extracurricular activities because of overly ambitious parents. When the extracurricular activities of only children were compared to those of non-only children, there was a trend in this expected direction; however, the difference was quite small and non-significant (see Table 4, page 31). Dividing mothers by family size also revealed only slight, non-significant differences among the three groups, with only children and children from large families involved in more activities than children in small families (see Table 5, page 31). A comparison of number of extracurricular activities with parental expectation scores did not reveal any significant relationship between these two variables. These data provide little support for the suggestion that mothers of only children or mothers with high expectations excessively involve their children in extracurricular activities.

One interesting finding in relation to extracurricular activities also deserves mention here. The differences in number of extracurricular activities approached significance when children were grouped by gender. Girls were involved in

more extracurricular activities than boys. Since grouping children by gender revealed almost identical mean expectation scores for both sexes (102.0 for boys, 101.8 for girls), this difference in number of extracurricular activities seems to have little to do with expectations.

Attitudes Toward Self-Reliance

The self-reliance items were asked in order to determine if mothers of only children differed from mothers of non-only children in the ages at which they expected children to be self-reliant in a variety of areas. The literature review led to the expectation that mothers of non-only children would probably expect their children to be self-reliant at an earlier age. For example, Kappelman (1975) suggests that parents of only children find it difficult to evaluate their children's potential realistically and usually aim too high. Research on developmental milestones also suggests that first-time parents usually underestimate the time it takes for children to achieve certain developmental milestones (Waddell and Ball, 1980, as cited in Falbo and Polit, 1986). Elkind (1981) also discusses a societal trend toward expecting children to take over adult responsibilities and decision-making at earlier ages.

The data from this research did not support these expectations regarding self-reliance. There were no significant differences in attitudes toward self-reliance among mothers of only and non-only children or among mothers

of one-child families, small families, and large families. When the individual self-reliance items were totaled and averaged for each group of mothers, the means were almost identical. It would appear that mothers of only children are no more likely to have inaccurate perceptions of children's abilities than are mothers of more than one child.

An item-by-item analysis did reveal one interesting item for which the difference in average ages is worthy of note. When asked at what age children should be included in family discussions with the child's opinion being considered along with the opinions of older members of the family, mothers of only children answered an average age 1.32 years older than mothers of non-only children. This trend is not consistent with what would have been expected from the literature. One explanation might be that one-child families exhibit a greater adult orientation regarding family matters and decisions and child input is not sought as early or as frequently as it might be in larger families.

Summary

These data do tend to challenge the assumptions frequently made about the nature of the parent-child relationship in one-child families. None of the differences among mothers of only and non-only children were statistically significant and while trends were frequently in the expected direction, the differences were quite small. The point was made, however, that the differences between the parental

expectations of mothers of only and non-only children did not disappear when family size was controlled, indicating that there is the possibility of differences in the parenting of an only child. Additional research regarding parental expectations may shed some light on this possibility.

Mother's education was also found to be significantly related to parental expectations in a negative direction. Several potential explanations for this were discussed, including the possibilities that more highly educated parents are more aware of recently publicized concerns regarding excessive expectations and/or that less educated parents intensify expectations in response to their own unfulfilled ambitions.

There were no significant differences found between mothers of only and non-only children with regard to educational expectations, involvement of their children in extracurricular activities, or in attitudes toward self-reliance. There was little support for the suggestions frequently made in the literature regarding only children and their parents' heightened educational expectations, tendency to promote excessive involvement in extracurricular activities, or unrealistic attitudes about developmental readiness for self-reliance.

Suggestions for Future Research

A major limitation of this study is its lack of generalizability. The sample was collected through available

subjects and the number of volunteers was relatively small. In addition, the sample turned out to be a predominately white, middle-class, well-educated group of mothers. Therefore, the results can only be legitimately generalized to populations with similar characteristics. It is strongly suggested that similar research be conducted regarding only children and parental expectations using a larger, more representative sample.

In addition, it is suggested that further research be conducted to refine the instrument used to measure parental expectations. This research provided the opportunity to pilot a newly created instrument and reliability analysis did reveal an acceptable level of internal consistency. Additional testing and revision of the instrument in terms of its reliability and validity might strengthen its usefulness in further studies of the role of parental expectations in child development.

Additional research should also be conducted on other aspects of the parent-child relationship that have been used to explain the differences found in only children. Some of these aspects include assumptions about affectional deprivation, greater overprotection, heightened parental anxiety, more verbal and physical stimulation, excessive association with adults, educational encouragement, a more concentrated intellectual environment, increased parental contact, higher value placed on only children as individuals,

more attention and guidance, less parental regulation, and less diluted parental inputs. This research could explore not only the differences among parents of only and non-only children, but also the relationship between these aspects of the parent-child relationship and specific child characteristics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

UNIVERSITY LETTER HEAD STATIONARY

January 8, 1990

Dear Parents,

This letter is being sent to request your assistance in a research project being conducted by a graduate student in Child Development at Michigan State University. The project is intended to investigate certain components of parents' attitudes and opinions. Parenting is one of the most challenging tasks that any of us will ever undertake and it has grown especially challenging in these rapidly changing times. Many family professionals desire to understand the parenting experience more adequately and one way to do this is to seek this information from parents themselves. Your participation in this study could make an important contribution to knowledge currently available about parenting in our society. Participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate at all.

For the purposes of this study, the sample of parents will be limited to mothers of children between the ages of five and six years. Participation in this study would involve filling out a questionnaire including items relating to your opinions as a parent and some background information. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The confidentiality of each participant is guaranteed and parents' names will never be directly associated with their completed questionnaires. All participants will remain anonymous in any reports on the research findings. If you would be willing to participate, please fill out the information on the next page and return it to your child's school as soon as possible. Completed forms will be collected by the researcher by January 17th.

Thank you very much for your time and your consideration of this matter. Questions about the research may be directed to the student, Jo Bush-Glenn (393-8264) or to her supervisors, Dr. Marjorie Kostelnik (355-1900) or Dr. Thomas Luster (353-3867), both faculty with the Department of Family and Child Ecology, College of Human Ecology, Michigan State University.

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research project. If you meet the characteristics of the sample required for the purposes of this research, an opinion questionnaire will be sent to you via your child's school within the next two weeks. To indicate your willingness to participate, please write your name and your child's school in the spaces provided and answer the questions below. You can be assured that your confidentiality will be maintained at all times and your name will never be directly connected to your completed questionnaire. Send this completed form back to the school before January 17th. Thank you again.

Name _____

Your Child's School _____

Would you like a summary of the results of the study when it is completed? (Circle one)

YES

NO

The answers to the following questions will assist the researcher in selecting those mothers to whom a questionnaire will be sent. Please circle the number of the response that best fits your situation.

1. Are you the mother of a child that is five or six years old?

1. YES

2. NO

2. How many children live in your family?

1. ONE CHILD

2. TWO CHILDREN

3. THREE CHILDREN

4. MORE THAN THREE CHILDREN

If you chose the response "ONE CHILD" for question 2, please answer the following question:

3. Do you expect to have more than one child in the future?

1. DEFINITELY YES

2. PROBABLY YES

3. NOT SURE

4. PROBABLY NO

5. DEFINITELY NO

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY LETTER HEAD STATIONARY

January 22, 1990

Dear Parent,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Enclosed you will find the questionnaire that was described to you in an earlier letter. Your participation will help to contribute to the knowledge that family and child professionals have about the parenting experience in these changing times and will assist them in more effectively meeting parents' and childrens' needs. Your efforts and time are very much appreciated.

This study has been designed to investigate mothers' attitudes and opinions regarding parenting children between the ages of five and six years. If, for some reason, you have received this questionnaire and you are not a mother with a child in this age group, do not complete it. Instead, please return the questionnaire to your child's school with a note on the envelope explaining the mistake. I apologize for any inconvenience this causes you.

If you have any questions about this research, please direct them to me at 393-8264 or to my faculty supervisors, Dr. Marjorie Kostelnik (355-1900) or Dr. Thomas Luster (353-3867). We would be happy to discuss any concerns with you.

Again, thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Jo Bush-Glenn, Graduate Student
Department of Family and Child Ecology
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CHILD ECOLOGY

College of Human Ecology

Michigan State University

DIRECTIONS

1. Each section of the questionnaire contains a separate set of instructions that will assist you in answering the questions for that section. You may refuse to answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time, however, the results of the study will be more meaningful if you complete the entire questionnaire.
2. When the questionnaire is completed, enclose it in the envelope in which it came and seal it. Then, peel off and discard the label with your name on it and return the envelope to your child's school before January 31.
3. You can be assured that the confidentiality of your responses will be maintained at all times. At no time will your name be directly connected to your questionnaire. The number is used on this page only to monitor the return of questionnaires. All respondents will remain anonymous in any report on the findings of the study.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this research project. Your cooperation, time, and efforts are valuable and appreciated.

SECTION I

You have been asked to participate in this research because you are a mother of a child that is five or six years of age. It is with this child in mind that we would like you to answer the following questions. If you have more than one child in this age range, choose one about whom to answer these questions.

INSTRUCTIONS: The following statements are commonly held opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. Please read each statement carefully and circle the response that most closely expresses your feelings regarding the statement. Please respond to every statement. The answer categories are as follows:

SD = STRONGLY DISAGREE
D = DISAGREE SOMEWHAT
MR = MIXED REACTION
A = AGREE SOMEWHAT
SA = STRONGLY AGREE

1. When my child comes home from school, he/she should not have to worry about studying or practicing but should just be able to relax and play.

SD D MR A SA

2. It is important to me that my child learn to read as soon as possible so that she/he can be more successful in school.

SD D MR A SA

3. The most important task of parenting is disciplining the child.

SD D MR A SA

4. I think parents should participate everyday with their child(ren) in intellectual activities such as helping with homework or projects, reading books, or visiting museums.

SD D MR A SA

5. It concerns me when my child doesn't want to try something new and challenging.

SD D MR A SA

6. When children feel that family rules are unreasonable, they should be encouraged to tell their parents that they disagree with the rules.

SD D MR A SA

7. One thing I seldom worry about is that my child won't be interested enough or won't try hard enough to do well in school.

SD D MR A SA

8. I will do everything I can to make my child one of the smartest in his/her class.

SD D MR A SA

9. I worry that some of the people who live in my neighborhood could be a bad influence on my child.

SD D MR A SA

10. It is very important to me that my child eventually has a job for which she/he is respected.

SD D MR A SA

11. Sometimes it is hard for me to stop myself from showing off my child's skills or abilities.

SD D MR A SA

12. The way children turn out often has little to do with how their parents raise them.

SD D MR A SA

13. I believe that my child will eventually be able to get a high-salary, high-responsibility job.

SD D MR A SA

14. I worry sometimes that my child's school will not challenge him/her enough.

SD D MR A SA

15. A child's personality is shaped to a large extent by the parents when the child is young.

SD D MR A SA

16. It makes me feel extremely happy when my child succeeds in learning to do something new.

SD D MR A SA

17. I think that my child's chances of being successful as an adult are probably not any better than those of the majority of other children who are her/his age and sex.

SD D MR A SA

18. I believe that it is important to spend a lot of time talking to my children even before they can understand whatever it is I am saying.

SD D MR A SA

19. I think it is best to overlook my child's shortcomings rather than try to get him/her to overcome them.

SD D MR A SA

20. It really doesn't matter that much to me what my child gets on her/his report card.

SD D MR A SA

21. Some children are born with undesirable personality characteristics and there is not much that a parent can do to change these characteristics.

SD D MR A SA

22. I think my child should be able to tell the difference between right and wrong by now.

SD D MR A SA

23. I believe that involving my child in activities that are challenging for him/her now, will improve his/her ability to learn things in school.

SD D MR A SA

24. It is more important for a child to learn to think for herself/himself than to learn to obey adults.

SD D MR A SA

25. I sometimes wish that my child was more physically attractive.

SD D MR A SA

26. I would like my child to be successful at more things in her/his life than I have been in mine.

SD D MR A SA

27. I am concerned that ideas and values contrary to my own will be adopted by my child after he/she is in school for awhile.

SD D MR A SA

28. I am convinced that my child faces a very bright future if she/he works hard enough.

SD D MR A SA

29. I believe that my child will have an opportunity to get a college degree at a good college or university.

SD D MR A SA

30. Children who are held to firm rules grow up to be the best adults.

SD D MR A SA

31. It is important to me that my child start incorporating my values as his/her own as soon as possible.

SD D MR A SA

32. I expect my child to be able to participate in adult activities such as dinner parties or going to the theatre in a lady-like or gentlemanly-like manner.

SD D MR A SA

33. I believe that the less my child watches television the better off she/he will be.

SD D MR A SA

34. I believe that I should not expect my child to always speak respectfully and politely to adults.

SD D MR A SA

35. In order for a child to fulfill his/her creative potential, he/she must often be given special training or education.

SD D MR A SA

36. Successfully rearing a child has much to do with luck.

SD D MR A SA

37. I am confident that I can help my child make the most of her/his natural abilities.

SD D MR A SA

38. There is no limit to what my child can accomplish given the right encouragement and experiences.

SD D MR A SA

39. I believe that the way I treat other people will greatly influence the way in which my child behaves toward others.

SD D MR A SA

40. I believe my child will be able to overcome any problems she/he must deal with as she/he grows up.

SD D MR A SA

41. I would like my child to put forth the maximum effort in everything he/she does.

SD D MR A SA

42. The most important difference between children who are good students and children who do poorly in school is the amount of ability they are born with.

SD D MR A SA

43. I do not think that my child should be involved in many extracurricular activities such as hobbies, sports, or special classes because school is challenging enough right now.

SD D MR A SA

44. I would like my child to be able to adapt more easily to changes in family schedules.

SD D MR A SA

45. There is not very much that a parent can do to influence the development of his/her child's intellectual abilities before the child's second birthday.

SD D MR A SA

For the following questions please check the answer that is closest to your opinion.

1. How much education would you like your child to have?

☐ 8 YEARS
☐ 9-11 YEARS
☐ HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
☐ TRADE/TECHNICAL SCHOOL
☐ 2 YEARS COLLEGE
☐ 4 YEAR COLLEGE DIPLOMA
☐ MORE THAN 4 YEARS OF COLLEGE

2. What is the minimum level of education that you think your child must receive?

☐ 8 YEARS
☐ 9-11 YEARS
☐ HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
☐ TRADE/TECHNICAL SCHOOL
☐ 2 YEARS COLLEGE
☐ 4 YEAR COLLEGE DIPLOMA
☐ MORE THAN 4 YEARS OF COLLEGE

3. How much schooling do you actually expect your child to complete?

☐ 8 YEARS
☐ 9-11 YEARS
☐ HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
☐ TRADE/TECHNICAL SCHOOL
☐ 2 YEARS COLLEGE
☐ 4 YEAR COLLEGE DIPLOMA
☐ MORE THAN 4 YEARS OF COLLEGE

Listed below are various extracurricular activities in which children may participate. These are activities that are outside of the regular school day. Please check those activities in which your child has been involved within the past twelve months. For some activities you may be asked to specify the types of activities in which your child participated within that category. (For example, for the category "music lessons", you would write the type of music lesson your child had.) If there is more than one activity for a particular category, please list all of them.

_____ ART CLASSES _____
(please specify)

_____ MUSIC LESSONS _____
(please specify)

_____ DRAMA CLASSES

_____ BROWNIES OR CUB SCOUTS

_____ OTHER CLUBS _____
(please specify)

_____ DANCE CLASSES _____
(please specify)

_____ GYM CLASSES (Such as Gymboree or motor development classes)

(please specify)

_____ FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES _____
(please specify)

_____ MUSEUM CLASSES _____
(please specify)

_____ NATURE CENTER CLASSES _____
(please specify)

_____ SUMMER DAY CAMP _____
(please specify)

_____ COMPUTER CLASSES _____
(please specify)

_____ SPORTS ACTIVITIES (please list) _____

_____ OTHER ACTIVITIES (please list) _____

SECTION II

In this section you will be asked to give your opinion about the ages at which children are ready for certain kinds of responsibilities.

INSTRUCTIONS: What follows is a list of statements about various abilities and responsibilities that children might be expected to be ready for at various ages. Please read each statement, think of the average child, and then mark in the blank the age at which the average child should be able to perform this task. You may mark the age in years or in half-years. (For example, your answer might be either "5 years" or "5 1/2 years".) We want your own opinion on these statements.

1. I believe a child should be taught to manage an allowance by the age of _____
2. I believe a child is capable of undressing and going to bed on his/her own after being told it is time to go to bed by the age of _____
3. I believe a child should help with the weekly cleaning by running the vacuum cleaner or emptying the wastebaskets by the age of _____
4. I think a child should be permitted to run errands around the neighborhood by the age of _____
5. I believe a child should be able to make his/her own bed daily without help by the age of _____
6. I believe a child can be taught to make a good selection of her/his own meal when dining in a restaurant by the age of _____
7. I think a child should be able to go to school alone, a distance of one mile or less, when it is not necessary to cross heavy traffic streets, by the age of _____
8. I think a child should be able to dress himself/herself entirely without help by the age of _____

9. I believe a child should be able to wash and dry her/his hands and face, insuring cleanliness, without adult supervision by the age of _____
10. I think a child is capable of answering the telephone appropriately by the age of _____
11. I think a child should be able to set the table for a family meal with dishes and silverware without help from an adult by the age of _____
12. I think a child should be able to put his/her own shoes on the correct foot and lace and tie them without help by the age of _____
13. I believe a child should be allowed to stay home alone while the parents are away for period of an hour or less by the age of _____
14. I think a child is capable of taking entire care of his/her hair (i.e. wash, comb, decide how it is to be worn) by the age of _____
15. I think a child should be allowed to leave the parental home for a period of time (e.g. to a one week camp) by the age of _____
16. I believe a child should be able to take the entire responsibility for her/his school "homework" (i.e. complete it without parental reminder or supervision) by the age of _____
17. I think a child should be included in some family discussions (e.g. on expenditures of money), his/her opinions being considered along with the opinions of older members of the family, by the age of _____
18. I think a child should be able to partake in extracurricular activities, being guided by his/her parents in his/her choice of activities (e.g. orchestra, swimming lessons, sports) by the age of _____

SECTION III - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section of the questionnaire is designed to get an accurate picture of the families in our study by collecting some background information.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: Most of the following questions may be answered by simply circling the number of your response. A few questions ask for short written answers.

1. What is your present age? _____ YEARS
2. What is your present marital status? (Please circle number)
 1. SINGLE (Never married)
 2. MARRIED (First time and living with spouse)
 3. DIVORCED OR SEPARATED
 4. CO-HABITING (Living with partner, but not married)
 5. REMARRIED (Married more than once and living with current partner)
 6. WIDOWED (Spouse is deceased)
3. Please fill in the requested information for each of your children on the lines provided below. Include your children's gender by circling an M for male and an F for female, age at last birthday, and whether or not they are living at home full-time or part-time. Also, please circle the child about whom you answered the questions in Section I of the questionnaire. For example, if CHILD 4 is the child you had in mind in answering these questions, circle "CHILD 4" below.

	(1) SEX	(2) AGE	(3) LIVING AT HOME FULL-TIME? YES or NO	(4) IF LIVING AT HOME PART-TIME HOW MUCH?
a. CHILD 1	M F	_____	_____	_____
b. CHILD 2	M F	_____	_____	_____
c. CHILD 3	M F	_____	_____	_____
d. CHILD 4	M F	_____	_____	_____
e. CHILD 5	M F	_____	_____	_____
f. CHILD 6	M F	_____	_____	_____

(Add on if necessary)

4. How many children are in your family all together? (Please circle the number of the correct response)

1. ONE CHILD
2. TWO CHILDREN
3. THREE CHILDREN
4. MORE THAN THREE CHILDREN

If you chose response number "1" for question 4 or "ONE CHILD", please answer questions 5 and 6 below. If you did not choose this response, go on to question number 7 on the next page.

5. Do you expect to have more than one child in the future?

1. DEFINITELY YES
2. PROBABLY YES
3. NOT SURE
4. PROBABLY NO
5. DEFINITELY NOT

6. If you do not expect to have more than one child in the future, please check the response below that best describes your reasons for this decision. If you do expect to have more children in the future, skip this question and go on to question 7.

1. VOLUNTARY - WE HAVE CHOSEN TO HAVE ONLY ONE CHILD
2. INVOLUNTARY - WE CANNOT HAVE ANY MORE CHILDREN FOR PHYSICAL REASONS
3. INVOLUNTARY - I AM NO LONGER MARRIED OR IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH A POTENTIAL FATHER OF MORE CHILDREN
4. OTHER _____
(please explain)

These next questions have to do with your family's work, education, and income. Your responses will help us in obtaining an accurate financial profile of the families in our study.

7. Are you working for pay, either part-time or full-time? If you are married or remarried, please provide this information for your spouse, too.

(Circle As Many As Apply in Each Column)

<u>(a)</u> <u>YOU</u>	<u>(b)</u> <u>YOUR SPOUSE</u>	
1	1	YES, EMPLOYED FULL-TIME (30+ HRS/WK) OR WITH A JOB BUT NOT AT WORK AT PRESENT BECAUSE OF TEMPORARY ILLNESS, VACATION, STRIKE
2	2	YES, EMPLOYED PART-TIME (LESS THAN 30 HRS/WK)
3	3	UNEMPLOYED, LAID-OFF, LOOKING FOR WORK
4	4	FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER
5	5	RETIRED
6	6	IN SCHOOL
7	7	DISABLED
8	8	OTHER _____ (please specify)

8. Please give us some information about the type of work you do. If you are married or remarried, please provide this information for your spouse, too.

<u>(a)</u> <u>YOU</u>	<u>(b)</u> <u>YOUR SPOUSE</u>
--------------------------	----------------------------------

TITLE: _____

KIND OF WORK
YOU DO: _____

KIND OF COMPANY
OR BUSINESS: _____

9. For this question, please report the years of education that you and your spouse have received.

(a) YEARS OF EDUCATION FOR YOU _____

(b) YEARS OF EDUCATION FOR YOUR SPOUSE _____

10. Next, think about your total family income for 1989 as received by you and all family members who live with you. This is the total income before taxes. Be sure to include all sources of income such as earned income, investments, social security, business or farm income, job-related benefits, welfare benefits, and so on. Circle the number of the category that is closest to your total family income.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. \$4,999 or less | 9. \$40,000-\$44,999 |
| 2. \$5,000-\$9,999 | 10. \$45,000-\$49,999 |
| 3. \$10,000-\$14,999 | 11. \$50,000-\$54,999 |
| 4. \$15,000-\$19,999 | 12. \$55,000-\$59,999 |
| 5. \$20,000-\$24,999 | 13. \$60,000-\$64,999 |
| 6. \$25,000-\$29,999 | 14. \$65,000-\$69,999 |
| 7. \$30,000-\$34,999 | 15. \$70,000-\$74,999 |
| 8. \$35,000-\$39,999 | 16. \$75,000 or above |

11. Finally, which of the following best represents your family's ethnic identification? (Circle the number)

1. ASIAN
2. BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN
3. HISPANIC / LATINO
4. NATIVE AMERICAN / AMERICAN INDIAN
5. WHITE / CAUCASIAN
6. OTHER _____
(please specify)

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