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A STUDY OF PARENTS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE FACILITATION OF GROWTH IN CHILDREN

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A STUDY OF PARENTS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE FACILITATION OF GROWTH IN CHILDREN

By

William A. Mester III

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF PARENTS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE FACILITATION OF GROWTH IN CHILDREN

By

William A. Mester III

The purpose of this study was to examine what relationship exists between parental participation in problem-solving discussion groups and parents' attitudes of acceptance toward their children and what relationship exists between such participation and the parents' perception of their role as a supporter of the growth endeavors of their children.

The parent group consisted of nine parents who were students at Saginaw Valley State College and whose children attended the day care center. They participated in a series of problem-solving discussion sessions on parenting, using a conceptual framework of dynamic holistic growth.

Two hypotheses were formulated which dealt with the attitudinal change of the parents toward greater acceptance of their children and greater self-perception change toward their role as a facilitator of their children's growth.

Two attitude survey instruments and an open-ended questionnaire were administered on a pre- and posttest basis. Five constructs were

developed, in part from the study purposes and in part as an outcome of the discussion group, which were used to analyze the dialogue of the discussion groups. The constructs dealt with parents' perception of the parenting process and the social-emotional growth of their children as well as their perceptions of parenting as an opportunity for self-renewal. The writer found no significant differences to support the hypotheses. One subtest, Uniqueness, from the Parent Acceptance Scale, was determine to be significant.

Through the analysis of the dialogue, sufficient supporting data were identified to warrant the reaffirmation of five constructs. The constructs are:

1. Parents experienced external factors that influenced the way in which they parented, even though it was in conflict with their personal belief system.
2. Parents expressed insecurities concerning the social and emotional growth of their children in a complex world.
3. Through the group discussion related to the day care experience, parents examined and grew in their competency in parenting.
4. Parents perceived a relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child.
5. Parenting provided within its own context suitable opportunities for the renewal and growth of the parent.

This work is dedicated to my parents, Marge and Will, whose support and unconditional love have always served as a wonderful example of parenting for me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recent research in child development has demonstrated that the early years in a child's life play a significant role in a child's later development. Children, early in life, are learning all of the time, from every experience. From birth they generally show a greater tendency to exhibit feelings of happiness or positive behaviors than negative feelings or behaviors. In Jersild's (1968) words, they do indeed begin their lives as friends. It can be noted, however, that these same children who at birth are so friendly and who in their earliest years are so spontaneous, active, and curious often become bored, passive, and hostile by age eight (Jersild, 1968). There are many education programs which are corrective or remedial or curative in nature. Frequently they deal with the troubled adolescent. There are relatively few programs designed that are preventive in nature. There are few that can be cited for their efforts to support or encourage the actualization of the positive potential in a child's early life (Elkind, 1981). Efforts have been made to identify those factors significant to a child's early development, among them the educative role of the parent.

Most research on the early years of a child's growth and development has acknowledged explicitly or implicitly the vital role of the parent in a child's growth (Hereford, 1963). Parents do indeed exert a powerful and to some extent lasting influence on their children (Wolfe, 1964). From the moment of conception, the mother's health determines the biological environment in which the fetus will either thrive or struggle for survival. It is now known that even the quality of the relationship between the husband and wife during pregnancy can have an effect on the child's development before birth (Stone & Church, 1975). After birth, it is the parent who will play the primary role in helping the child bond and develop a trusting relationship. It is from the parents that children first experience love and acquire the idea that they are able and worthy of love (Coopersmith, 1967). It is largely because of their communication with parents that children during their preschool years develop linguistic skills. The nature and style of communication and interaction between parents and children do have an effect on the development of intelligence in children (Hunt, 1969). Parents also play the primary role in the development of socialization skills in their children by serving as role models (Hunt, 1969; Kagan, 1970). It is true that children frequently learn to do what their parents do and not necessarily what their parents tell them to do. The nature of a child's growth, then, is closely related to the nature of the relationship he has with his parents or primary caregivers. The parent is truly a significant other in a child's life.

A parent brings to the parenting process a lengthy and complex background of experience from the past. These past experiences will have a significant effect on the way in which the parent will reconstruct his or her present experiences (Dewey, 1938); further, the past as experience plays a significant role in a person's perception of the present (Combs, 1967). There is evidence that people tend to parent in the same way in which they were parented (Block, 1955). The relationship between parent and child will also then have an effect on the child's constellation of perceptions regarding himself or herself, the child's life in general, and particularly his or her relationship with others. A parent then functions in many roles, as a primary source of warmth, as an organizer in the living environment, a provider of resources, a social role model, and as a facilitator of learning and growth.

In view of such inclusive and significant roles they play, it is understandable that parents often feel insecure or anxious about knowing what to do to help their children grow (Briggs, 1970). Parents may know and want what is best for their children, but they frequently become confused recognizing how to achieve their desired ends. For example, parents are often unaware of their own biases and prejudices. Parents and children respond to their experiences with strong feelings: joy-anger, delight-sadness. Parents, however, sometimes avoid and resist their feelings. They do not feel they are appropriate, and they sometimes attempt to restrain such feelings in their children. Denied feelings tend to show up later in some disguised form, such as anxiety

or guilt, and they thus can have an undesirable effect on the parent-child relationship (Briggs, 1970). Parents, then, might become better parents if they gained increased insight into their own experiences and if they experienced an increased openness toward themselves and others.

Parents might also become better parents if they gained greater knowledge of the process of growth and development in children and the effect that parents can have on that growth (Briggs, 1970). Parents' knowledge of human development is important. If parents recognize that a child is constantly striving to actualize his potential, perhaps they might perceive their own role as a guide or facilitator. If parents perceive a child as intrinsically motivated as opposed to being motivated by external rewards, they perhaps will see more clearly their role as providers of enriching experiences in which the child can take joy and wonder, rather than their role as dispenser of praise and criticism.

The knowledge or understanding that growth is a process that follows a sequence and that development depends on the nature of the experiences a child has had may lead parents to perceive their role as providing new experiences that build from previous ones and that are, according to Hunt (1964), an optimal match between the child's present level of functioning and his or her comfort for risking new acquisitions. Here, then, parents would see the importance of providing for connectedness in the child's experiences and of attending to their child's unique level of development.

If parents come to understand that although there is a sequence to development, still each person is unique, perhaps they can see it is important to discover and be open to that unique pattern of growth that constitutes their child. They perhaps can then accept and cherish their child because of and for his or her uniqueness.

Parents, as well as children, grow from healthy interpersonal relationships. It would seem, then, that if parents can be helped to become better observers of child development, they can participate more fully in their child's growth. They will become better able not only to meet their child's needs but, more important, to help the child meet his or her own needs.

When parents become more aware of how children grow and when they are given help looking at the total child, they should feel more secure in supporting their child's growth. Because of this security they feel, parents might then be better able to build a trusting relationship and as a consequence become more open and creative and live a fuller life.

Need for the Study

While the importance of the educative role of the parent is being assumed, more needs to be known about how parent attitudes and self-perceptions can be influenced so that parents can play a more effective role in improving the quality of their child's experiences. Research has indicated that parent attitudes can be changed through discussion groups (Hereford, 1963). To date, little research has been conducted that has used a child's experiences in a preschool setting as

a focus for parent discussion groups, in an attempt to analyze the relationship between problem-solving discussion groups and parent attitudes toward the parenting process.

Problem Statement

Can a group-centered, problem-solving discussion technique using children's experiences at a day care as a common focus for discussions on parenting:

1. be effective in helping parents gain insight into their attitudes and self-perceptions toward parenting, and
2. influence parents' attitudes and self-perceptions so that parents can be more effective in supporting their child's growth?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was designed to answer the questions: (1) What is the relationship between parental participation in problem-solving discussion groups and parents' attitudes of acceptance toward their children? and (2) What is the relationship between such participation in problem-solving discussion groups and the parents' perception of their role as a supporter or facilitator of the growth endeavors of their children? The parent discussion groups were run in conjunction with the child's participation in a day care that was based on principles of growth and development.

The experiences in the day care served as the catalyst and common ground for the growth experience in the discussion groups. The discussion sessions were group centered and problem solving in nature

and gave recognition and emphasis to the diverse nature of the participants' experiential backgrounds. The content of the discussion groups was facilitated in the parent groups in conjunction with the conceptual framework of human growth and development presented in Chapter II.

Significance of the Study

If it can be shown that a program that uses a child's preschool experience as a basis for parent discussion and group problem solving will influence the parent's attitudes and self-perceptions with respect to parenting, a vehicle for parent education will be identified that promotes an enriched environment that is supportive of a child's uniqueness and total growth. Thus, if an approach can be developed that can be shown to be a good vehicle for changing attitudes and perceptions of parents, this approach can be advanced more strongly as a powerful tool in parent education and as a way of enhancing a child's growth through his relationship with his parents.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show attitudinal change in their acceptance of the child.

Hypothesis 2: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show self-perception changes in their perception of their role as facilitator and supporter of their child's growth.

Limitations

All the participants attended the same college; however, the participants did represent a range of economic levels.

This study was limited to one series of discussions; no comparison was made with other parent discussion groups.

The writer was the participant observer in the discussion groups, and information obtained such as body gestures, inflections, and facial expressions was used to interpret the data.

This study comprised six sessions spaced over a period of 12 weeks. This was done to accommodate the schedule of the college and the day care. The limited number of sessions and the duration stand as limitations to the study.

The sample for this study was not a random sample. The sample consisted of those parents who volunteered to participate.

Another limitation to the study is the fact that two of the data instruments were paper-pencil tasks and therefore required all participants to read and respond in writing.

The use of pre-post written tests in the study may have predisposed or alerted participants to preferred directions of growth. This stands as a limitation to the study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to develop a clearer understanding of the conceptual framework of this study.

Group-centered problem-solving discussion group: An informal discussion group whose focus and purpose emerge from the members of the group rather than being externally imposed.

Experiential day care: A program whose curriculum is the active involvement of students with their environment as the basis for learning.

Holistic dynamic growth: A theory of growth and development, espoused by Allport, Maslow, and Rogers, that describes a growth process inherent in a human being that allows the uniqueness of each person to emerge as he or she grows.

Overview of Thesis

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. In Chapter I, the writer gave a brief introduction to the thesis topic, the need for the study, and its significance. This was followed by a statement of hypotheses, limitations of the study, and definition of terms.

A review of the theories and supportive research relevant to the study is presented in Chapter II. A historical account of the relationship between schools and community, a review of literature on parent education, and the theory and research on attitudes are included. This is followed by a review of literature on parent education groups and their effect on changing parent attitudes. Changing parent attitudes with respect to research design is then reviewed. Finally, a theory of human growth and development is presented which will serve as a conceptual framework for the contents of the group discussion sessions.

The design employed in this study is presented in Chapter III. Included are the problem statement, the hypotheses, a description of

the population, and the evaluation instruments. The procedures for collection and treatment of data are then presented.

In Chapter IV the analysis of data is presented. This includes an analysis using the five constructs and the pre-post attitude surveys.

A summary of the study, reflections, conclusions, and implications for further study are included in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND SUPPORTIVE RESEARCH

Introduction

As the focus of this study is parent education and day care programs, literature related to these topics is reviewed. The nature and role of parent education programs is examined. The historical development of these programs is traced and their relationship to schools in general. A more in-depth investigation of different techniques and approaches used in parent education is conducted. A discussion of parent attitudes follows with a review of approaches implemented to change those attitudes. Finally, a holistic, dynamic theory of growth and development is presented that is intended to serve as a conceptual framework for affecting parents' role in facilitating the growth of their child in this study.

Schools and Community

The feeling that parent-school cooperation and involvement should be important to public school education traces its roots to the work of Francis Wayland Parker (Meyer, 1957). An educator in Chicago in 1833, he was influenced by the work of Froebel and was attempting to implement new teaching methods. As these new methods and techniques upset members of the community, Parker formed the first parent-teacher

guild, the first in Chicago and one of the first in the nation. The guild meetings were used to discuss these changes. As a result, angry and upset parents gained a better understanding of what was happening, resulting in acceptance and harmony between school and the community.

The guilds continued to operate, and in 1897 the National Congress for Mothers in Washington, D.C., was formed. Its aim was to bring input from the community into the school. They acquired a formal charter three years later, changing the name to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Later it evolved into the current Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Meyer (1957) described that the PTA grew to such an extent that its memberships were in the millions and it represented every geographical location in the country. Its goals continued to stress providing community input and participation into the schools.

Somewhat more recently (1960s and 1970s), with the pressure of demonstrative social change, new demands were placed on the school to be responsive to its citizenry. Hildebrandt (1976) stated,

The accelerated migration of rural America to the cities to work, the need for more technically trained workers, the rising school dropout rate, and the growing unrest among minorities woke the nation to some festering ills in its midst. (p. 452)

So the war on poverty began, and the need to educate was accentuated.

One specific program from President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty was the formation of Head Start. While its major goal was to educate young children, it maintained a strong commitment to involve parents and school dropouts. In its first summer, Hildebrandt reported that Head Start had involved 536,108 children, 39,463 professionals,

44,589 paid neighborhood residents, 54,996 neighborhood volunteers, and 40,187 other volunteers throughout the nation.

The Head Start program also included the Parent and Child Center, which represented resources from the family, the community, and professionals. It recognized that both paid and volunteer nonprofessionals could make contributions. It emphasized that the family is fundamental to the child's development and that parents should play an important role in developing policies.

The Nixon Presidency (1969-1974) did not maintain the momentum for early childhood education that previous periods had. However, the Head Start program survived, mostly because of strong grassroots support, demonstrating again that community organization is essential to schools (Hildebrandt, 1976).

A closer look at the Head Start program reveals not only parent and community input into schools but also schools having an effect on parents. One basic component of the Head Start program as stated by the Office of Education and Opportunity was that parents were to be active partners in their child's education. Gordon (1977), in his description of Head Start programs and Parent-Child Centers, listed two specific goals for these parents:

1. to assist in planning the program of the center: its hours, locations, programs, etc.

2. to participate in the parent education programs of the center which should, in part, help parents deal with general and specific problems of child rearing and homemaking.

As Gordon described the original intention of the Head Start program, parents were to be involved on a more equal level in the planning of programs for their children as the first step for them to experience ownership in their children's education. Simultaneously with this ownership of the problem would come recognition or awareness of the need for information concerning parenting skills. At this point, then, it was hoped information would be more relevant to them and they would be more accepting of it.

Levin (1967) encouraged this relationship between school and home. He indicated that the success of the Mississippi Head Start program might be due to the involvement of the parents in so much of the control and decision-making process. He concluded that when parents were asked and when it was clear that their answers were used, parents spoke up and became involved in their children's education.

Bloom, Davis, and Hess (1965) took the position that the school system must take the initiative for compensatory education and parent involvement. Fusco (1966) claimed,

Generally socially disadvantaged parents are interested in their children's education and are eager for them to succeed in school; their indifference and apathy reflect their lack of skills concerning ways in which they can prepare their children for the transition from home to school and reinforce and support efforts made on behalf of their children. (p. 159)

School does need to take the initiative in reaching these parents; however, the attitude of these disadvantaged parents can interfere with the success of these efforts. Often the disadvantaged

parent views the school with mistrust and perceives school as forcing a foreign set of values and attitudes upon them (Fusco, 1966).

Levin (1968), in a Follow Through Conference at Kansas City, described these attitudes as he listed the various ways parents have been involved in school in the past. The first view of involvement is that of an audience where the parent is listening to a lecture or is an observer visiting school for the day. In this situation, the parent might feel he is being dictated to and that he has nothing to offer the school system. Second, the parent is asked to become a direct teacher of the child by following certain activities. But again this can be perceived as changing the family patterns to meet the school's and professionals' concept of what those activities should be. Levin's third level of participation could be described as a more active role as an aide or volunteer. However, the goal would still be to change the parent with school being the authority figure. In changing the parent it is implied that one must change the value system of the parents in order to improve the education of the child. A fourth approach has been extended for parents as more opportunities for decision making have been made available, such as serving on advisory boards and having input into curriculum.

In examining these approaches to parents' involvement, there appears to be a gap between the school's perception and the parent's perception of working together as a team for the education of the child. Woodhead (1977) explored this gap and proposed a direction to follow. He suggested the need for horizontal continuity between the

child's experiences at home and in school. He stated there is a tacit agreement that in modern society the caring and learning experiences provided by parents can usually be supplemented by some additional organized preschool experience. However, Woodhead warned that this preschool education should support family life rather than further undermine it by its not being complementary or cooperative with the family situation. Gordon (1976) also supported this tacit agreement as he stated that young parents often express doubts about their knowledge, skill, and capabilities to rear children and look to other sources for this support. Gordon's major concern was the delivery system or mode used to impart this knowledge. Woodhead (1977) also questioned the "interventionist" approach described by Davis, Bloom, and Hess where children's home experiences are rejected and replaced by an alien culture. He saw the disadvantaged home rich in experiences even though of a different nature, and that the child's learning should take this experience as its starting point so that learning is relevant and coherent.

Consistency between home and school or continuity to a child's experiences has emerged as a major concern for schools. In his position paper, "On the Continuity of Development," Gordon (1976) defined it as the "ongoing relationship between an individual's behaviors, attitudes, and personality at one age and at a later date." In his overview, Gordon discussed continuity through time where each developmental stage is linked but not locked into the next step. What develops, while strongly influenced by the past, is at the same time

influenced by the present. What remains continuous is the self, while specific responses or behaviors may change. This would apply to the preschool child, making it even more important for there to be a consistent relationship between his past experiences at home and the present ones he might have in school.

Woodhead (1977) stressed the importance of continuity even further as he explored the "horizontal continuity" of the relationship between the preschool and the home. Woodhead argued that discontinuities between home and school are just as likely to cause problems as discontinuities between different stages of learning can cause problems with children's learning. This discontinuity has been fostered in the past as education has become preoccupied with the search for ways of reducing inequalities by offering equal opportunities for all children. Consequently, this has forced a uniformity for all children throughout the nation in curriculum objectives, teaching methods, and assessment techniques. Woodhead believed that a community-based education or an education consistent with past experiences would not seek to eradicate these cultural differences by introducing a uniform curriculum. Instead, the diversity of children's experiences would be recognized as the starting point for learning.

In summary, these authors concluded that with such importance placed on the home or the community, the school's concern clearly becomes the question of how to help educate parents so that they may participate with knowledge and wisdom in the decision-making process of the child's education. Equally important is the question of how to

educate parents to develop better parenting skills so the child has a wealth of experiences to operate from and can reach maximum levels of development. The responsibility on the school's part is to listen to the perceptions and feelings of the parents, to come to understand their experiential background so that parental growth might be facilitated.

Parent Education

Croake (1977) defined parent education as the purposive learning activity of parents who are attempting to change their methods of interaction with their children for the purpose of encouraging positive behavior in their children.

References to parent education in the literature date back almost to the founding of this nation. As early as 1820, maternal associations were referred to, whose concern was largely the moral development of children (Sunley, 1955). Schlossman (1976) traced the origins of parent education to G. Stanley Hall's Child Study Movement in the 1880s. Hall's original attempt was to create a body of knowledge about the behaviors and characteristics of infants and children through adolescence. Most information was obtained through the use of a questionnaire filled out by the parent. Schlossman stated,

Participation in Hall's research forced parents to observe the behavior and speech of their children more systematically than before. Parents thus gained a dual satisfaction of learning more about their children and providing raw data for the scientific study of children. (p. 441)

Hall's theories and concern for child development became so widespread that in 1897 the National Congress of Mothers was formed, later to become known as the PTA. Schlossman credited the PTA with a paid membership of 60,000 at that time, a monthly journal of high reputation devoted to parent education, and an eight-volume collection of child care information entitled Parents and Their Problems. He stressed that the philosophical trend the PTA advocated was the new education of the progressive period. The emphasis was placed on cultivating children's interests along lines that were both individually liberating and socially acceptable, and on the doctrine of "learning by doing." Leff (1973) revealed the strength of the PTA as a parent education vehicle in the early 1920s when he stated that all welfare mothers attended parent education classes.

The major strategies for the PTA to implement their philosophy (Schlossman, 1976) were group discussions, home instruction for the poor, and local social political action. The first method involved small study groups to discuss recent literature they had read, real and hypothetical problems of child care and management, and social issues.

Federal support for parent education was initiated in 1909 with the White House Conference on Child Welfare (Brim, 1965). In 1914, through the Smith Lever Act, provisions were made for 2,000 county home demonstrations agents under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. These agents went directly into the home to help parents deal with the everyday problems of raising children.

In the mid-1920s, the Child Study Association of America (CSAA) was started by a group of Jewish-German women (Schlossman, 1976). In 1925 the National Council of Parent Education was initiated by the CSAA to coordinate the many lay and professional groups in the field (Schlossman, 1976). It made major contributions to the development of instructional materials and sponsored the first university course in parent education at Teachers College, Columbia, in 1925 (Crooke, 1977). The CSAA also organized the premier conference on parent education, which culminated in the influential publication, Concerning Parents, as well as publishing a monthly periodical, Child Study, which was the most sophisticated of the popular parent magazines of the day.

During that time period, parent education demonstrated three major theoretical trends (Schlossman, 1976). The first trend was that parent education was the instruction of the middle-class women only in ways that they could raise their children. Second, the emphasis shifted from the adolescent to the preschool child as educators began to realize the importance of the early years of a child. Last, the nursery school emerged as the vehicle to provide middle-class parents with specific settings to learn techniques and methods of child development. The White House Conference of 1932 reported five methods and techniques used in parent education: (a) teaching parents in groups, (b) teaching parents singly, (c) teaching parents through their participation in nursery school (d) teaching parents through directed observation of the children, and (e) use of special devices such as reading assignments and reports.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the federal Emergency Relief Administration organized schools for young children (Hildebrandt, 1976). Although the intention of the program was not to put teachers back to work, by 1942 there were 944 nursery schools operating for 38,735 children. The Lanham Act of 1942 provided funds for day care centers so that women could enter the work force as World War II progressed. During this time, Sigmund Freud's theories began to influence parents. The importance of the parent-child relationship, the significance of the early years of a child, and the contribution of play therapy and dramatic play to the understanding of a child's inner feelings began to influence parent education programs (Hildebrandt, 1976).

During the 1960s, the emergence of the Head Start program brought parent education from the middle class to minorities and the disadvantaged. A review of the program has already been reported. Brim (1965) described three methods of educating parents: (a) mass media, (b) group discussions, and (c) individual counseling. Crook and Glover (1977) reported that parent education and group methods in parent education have become synonymous. The term "parent education" is now less frequently being applied to mass-media events. Research has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of parent education. As early as the 1930s, an investigation was undertaken as to the improvement in parent knowledge (Owing, 1931).

A review of the recent research reveals some changing patterns. "Changing roles and characteristics of the American family have led

parents and educators to question what families need in order to be able to support the development of their children" (Hough & Stevens, 1981, p. 50). Keniston (1977) saw parents assuming a demanding role: choosing, meeting, talking with, and coordinating the experts, technology, and the institutions that bring up their children. From a positive perspective, this coordinating role allows parents to use their awareness of the child's unique needs to obtain appropriate specialized services. However, this can be a frightening role for parents unless they have accurate information about the past and present characteristics of themselves and their children and a support system (Hough & Stevens, 1981).

In the past, support systems were usually defined as institutions, agencies, or programs. Bronfenbrenner (1979), in his ecological view of the child, investigated informal support systems available to families. He suggested that the family system is also influenced by varied neighborhood groups, voluntary associations, and community agencies. A look at these informal support systems might reveal clues to educators as to effective means for increasing parenting skills. Hough and Stevens (1981) drew several implications concerning these systems. They stated that parents do not rear children in a social vacuum. Instead they call upon, and give substantial emotional, material, and informational help to family and friends. Parents look toward this social network as a primary source of child-rearing information. Stolz (1967) supported this in his interviews with parents, which indicated parents felt that observations of other adults and children

and their recollections of experiences in their own homes were the most important previous experiences influencing their parenting strategies.

Parent Attitudes

Hereford (1963) saw the main educational problem in parent-child relations as not one of giving or imparting information but rather one of changing attitudes. He stated,

The parent who can talk the jargon, who knows all about parent-child relations and yet is unhappy and ineffective with his own children, is an all too familiar sight. It is also quite common to see a parent who has had little instruction about child rearing practices, do a superior job of bringing up their children. (p. 4)

Tower's research (1980) also suggested that rather than attempting to mold our children and modify their behavior, an examination of parents' values would be more effective. Helping parents' attitudes become more consistent with their goals for their children is the most effective way to develop each child.

In exploring the concept of attitudes in general, most social psychologists (Triandis, Insko, Zimbardo) have agreed that Allport's (1935) definition of attitudes is the most influential one available. Allport stated: "An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related." Triandis (1971) restated this definition as follows: "An attitude is an idea charged with emotion which predisposes a class of actions to a particular class of social interactions" (p. 2). With either definition, several components of an attitude emerge.

The first component (Triandis, 1971) would be the cognitive one, the idea that is generally a result of a person categorizing objects or experiences. An example would be a parent seeing different ways a toddler would handle his food, thereby developing an attitude or idea about toddlers eating. Language would have a key function in that categorization. Triandis referred to Klineberg's statement that "when language provides a term for a particular category, it facilitates the use of that category by those who speak it" (p. 9). Zimbardo (1977) conceptualized the cognitive component as "a person's beliefs about factual knowledge of the object or person" (p. 20).

The second component is the affective one, where "emotion charges the idea" (Triandis, 1971, p. 3). It is the person's evaluation of or an emotional response to some object, idea, or person. This response can be in either a positive or negative direction toward the concept (Zimbardo, 1977). This emotional response would be based on a person's past experiences regarding that concept.

The third component is behavioral. Zimbardo stated it is the person's overt response or behavior directed toward the object or person. This is not to imply that there is a one-to-one relationship between attitude and behavior. Zimbardo stated that a particular action may be the product of many different attitudes; a given attitude may influence a variety of behaviors in different ways. Triandis supported this view that attitudes influence behavior, as well as behavior influencing attitudes, by the following example. A businessman may support a particular political program because he feels that

this support will increase the number of his clients. Having done this, he convinces himself and others that the political program has great merit. In the process, his attitude gradually becomes positive toward this program. Zimbardo saw that attitudes may be in conflict with one another, as often occurs when people choose short-term pleasures, knowing the long-term consequences. He further stated that attitude and behavior might not be consistent because of a difference in meaning between the two experiences. For these reasons, the distinction is made between the behavioral component of an attitude and behavior in general.

In addition to the basic components of attitudes, a knowledge of the function they serve is important to its understanding. Triandis described four functions of attitudes:

1. They help people understand the world around them by organizing and simplifying a very complex input from the environment.
2. They protect self-esteem by making it possible for them to avoid unpleasant truths about themselves.
3. They help people adjust in a complex world by making it more likely that they will react so as to maximize their rewards from the environment.
4. They allow people to express their values.

The first function, according to Triandis, helps us to adjust to our environment because it provides predictability. If we have classified the object correctly and the object behaves the way similar objects have behaved in the past, a person employing that previous

experience as a guide will usually be correct about the outcome. The second function of attitudes is most relevant to this study. Triandis stated that people who really count in our social environment tend to have attitudes that are similar to ours. In addition, people often bring those attitudes in line with the ones held by those important people in their lives.

Parents' attitudes toward their children would be a specific attitude to examine in light of this general information. Parents would formulate the cognitive component by their knowledge of child development and their past experiences of how they were parented. The affective component would determine their basic acceptance or rejection of the child's behavior, as well as how nurturing the parent might be. The last component would be the specific set of behaviors or techniques that the parent uses when interacting with the child.

Various research studies have investigated the influence of parents' attitudes on children's behavior. Hereford (1963) and Croak and Glover (1977) have suggested that a change in parental attitudes in the parent-child relationship leads to changes in both attitudes and behaviors on the part of the child. Anderson (1946) reported on a study by Miles indicating that there was found to be a relationship between parental attitudes and the child's status in social groups. Baldwin, Kalhorn, and Breese (1945) studied seven basic attitude clusters of parent attitudes: (a) acceptant-democratic, (b) acceptant-democratic-indulgent, (c) indulgent, (d) casual indulgent, (e) casual autocratic, (f) nonchalant rejectant, and (g) actively rejectant. The

result of this study indicated that children of acceptant-democratic parents displayed greater intellectual development, more spontaneity, emotional security, and control than did children of parents who were actively rejecting or indulgent. Block (1955) investigated restrictive versus permissive attitudes of fathers toward child rearing. The result of Block's study indicated that restrictive fathers had little self-assurance and constricted submissive individuals; furthermore, restrictive fathers frequently raise children who tend to become restrictive with their children. Nuttal and Nuttal (1976) found that parents who were perceived as more acceptant and as using less hostile control had children with higher academic motivation. Strom and Johnson (1978) discovered that parents with a positive attitude toward shared play time with their children had longer sustained interaction time between parent and child, which improved the quality of the relationship.

In summary, Hereford pointed out that parent education needs to focus on changing parents' attitudes and not just dispensing information. A review of the theoretical framework for attitudes reveals that it has three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. One function of attitudes is to help us relate to others. Identifying other people with similar attitudes is a central factor in creating a healthy atmosphere for the emotional growth of children.

Parent Education Groups and Changes in Parent Education

A review of the major theories concerning attitude changes indicates a variety of techniques and approaches. However, two approaches are most commonly used in the field of parent education. The Yale Attitude Change Approach (Zimbardo, 1971) focuses on social learning and the value of persuasive communication. Carl Hovland, a professor of psychology, designed the technique when investigating the morale of soldiers during World War II and attempting to change civilian attitudes toward various aspects of the war effort.

Zimbardo (1977) described the approach as persuasive communication. It is attempting to influence another person by arguing, presenting facts, drawing conclusions, and predicting future consequences. The approach is based on the theory that

attitudes (affective component) are influenced or changed by altering the opinions or beliefs (cognitive or knowledge component) that people have. Thus we should be able to change people's attitude toward a concept by changing their belief about it.
(p. 21)

To determine the extent to which a person will be persuaded by the communication, four specific processes need to be evaluated. The first is attention. If people are not aware of the communication, it cannot be effective. Comprehension is the second process as there has to be a basic understanding of the material presented. Acceptance, the next process, implies general agreement with the information that has been presented. Retention, the last process, is necessary for remembering the ideas or information and then generalizing it to new situations.

Zimbardo also described the Group Dynamics Approach developed by Kurt Lewin at the University of Michigan. It assumes that the person is more than a passive processor of information who computes his response from the logic of argument. Instead, the person is viewed as a social being, with an intimate dependence on others for knowledge about the world and even about himself or herself. In this approach the major factors that cause people to change their attitude is the discrepancy that exists between an individual's attitude and the group norm. Other people do not need to persuade you. Since the person is aware of the discrepancy, he or she will change the attitude in order to obtain acceptance, approval, and recognition. Olmsted, Ware, and Newell (1976) restated this approach in involving parents in their home-school program. They believed that as parents see that others view them as important and influential in their child's life and as human beings with ideas to contribute, their feelings about themselves may change.

A number of research studies have investigated changes in parent attitudes as a result of participation in a parent group. In 1963, Hereford completed a four-year study of parents who met in discussion groups for six two-hour weekly meetings. No specified approach was used. Groups were led by trained lay volunteers. Some groups used film as a stimulus for discussion; other groups used nothing. The experimental groups displayed a greater change in attitude than the control group. In a study conducted by Endres and Evans (1969), parents met for eight study groups held at two-week

intervals. Discussion topics included self-adequacy and understanding self and others. Results indicated a change in attitude and greater knowledge on the part of parents, but no significant differences were found in overt behavior. However, the children of the parents in the experimental group were found to be significantly happier and more satisfied with themselves than the children of the control group.

Attitude changes in parents who have participated in parent-effectiveness training (P.E.T.) groups have been investigated by various researchers. Watson (1980) found that P.E.T. appeared to influence the attitude of parents in a positive direction toward child-rearing practices. Goldstein (1980) compared the effects of P.E.T., assertiveness training, and a comparison treatment on self-assessed parental attitudes and behaviors of women. Her results did not support the concept that P.E.T. significantly changed parental attitudes and behaviors. Lewis (1978) also found that there was no significant change of measured parent attitudes using the P.E.T. model; however, teachers perceived children of parents who had taken a P.E.T. course to be less blaming and dependent. In addition, those children had feelings of being accepted by their parents to a greater degree than the children whose parents did not receive the training. Pinkser and Geoffroy (1978) compared P.E.T. and behavior modification parent training. They found that the P.E.T. group demonstrated significantly more family cohesion and, concurrently, less family conflict than the behavior modification group. However, there was no significant difference noted within the self-concept variable.

The Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (S.T.E.P.) program has been widely used as a technique to affect parents' attitudes. Kozlowski (1978) evaluated the effectiveness of S.T.E.P. in changing such parent attitudes as confidence, causation, acceptance, and understanding. His results indicated that S.T.E.P. participants were significantly higher than the control group on those variables when measured immediately; however, it did not last after a period of time had passed. Losconcy (1979) studied the effects of microparenting, adopted by Ivy, and the S.T.E.P. program to increase mothers' empathy for their children and their own self-concept. He found that the mothers' level of self-concept could be enhanced by either program.

Larson (1972) compared the P.E.T. format with achievement motivation groups and with discussion encounter groups. It was found that the greatest changes occurred in the achievement motivation groups. Freeman (1975) compared Adlerian mother study groups (AMS) with traditional mother study groups in which no particular approach was introduced. It was found that in the AMS group mothers held significantly less controlling and authoritarian attitudes and used negative discipline approaches significantly less than the traditional mother study groups.

Hamilton (1979) discovered more cooperative attitudes toward child rearing by mothers who had participated in an Adlerian parent education class. Morse (1980) employed a Dreikursian parent study/discussion group to affect parents' attitudes. The experimental group was significantly more knowledgeable and encouraging of their children

than the control group. Hoffman (1979) conducted a development parent group approach to help parents develop positive child-rearing attitudes. This approach did show significance for understanding and causation as specific parent attitudes.

Sutton (1980) expanded the group discussion approach to be effective with hard-to-reach parents by extending the format to include a discussion of total life concerns as well as parenting issues. The group leader must be able to integrate the parenting material for the members of the group. Harris's study (1979) also supported the premise that parent education classes could change parents' attitudes toward child rearing. Judah (1979) found that a general parent education group increased the consistency of parents' attitudes.

In summary, the Yale Attitude Change Approach advocated that, by dispensing information, attitudes could be changed. The group dynamics approach recognized the social nature of human beings and their need to belong to a group as being sufficient impetus for people to change their attitudes. This group approach has taken many different formats and titles; however, studies have indicated that parent education courses can change parental attitudes (Hereford, 1963; Larson, 1972; Lillibridge, 1971; Lobitz & Johnson, 1975; Sumerlin & Belanger, 1978). However, Croake and Glover (1977) criticized most parent education groups for their lack of a specific content in the programs. The theoretical orientation and objectives of the program vary greatly and largely remain unspecified. Many of the studies involved a rather rigidly controlled format led by professionals using

a particular approach or framework for understanding parent and child relationships, such as the S.T.E.P. program, or a relatively structural approach using a text as a guideline, such as the Adlerian mother study groups. Others were relatively unstructured and led by lay people (Hereford, 1963). Most involved no connection with a school program for children.

Parent Attitude Change: Length of Experiment

Insko (1967) stated that the most popular experimental design for attitude change is the before-and-after design involving an experimental and control group, both receiving a pre- and posttest measurement. He warned, though, that

in an attitude change study, the pretest may commit the subjects to their initial positions and make the experimental communication less persuasive, or the pretest may sensitize subjects to the issues and make the experimental communication more persuasive.
(p. 3)

Simonson (1979) discussed attitude measurement. He listed four basic approaches for collecting attitude information: self-reports, reports of others, sociometric procedures where members of a group report about their attitudes toward one another, and records that are systematic accounts of regular occurrences. Within each of these categories, there are strategies for measuring attitude-related behaviors, such as questionnaires, rating scales, interviews, written reports, or observations.

Experiments conducted regarding changing parent attitudes have varied in experimental design. Hereford's study (1964) used six two-hour sessions held at two-week intervals. Hereford also developed the

Parent Attitude Survey, which has been used in many studies.

Hereford's study did find significant changes in parent attitudes as measured by the Parent Attitude Survey upon immediate posttesting. Studies by Garcia (1971), Lillibridge (1971), and Larson (1972) used the Parent Attitude Survey developed by Hereford. All of these studies reported gains on the Confidence Trust Scale but reported different findings on the other three scales of the Parent Attitude Survey.

A review of the literature indicates great variety in the experimental designs used. Hamilton's (1979) subjects met once a week for eight weeks with pre- and posttesting being administered. Harris (1979) used the Maryland Parental Attitude Survey to measure the group that had enrolled in a parent education class. Judah (1979) used the Porter Parental Acceptance Scale in his experiment, which met weekly for six weeks. Morse (1980) conducted a two-hour session for eight weeks, also using a pre- and posttest design.

Pinkser and Geoffroy (1979) held a two-hour discussion group that met for eight consecutive weeks. Losconcy (1979) employed the S.T.E.P. program as a treatment for his experiment, which was conducted over a nine-week period, two hours per week. Kozlowski (1978) used the Parent Attitude Survey to measure the effects of the S.T.E.P. His research indicated that certain attitudes, such as trust, understanding, and confidence in the parent role, did increase. Watson (1980) also used Hereford's Parent Attitude Survey to assess the effects of P.E.T. His experimental design included a follow-up testing to determine the long-range effects of the program. Results indicated that

better scores were obtained at posttesting rather than at follow-up testing. Lewis (1978) also assessed the effect of P.E.T. over a six-week period using the Parent Attitude Survey Scale; however, her results were not significant.

In summary, there also can be found to exist a considerable range in experimental design. Testing in some studies has been conducted before the educational setting and immediately following. In other studies, posttesting has been conducted from 2 to 18 months after the conclusion of the experimental sessions in an attempt to assess the long-term or more lasting effects of the sessions. In general, most experiments did conduct at least a two-hour session held consecutively for either six or eight weeks. All experiments employed a parent attitude survey, with Hereford's being widely used.

Human Growth and Development

This study relied on the holistic dynamic theory of growth and development as a conceptual framework. The following will give emphasis to some of the tenets of this framework, referring to Maslow, Rogers, and Allport.

From this framework, human nature is viewed as essentially good. Previous psychological theory and many philosophical and religious beliefs held that human nature is essentially evil or irrational. In contrast, the holistic dynamic orientation holds that human nature can be trusted as it is essentially good or at least neutral.

As he commented on the nature of growth in a healthy person, Rogers (1962) underscored the basic goodness or trustworthiness of human nature:

It will have been evident that one implication of the view presented here is that the basic nature of the human being, when functioning freely, is constructive and trustworthy. For me this is an inescapable conclusion from a quarter century of experience in psychotherapy. When we are able to free the individual from defensiveness, so that he is open to the wide range of his own needs, as well as to the wide range of environmental and social demands, his reactions may be trusted to be positive, forward-moving, constructive. We do not need to ask who will socialize him, for one of his own deepest needs is for affiliation and communication with others. When he is fully himself, he cannot help but be realistically socialized. We do not need to ask who will control his aggressive impulses, for when he is open to all of his impulses, his need to be liked by others and his tendency to give affection are as strong as his impulses to strike out or to seize for himself. He will be aggressive in situations in which aggression is realistically appropriate, but there will be no runaway need for aggression. His total behavior, in these and other areas, when he is open to all his experience, is balanced and realistic--behavior which is appropriate to the survival and enhancement of a highly socialized animal.

I have little sympathy with the rather prevalent concept that man is basically irrational, and that his impulses, if not controlled, would lead to destruction of others and self. Man's behavior is exquisitely rational, moving with subtle and ordered complexity toward the goals his organism is endeavoring to achieve. The tragedy for most of us is that our defenses keep us from being aware of this rationality, so that consciously we are moving in one direction, while organismically we are moving in another. (pp. 30-31)

Maslow (1968) spoke similarly of the inner nature of man when he outlined his basic propositions in Toward a Psychology of Being:

This inner nature, as much as we know of it so far, is definitely not primarily "evil," but is rather what we adults in our culture call "good," or else is neutral. The most accurate way to express this is to say that it is "prior to good and evil." There is little question about this if we speak of the inner nature of the infant and child. The statement is much more complex if we speak of the "infant" as he still exists in the adult. And it gets still more complex if the individual is seen from the point of view of B-psychology rather than D-psychology.

This conclusion is supported by all the truth revealing and uncovering techniques that have anything to do with human nature: psychotherapy, objective science, education and art. For instance, in the long run, uncovering therapy lessens malice, fear, greed, etc., and increases love, courage, creativeness, kindness, altruism, etc., leading us to the conclusion that the latter are "deeper," more natural, and more intrinsically human than the former, i.e., that what we call "bad" behavior is lessened or removed by uncovering, while what we call "good" behavior is strengthened and fostered by uncovering. (p. 194)

An emphasis is also placed on the importance of the uniqueness of each individual. Although people share many of the same attributes, their uniqueness lies in the dynamic organization and development that an individual gives to those attributes. Growth is the process through which the individual develops or actualizes that unique organization of inner potential.

Allport (1955) emphasized dimensions of uniqueness of each individual as he contemplated some of the dilemmas this poses for the sciences in studying personality.

Personality is less a finished product than a transitive process. While it has some stable features, it is at the same time continually undergoing change. It is this course of change, of becoming, of individuation that is now our special concern.

The first fact that strikes us is the uniqueness of both the process and the product. Each person is an idiom unto himself, an apparent violation of the syntax of the species. An idiom develops in its own peculiar context, and this context must be understood in order to comprehend the idiom. Yet at the same time, idioms are not entirely lawless and arbitrary; indeed they can be known for what they are only by comparing them with the syntax of the species.

Hence the individuality of man extends infinitely beyond the puny individuality of plants and animals, who are primarily or exclusively creatures of tropism or instinct. Immense horizons for individuality open when billions of cortical cells are added to the meager neural equipment of lower species. Man talks, laughs, feels bored, develops a culture, prays, has a foreknowledge of death, studies theology, and strives for the improvement of his own personality. The infinitude of resulting patterns is plainly not found in creatures of instinct. For this reason we should exercise

great caution when we extrapolate the assumptions, methods, and concepts of natural and biological science to our subject matter. In particular we should refuse to carry over the indifference of other sciences to the problem of individuality. (pp. 19-22)

To understand the growth of the individual, one must come to understand the individual in a holistic manner, operating within the living context of his life environment. The emotional, behavioral, or cognitive attributes of an individual can only be fully understood if they are regarded as parts of the total organism in the context of its experiences. The individual as a unit can be reduced no further. The basic datum is the individual, who stands as much more than the sum of the parts.

Allport (1955) made this point in his exhortation for a holistic approach to the study of personality:

Thus every person deviates in thousands of ways from the hypothetical average man. But his individuality is not the sum of all these separate deviations. This is a point of extreme importance--and unless this is understood the reader will fail to grasp the burden of this book.

Take lungs for a moment--yours and mine. There is no living relation between your lungs and my lungs, nor between your cortical metabolism and mine. But my lungs do influence my cortical metabolism and so do yours. My potassium need interacts with my sodium need. These chemical needs may be compared with yours, but they have no organic functioning relation to yours. It is my heredity, my early experience, my temperament, brain capacity, emotions, motives, pulse rate, memory, cultural history, and imagination that are bound together in one individual functioning: they comprise one system, made up of various subsystems.

Unfortunately science studies chiefly my pulse rate in comparison with yours, my emotions as different from yours, my height as deviant from the norm; it seldom studies my height, pulse, emotions as an interacting pattern.

I object strongly, therefore, to a point of view that is currently in psychology. Eysenck states it as follows: To the scientist, the unique individual is simply the point of intersection of a number of quantitative variables.

What does this statement mean? It means that the scientist is not interested in the mutual interdependence of part-systems within

the whole system of personality. He is interested only in separate dimensions whereby he can compare many persons. He is interested in hearts (yours and mine) or lungs (yours and mine) but not in the mutual interaction of my heart with your lungs. He is interested in some trait (e.g., introversion)--yours and mine; but is not interested in the manner in which your introversion interacts with your other traits, with your values, and with your life plans. The scientist, according to this view, then, isn't interested in the personality system at all, but only in common dimensions. The person is left as a mere "point of intersection" with no internal structure, coherence, or animation. I cannot agree with this. (pp. 7-8)

Maslow (1970) also postulated the importance of regarding the individual as an integrated whole:

Our first proposition states that the individual is an integrated, organized whole. This theoretical statement is usually accepted piously enough by psychologists, who then often proceed calmly to ignore it in their actual experiments. That it is an experimental reality as well as a theoretical one must be realized before sound experimentation and sound motivation theory are possible. In motivation theory this proposition means many specific things. For instance, it means the whole individual is motivated rather than just a part of him. In good theory there is no such entity as a need of the stomach or mouth, or a genital need. There is only a need of the individual. It is John Smith who wants food, not John Smith's stomach. Furthermore, satisfaction comes to the whole individual and not just to a part of him. Food satisfies John Smith's hunger and not his stomach's hunger. (p. 19)

The need to regard the total organism, Maslow went on to point out, may be all the more appropriate when one views needs or derives of higher order. Further, he cautioned avoiding the complex in favor of the more simplistic.

It would be far better to take as a model for research such a drive, let us say, as the desire for money rather than the sheer hunger drive, or even better, rather than any partial goal, a more fundamental one, like the desire for love. Considering all the evidence now in hand, it is probably true that we could never understand fully the need for love no matter how much we might know about the hunger drive. Indeed a stronger statement is possible, namely, that from a full knowledge of the need for love we can learn more about general human motivation (including the hunger drive) than we could from a thorough study of the hunger drive.

It is well in this connection to recall the critical analysis of the concept of simplicity that has been made so often by the Gestalt psychologists. The hunger drive, which seems simple when compared with the drive of love, is actually not so simple in the long run. The appearance of simplicity can be obtained by selecting isolated cases, activities that are relatively independent of the wholeness of the organism. An important activity can easily be shown to have dynamic relationships with almost everything else of importance in the person. Why then take an activity that is not at all average in this sense, an activity that is selected out for special attention only because it is easier to deal with by our customary (but not necessarily correct) experimental technique of isolation, reduction, or of independence from other activities? If we are faced with the choice of dealing with either (1) experimentally simple problems that are however trivial or invalid, or (2) experimental problems that are fearfully difficult but important, we should certainly not hesitate to choose the latter. (pp. 20-21)

Further, it is held that the individual is inherently motivated to grow and that growth can be viewed as a more dynamic and holistic process. Both a behavioral and psychoanalytic framework would pose the individual as a more reactive organism. The organism reacts to internal or external pressures that cause tension and then attempts to restore balance by reducing that tension. In contrast, the holistic dynamic theory holds that the individual is inherently motivated to grow, that in this dynamic process the organism often seeks out states of imbalance or tension in an effort to grow. Growth, then, is viewed as a more continuous and ongoing process.

Allport made this point in his dialogue with Richard Evans (1981):

Allport: Individuals are in a constant process of becoming. Many factors enter into the process, including some mechanical learning out of habits from the past, but all these factors must be accounted for when we attempt to determine how personality becomes what it is. We may learn to keep to the right in traffic or how to run a machine or some skill which might be explained by traditional theory, but the concept of becoming includes also the self-image,

maturation, identification, and all forms of cognitive learning. They must be accounted for in an adequate theory of personality.

Evans: You made the point in your book, Becoming, that personality grows in a continuing way and we cannot break up development into segments such as the first five years, the next five years, and so on. Emergent personality must be taken as a total process of development.

Allport: Goldstein and Maslow have been trying to say the same thing using the concept of self-actualization. They feel that as long as a person lives, he has to actualize his being, and it doesn't stop at any period, nor is it fixed or set at any given episode of life. (pp. 3-4)

In the same dialogue, Allport explained his view of the organism (O) as being more proactive and not mainly a reactive tension-reduction system.

Evans: You're using homeostasis as the biologist does, in the sense that he postulates that the organism seeks a physiological balance regardless of how much imbalance there is, are you not?

Allport: Yes, that's exactly what I mean. If you consider the O as having tension-reducing propensities, or as establishing homeostasis or equilibrium, that is one view of O. Actually, however, I take a more proactive view of the nature of O. As I see it, it not only tries to establish equilibrium under some circumstances, but also attempts to maintain disequilibrium. It even goes out to seek disequilibrium in order to maintain tension. So your conception of the nature of the O forms the basis for your notion of what personality really is. (p. 14)

Maslow gave a final summary of this view as he looked at growth motivation:

Almost always associated with negative attitudes toward the need is the conception that the primary aim of the organism is to get rid of the annoying need and thereby to achieve a cessation of tension, an equilibrium, a homeostasis, a quiescence, a state of rest, a lack of pain.

The drive or need presses toward its own elimination. Its only striving is toward cessation, toward getting rid of itself, toward a state of not wanting. Pushed to its logical extreme, we wind up with Freud's death-instinct.

Angyal, Goldstein, G. Allport, C. Buhler, Schachtel and others have effectively criticized this essentially circular position. If the motivational life consists essentially of a defensive removal

of irritating tensions, and if the only end product of tension-reduction is a state of passive waiting for more unwelcome irritations to arise and in their turn, to be dispelled, then how does change, or development or movement or direction come about? Why do people improve? Get wiser? What does zest in living mean? (p. 29)

Further, he stated regarding a theory of homeostasis:

This theory must be put down as an inadequate description even of deficiency motivation. What is lacking here is awareness of the dynamic principle which ties together and interrelates all these separate motivational episodes. The different basic needs are related to each other in a hierarchical order such that gratification of one need and its consequent removal from the center of the stage brings about not a state of rest or Stoic apathy, but rather the emergence into consciousness of another "higher" need: wanting and desiring continues but at a "higher" level. Thus the coming-to-rest theory isn't adequate even for deficiency motivation.

However, when we examine people who are predominantly growth-motivated, the coming-to-rest conception of motivation becomes completely useless. In such people gratification breeds increased rather than decreased motivation, heightened rather than lessened excitement. The appetites become intensified and heightened. They grow upon themselves and instead of wanting less and less, such a person wants more and more of, for instance, education. The person rather than coming-to-rest becomes more active. The appetite for growth is whetted rather than allayed by gratification. Growth is, in itself, a rewarding and exciting process, e.g., the fulfilling of yearnings and ambitions, like that of being a good doctor; the acquisition of admired skills, like playing the violin or being a good carpenter; the steady increase of understanding about people or about the universe, or about oneself; the development of creativeness in whatever field or, most important, simply the ambition to be a good human being. (pp. 30-31)

Another condition basic to this growth is the process of need satisfaction. Because inner nature is to be trusted, needs should be satisfied as they arise as this will allow for the development of further potential.,

Similarly, it can be said that to help an individual grow, one must understand that individual's realm of personal meaning, the constellations of personal perceptions and constructs he has created based on the experiences he has had. As feelings of safety develop,

individuals develop the ability to trust; through trust they develop the ability to become open to themselves, to others, and to new experiences. It is in this context that true growth can occur:

SAFETY > TRUST > OPENNESS > GROWTH

An environment, then, that allows for safety and trust enhances openness and promotes growth.

Maslow outlined the processes this growth involves:

Our final formula then has the following elements:

1. The healthy spontaneous child, in his spontaneity, from within out, in response to his own inner Being, reaches out to the environment in wonder and interest, and expresses whatever skill he has.
2. To the extent that he is not crippled by fear, to the extent that he feels safe enough to dare.
3. In this process, that which gives him the delight-experience is fortuitously encountered, or is offered to him by helpers.
4. He must be safe and self-accepting enough to be able to choose and prefer these delights, instead of being frightened by them.
5. If he can choose these experiences which are validated by the experience of delight, then he can return to the experience, repeat it, savor it to the point of repletion, satiation or boredom.
6. At this point, he shows the tendency to go on to more complex, richer experiences and accomplishments in the same sector (again, if he feels enough to dare).
7. Such experiences not only mean moving on, but have a feedback effect on the Self, in the feeling of certainty (This I like; that I don't for sure); of capability, mastery, self-trust, self-esteem.
8. In this never ending series of choices of which life consists, the choice may generally be schematized as between safety (or, more broadly defensiveness) and growth, and since only that child doesn't need safety who already has it, we may expect the growth choice to be made by the safety-need gratified child. Only he can afford to be bold.
9. In order to be able to choose in accord with his own nature and to develop it, the child must be permitted to retain the subjective experiences of delight and boredom, as the criteria of

the correct choice for him. The alternative criterion is making the choice in terms of the wish of another person. The Self is lost when this happens. Also this constitutes restricting the choice to safety alone, since the child will give up trust in his own delight-criterion out of fear (of losing protection, love, etc.).

10. If the choice is really a free one, and if the child is not crippled, then we may expect him ordinarily to choose progression forward.

11. The evidence indicates that what delights the healthy child, what tastes good for him, is also, more frequently than not, "best" for him in terms of far goals as perceivable by the spectator.

12. In this process the environment (parents, therapists, teachers) is important in various ways, even though the ultimate choice must be made by the child:

a. it can gratify his basic needs for safety, belongingness, love and respect, so that he can feel unthreatened, autonomous, interested and spontaneous and thus dare to choose the unknown;

b. it can help by making the growth choice positively attractive and less dangerous, and by making the regressive choice less attractive and more costly.

13. In this way the psychology of Being and the psychology of Becoming can be reconciled, and the child, simply being himself, can yet move forward and grow. (pp. 57-59)

Growth is something that cannot be forced or directed but must instead be nurtured, enabled, or helped. The direction in which the growth takes place is a decision that rests ultimately in the hands of the individual. Individuals choose how they will grow. This outlook places much responsibility in the hands of the individual as he chooses and charts the course of that growth.

Maslow discussed this at great length:

If this is all so, if the child himself must finally make the choice by which he grows forward, since only he can know his subjective delight experience, then how can we reconcile this ultimate necessity for trust in the inner individual with the necessity for help from the environment? For he does need help. Without help he will be too frightened to dare. How can we help him to grow? Equally important, how can we endanger his growth?

The opposite of the subjective experience of delight (trusting himself), so far as the child is concerned, is the opinion of other people (love, respect, approval, admiration, reward from others,

trusting others rather than himself). Since others are so important and vital for the helpless baby and child, fear of losing them (as providers of safety, food, love, respect, etc.) is a primal, terrifying danger. Therefore, the child, faced with a difficult choice between his own delight experience and the experience of approval from others, must generally choose approval from others, and then handle his delight by repression or letting it die, or not noticing it or controlling it by willpower. In general, along with this will develop a disapproval of the delight experience, or shame and embarrassment and secretiveness about it, with finally, the inability even to experience it.

The primal choice, the fork in the road, then, is between others' and one's own self. If the only way to maintain the self is to lose to others, then the ordinary child will give up the self. This is true for the reason already mentioned, that safety is a most basic and prepotent need for children, more primarily necessary by far than independence and self-actualization. If adults force this choice upon him, of choosing between the loss of one (lower and stronger) vital necessity or another (higher and weaker) vital necessity, the child must choose safety even at the cost of giving up self and growth.

(In principle there is no need for forcing the child to make such a choice. People just do it often, out of their own sicknesses and out of ignorance. We know that it is necessary because we have examples enough of children who are offered all these goods simultaneously, at no vital cost, who can have safety and love and respect too.) (pp. 51-52)

The individual charts his own growth, hopefully within an environment of support.

From this point of view, then, of fostering self actualization or health, a good environment (in theory) is one that offers all necessary raw materials and then gets out of the way and stands aside to let the (average) organism itself utter its wishes and demands and make its choices (always remembering that it often chooses delay, renunciation in favor of others, etc., and that other people also have demands and wishes). (Maslow, 1970, p. 277)

In summary, this study used as a conceptual framework a holistic dynamic theory of growth and development, citing the works of Allport, Maslow, and Rogers. Growth has been described as an ongoing, continuous process inherent in a human being; emphasis is given to the unique patterned individuality of each person's growth. Growth was

described as a process of need satisfaction and inherent motivation toward further integration and growth. Growth was characterized as a holistic and dynamic process. An atmosphere supportive of growth was then described as one providing for safety, love, support, and openness.

Summary

The development of attempts to influence parenting skills was traced in this chapter. Schools and communities and their programs were examined for the relationship between home and school. Under-scored was the evidence that, historically, schools had been concerned about the education of the parent as well as the child. A closer investigation into parent education programs was conducted to determine the format or content of such programs. This investigation broadened to include the role of parents and their support systems. It was discovered that mass-media attempts to inform parents evolved into the use of small group methods. Parent attitudes were then discussed to examine their relationship to parenting behaviors. Since group methods were a prevalent technique used in parent education, several programs such as S.T.E.P. and P.E.T. were examined for their effectiveness. Length of experiment and content were also examined. Finally, a theory of growth and development was presented that would serve the conceptual framework for the study.

CHAPTER III

THE DESIGN

Introduction

The design employed in this study is described in this chapter. It includes the problem statement, a statement of the hypotheses, and a description of the population and sample. A description of the data-collection instruments and the procedures for data analysis is also included.

Problem Statement

Can a group-centered, problem-solving discussion technique using children's experiences at a day care as a common focus for discussions on parenting:

1. be effective in helping parents gain insight into their attitudes and self-perceptions toward parenting, and
2. influence parents' attitudes and self-perceptions so that parents can be more effective in supporting their child's growth?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show attitudinal changes in their acceptance of the child.

Hypothesis 2: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show self-perception changes in their perception of their role as facilitator of their child's growth.

Population

All parents whose children attended the day care center for Saginaw Valley State College on either a full- or part-time basis were contacted. They received a letter inviting them to participate in a problem-solving discussion group whose major focus would be parenting. Specific details of the study design such as completing surveys were presented. Parents agreed to participate by completing the tear-off sheet at the bottom of the letter and returning it to the teachers at the day care center.

Nine parents responded to the request. All respondents were accepted for the study. The group included one father with a handicapped child, four single mothers, and four married mothers. All parents were also students at Saginaw Valley State College majoring in various fields.

The Day Care Program

The Saginaw Valley Day Care Center consists of a modern three-bedroom ranch-style house located on 20 acres in a rural area. There is a barn and a corral for ponies. Lambs, rabbits, and ponies are available as experiences for students.

The curriculum of the day care places a primary emphasis on real experiences and free play. Much time is allowed outside for the children to study and explore. In addition to the animals, children also have had opportunities to plan gardens during the summer; in

winter they have had the opportunity to collect sap from maple trees and reduce it to syrup.

Free play and exploration continue as the major orientation for inside activities as well. The three-car garage has been converted for use for large-movement activities. Students regularly plan and help prepare meals.

The two teachers at the day care center receive support from Introductory Education students who are guided in working with students individually or in small groups. The head of the Early Childhood Education Department serves as the coordinator of the day care program and meets with the staff on a regular basis.

The student membership in the day care varies from one school term to the next. Students' scheduled attendance varies from one to five days a week. Students are allowed to attend for half days. The typical student attends the day care for three days a week. The day care is open year-round. Tuition is charged, although tuition for some families is paid by the Department of Social Services.

Setting for the Study

The format of the discussion group was carefully designed to be consistent with the theoretical or philosophical approach to parenting that was chosen. The facilitator of the group was the writer. The two day care teachers attended the six sessions held and participated in all discussion. Meetings were held between the teachers and the facilitator before the sessions to discuss and reach conceptual agreement as to the process of facilitation.

Each sessions began with a specific focus, either an open-ended question or a stimulus such as a series of statements. The parents then responded to the topic by relating particular examples. The examples usually reflected many different perspectives, including opposing reactions to similar situations. The parents often related situations describing the way they had been parented, as well as how they were parenting. The facilitator then interjected appropriate theoretical statements or knowledge that reflected the shared experiences. New dimensions to the concept were introduced by the facilitator in the form of questions. Paraphrasing or active-listening techniques were used to clarify statements and to insure accurate understanding for the facilitator and the group members. Modeling was provided for parents as they specifically asked for guidance in handling particular problems. At the conclusion of each session, the facilitator summarized the content of the session, and the group set the goals for the next meeting.

Sessions were taped so the dialogue of the members could be analyzed for additional information. This information would be considered with the other evaluation instruments used.

Content of Discussion Group

Although there was a focus to each group, the specific content of each session remained flexible to allow for the individuality of each member. In general, the content of the program was grounded in the theories of Allport, Maslow, and Rogers regarding the nature of

growth and development. Although topics became interrelated, the major focus of each session was as follows:

1st session: This consisted of an introduction to the project, a group dynamics activity to help members get to know each other, and small group discussions on what goals were most important for their children.

2nd session: A statement sheet about growth and development was provided for members to react to. The major theme became helping children become responsible.

3rd session: The focus was developing good self-esteem.

4th session: How to set appropriate expectations was the major theme.

5th session: Discussion centered on how people develop and grow.

6th session: Sex-role stereotyping was the major topic.

Data Instruments

Open-Ended Questionnaire

The open-ended questionnaire was administered with the intention of providing a balance in test format and with the hope of obtaining richer data. Several open-ended statements were proposed to obtain parents' attitudes concerning parenting in general. Because of the need to keep the testing time for each parent manageable, only three questions or statements were presented:

- a. Tell me about your child.
- b. As a parent, what concerns you the most about raising your child?
- c. Describe when you felt happiest as a parent.

The first statement was designed to sample in an unstructured way those perceptions and feelings foremost in the minds of the parents about their child. The second question attempted to have the parents share the areas of parenting they were most concerned about handling. The last statement was presented to identify those times that provided satisfaction in the job of parenting.

Constructs

Five constructs in the form of questions were used to assist in the analysis of the data gained from the open-ended questionnaire and the dialogue from the discussion group sessions. As stated earlier in Chapter I, it was intended that the use of the constructs would allow analysis of the data at yet another level and would identify additional parameters that might lead to a deeper understanding of the parenting process.

The particular constructs employed in this study were carefully selected to develop the purpose of the study. The first two constructs emerged as a result of a thorough analysis of the transcripts and open-ended questionnaires with key words or phrases reappearing, from which the constructs were formed. The last three constructs are a further elaboration of the stated purpose of this study.

Each construct was developed more fully through quotations from the open-ended surveys or from the transcripts of the discussion groups. The major dimensions of each construct were then summarized. On this basis, a determination was made as to whether each question warranted assertion as a supported construct.

The following five constructs in the form of questions were developed:

1. What evidence was expressed by the participants that at times external factors influenced the way in which they parented even though it was in conflict with their personal belief system?
2. What evidence was expressed by the participants that they felt insecurities concerning the social and emotional growth of their children in a complex world?
3. What evidence was expressed by the participants that the group discussion related to the day care center contributed to parents examining and growing in their competency in parenting?
4. What evidence was expressed by the participants that there is a relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child?
5. What evidence was expressed by the participants that the process of parenting provides within its own context suitable opportunity for the renewal and growth of the parent as a human being?

These constructs are dealt with in Chapter IV.

Parent As A Teacher Inventory

The Parent As A Teacher Inventory (PAAT) and the Parental Acceptance Scale (PAS) were chosen as two additional data-collection instruments. Both instruments measured parents' attitudes on parenting issues that reflect a knowledge of human growth and development.

Stasser based the Parent As A Teacher Inventory (PAAT) on the belief that parent education is most successful when the participants are considered as individuals. More specifically, it is important to determine what individual mothers and fathers expect of their children and how they perceive themselves as teachers. For this reason, he devised the PAAT. It is a composite attitude scale in which the individual parents describe feelings about various aspects of the parent-child interactive system, their standards for assessing the importance of various aspects of child behavior, and their value preferences concerning child behavior (Strom & Johnson, 1978). His rationale for such an instrument was that an individual's emotional and behavioral responses to their own parent-child relationship are a combination of present parenting experience, value-laden expectations, and beliefs regarding child behavior. Specific emphasis was given to the nurturance of creativity as conceptualized by E. Paul Torrance and the influence of play on human development as conceptualized by Robert Strom.

The perspective from which the items were written encourages mothers and fathers to analyze their role as a dynamic force in the parent-child interactive system established with their child. It is the focus on improving the parent-child system rather than on either parent or children as separate agents that seems to account for the long-term success of some early intervention programs over others that do not have a long-term effect. The PAAT items are grouped into five areas:

- a. Creativity subset--Parental acceptance of creative functioning in their child and desire to encourage or suppress its development.
- b. Frustration subset--Parent child-rearing frustration and locus of the frustration.
- c. Control subset--Parent feelings about control and the extent to which parental control of child behavior is deemed necessary.
- d. Play subset--Parental understanding of play and its influences on development.
- e. Teaching-learning subset--Parent perception of their ability to facilitate the teaching-learning process of their child.

Ten items designed to measure each of the five subsets make a composite PAAT of 50 items. Items are patterned so that each variable occurs only once in every five items. Scoring the inventory calls for assigning a numerical value of 4, 3, 2, or 1 to each of the 50 responses. The most desired responses based on child-development research are valued 4, with diminishing values assigned to other responses on the basis of their distance from the most desirable. Scoring may begin from the left to the right so that a Strong Yes might be a 4 for some questions, while a Strong No might be a 4 for some other questions.

Parental Acceptance Scale

Porter (1954) identified parental acceptance of children as one of the essential elements underlying the whole structure of the parent-child relationship. He discovered that previous research had concentrated on nonacceptance, such as overprotection, rejection, or indulgence. The scale was devised as a means to measure parental acceptance. Porter's operational definition was:

An acceptant parent is one who:

Regards his child as a person with feelings and respects the child's right and need to express these feelings.

Values the unique make-up of his child and does what he can to foster that uniqueness within the limits of healthy personal and social adjustment.

Recognizes the child's need to differentiate and separate himself from his parents, to become an autonomous individual.

Loves his child unconditionally.

From this operational definition, Porter defined parental acceptance as feelings and behavior on the part of the parents that are characterized by unconditional love for the child, a recognition of the child as a person with feelings, who has a right and a need to express those feelings, a value for the unique make-up of the child, and a recognition of the child's need to differentiate and separate himself from his parents in order that he may become an autonomous individual.

Two criteria were considered especially important when devising test items: (1) that the items should attempt to determine the true feelings and behavior patterns of a parent in regard to his acceptance of his child and (2) that the parent will refer to his own child when responding to the items rather than to children in general or to someone else's children.

All subtest items were intermixed in the schedule. Responses were also arranged in different combinations so that the same order occurred only twice. Responses were arbitrarily weighted from 1 to 5, with 1 representing low acceptance and 5 representing high acceptance. A split-half reliability correlation of 0.766 raised by the Spearman Brown Prophecy formula to 0.865 was obtained on the Acceptance scale by Porter (1954).

Procedure for Data Analysis

Constructs

The constructs were used to analyze the responses to the open-ended questionnaire and the recorded dialogue from the discussion sessions. Each construct was developed more fully through quotations from the open-ended questionnaires and the transcripts of the discussion groups. The major dimensions of each construct were summarized. On this basis, a determination was made as to whether each construct warranted assertion as a supported construct.

Attitude Scales

Parents in the study were tested before participation in the discussion group and upon completion of the sessions. The testing was conducted in a group setting for the two attitude scales administered. Directions were explained to the group, and then the participants completed the forms independently. The open-ended questionnaire was administered in an individual interview with each participant. It was felt that more information would be obtained if the participants were encouraged to expand their responses by comments such as "Tell me more," or "What do you mean?" The PAAT and the PAS were scored for each participant according to the standardized procedure prescribed. Individual scores were tabulated on paper to enable a statistical analysis of the pre- and posttest scores.

An "A" test was applied to the data from the PAS to test Hypothesis 1. The test for significance was conducted at the .05

level. An "A" test was also applied to the data gained from the Parent as Teacher Profile to test Hypothesis 2. The test for significance was conducted at the .05 level. The results of this treatment are presented in Chapter IV.

Summary

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to answer the following questions: (1) To what extent can parental participation in problem-solving discussion groups change parental attitudes toward directions of greater acceptance of the child? and (2) To what extent can such participation change parental self-perception toward a greater perception of the parents' role as being more supportive or facilitative of the growth endeavors of their children? The writer believes that the philosophy of the Saginaw Valley State College Children's Center, which is based on principles of total growth, will serve as a model for parents to achieve deeper insights into their parental role. The writer believes that the group process implemented and the model of the day care will help to prove the hypotheses stated.

Analysis of data included the use of pre-post attitude measurements. It was noted that the process of interaction that occurred among the members of the group might not be measured sufficiently by standardized tests alone. Because of the complexity of the parenting process as revealed in group-centered discussions, a different type of analysis would be of further value in examining the relationship between factors. Five constructs were developed, which were

used to analyze the data from the open-ended questionnaires and the transcripts of the dialogue from the discussion sessions.

The design of the study was discussed in this chapter, which included the following: problem statement, hypotheses, population and setting, group process, data instruments, and procedures for data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter data are presented relevant to these two questions: (1) What is the relationship between parental participation in problem-solving discussion groups and parents' attitudes of acceptance toward their children? and (2) What is the relationship between such participation in problem-solving discussion groups and the parents' perceptions of their role as a supporter or facilitator of the growth endeavors of their children?

Data are first presented from the open-ended questionnaires administered before and after the series of discussion sessions. Next the findings are also presented relevant to the five key construct questions that were used to analyze the dialogue of the discussion groups and the open-ended questionnaires. Finally, the data are presented on the pre- and posttest data instruments.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show attitudinal changes in their acceptance of the child.

Hypothesis 2: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show self-perception changes in their perception of their role as facilitator of their child's growth.

Open-Ended Questionnaire

The following questions were asked of each participant at the beginning and the conclusion of the six discussion group sessions:

1. Please describe your child.
2. As a parent, what concerns you most about your child?
3. Describe when you felt happiest as a parent.

Responses are recorded below.

Pretest Responses

Question 1: Please describe your child.

- a. Creative, functioning well.
- b. A lovable little mischief boy who is strong willed and outgoing. Sometimes, he is stubborn about getting things his way. Usually, he will share with his brothers and friends. He is short for his age but fast on his feet. He loves to look and read books.
- c. I see her as very active, loving, affectionate, talkative, creative, and intelligent--physically tall for her age, healthy, and I think very pretty.
- d. Very up and down type of personality. A bit manic depressive? Sweet when up and horrible when down. Very, very sensitive. Takes a long time to warm up to new people and things. But very affectionate and not too sure of himself.
- e. Quiet, very sensitive to displeasure, works well with games. Lets me know quickly what we are doing regarding him. Works and plays well by self. Seems to be developing good social awareness.

f. Merry, curious, stubborn, has her own mind, sociable, funny, energetic.

g. Enjoys being around people, doesn't like to play by himself. Very bright and curious. Reaches out to people to make them feel good.

h. Very determined once her mind is made up. Fairly quiet. Plays well by herself. Doesn't always show true feelings.

i. Not too responsible--doesn't pick up things. Chatters a lot. Likes to have your attention all the time.

Question 2: As a parent, what concerns you most about your child?

a. That I can help her to become a happy person (happy with herself) who has a sense of responsibility to herself and to society.

b. My concerns change as he moves through different stages. He seems to work out those things that I am concerned about with little or no interference from me.

c. One parent responded with a question mark. When questioned further, she stated that the task of child rearing was overwhelming.

d. That he has a healthy respect for school and adults. The first years of school are important because they will have impressions on you for the rest of your life.

e. That he is emotionally happy, physically healthy and will be flexible enough to make all the adjustments necessary as he grows up. Also that he may have many opportunities to learn and see much while he grows and that he will not be subjected to boring days with nothing to do.

- f. The schools I have to put her in.
- g. The state that the world is in. Hard to raise a child with so much garbage thrown at them. He can't discern what is right or wrong. To help him be able to decide the right to ask why.
- h. The pressures my child will have to deal with. There are so many more pressures to deal with than before.
- i. That he will be a well-adjusted person when he grows up.

Question 3: Describe when you felt happiest as a parent.

- a. When we share a good joke.
- b. Of course with each kiss, also as I watch things click (problem being solved) and when I watch him play with friends.
- c. So many times, probably the happiest day of my life was the day she was born. I can remember at around nine months or so when she could really begin to cuddle on her own, feeling a real sense of overwhelming joy. And just little things everyday.
- d. When I am playing with my children. Taking trips to the zoo, park, or farms where animals are. Enjoying these adventures with them.
- e. When he was born. When he is proud to show me something he has learned or discovered and involves me in his conversations.
- f. When my little handicapped daughter spoke to me in a whole sentence.
- g. When Alison was born because nothing had affected her yet and I felt I could shape this person.

h. Holidays are really happy times now that the children are getting older. They get so excited and enjoy getting ready that it really gets you in the mood.

i. Bedtime is the happiest time since it seems she shares so many secrets and we feel close.

Posttest Responses

Question 1: Please describe your child.

a. Sweet, loving, innocent, willing to learn. Needs a lot of love. People are wonderful and ready to reach out until society makes negative things happen.

b. She is sensitive, takes life much more seriously than I would like. She spends a lot of time thinking--in deep thought which concerns me. She plays well with other children. She has a problem with self-confidence and is very hard to comfort when she is upset.

c. Enthusiastic, happy by new things, stubborn, determined, bright, loving, affectionate. Confident--will keep trying until she succeeds.

d. Independent child, happy, determined. She has a lot of ideas in her head she wants to carry out. If there is a problem, she has a thousand reasons why it happened.

e. Outgoing, asks a lot of questions, very intelligent, creative, likes to explain. He always has different things to do. He makes up his own schedule. Gets along with others.

f. Bright, fun, sensitive. I don't want to say bossy but he has a tendency to want things his own way. Likes things organized.

Loving, affectionate, and has a good sense of humor. Not shy, likes grown-ups to talk to him.

g. Smart, comes up with ideas. Strong willed or stubborn. She does share with people. She can be neat once in a while. She does talk back and fights but is starting to get along.

h. He is not all together. He gets too angry. When he is good he is happy. He is more introspective. He can enjoy things for himself--doesn't need for everyone else to know.

i. He likes to be with adults. He is curious about a lot of things. He stays at a task longer and remembers quite a bit about what happened a long time ago. He doesn't understand why if someone is your friend why they might do something to hurt him.

Question 2: As a parent what concerns you most about your child?

a. The state the world is in. Hard to raise a child with so much garbage thrown at them. They can't tell what is right or wrong. To help her be able to decide right to ask why.

b. I am concerned about school. She is very intelligent but she doesn't display it always. I had a terrible school experience and I don't want her to have a difficult time. If I have to force her to come to school, she can get very stubborn.

c. I am worried about the separation from my husband and how she is handling it. Concerned that she doesn't have her father and that her father is black. Keeping up with her as she has boundless

energy and I don't. I want her to be happy and to be a good person so that she doesn't steal or cheat.

d. I want her to have good self-esteem. I want her to be able to assert herself and that she will feel so good about herself that she will give to others.

e. That I understand his questions. That he is open about his feelings and not afraid to tell me what he likes. That he be able to choose what he wants. That he is able to express himself.

f. I don't spent a lot of time worrying about raising my child. I want her to be a happy person who can set her own goals and be independent. This will be hard for me because she is my only child and it will be hard to let her go.

g. I am concerned about explaining things to him and answering his questions. When he gets stubborn and wants his own way. I do want him to be flexible and curious.

h. I just want him to be happy and feel that his parents didn't mess him up.

i. I am concerned that she will just give in to society and become what society wants rather than what she wants.

Question 3: Describe when you felt happiest as a parent.

a. When Allison was born because nothing had affected her yet and I felt that I could shape this person. There aren't a lot of decisions to be made at that point so it is easier. You don't have to wrack your brains.

b. Being alone with him--no outside intrusions, no time limits. I like to hear his views on the world.

c. When she was born, I couldn't believe that little girl was mine. I breast fed her for ten months and really enjoyed the warmth.

d. When I watch my kids run, during family activities, and when I am reading to them.

e. When I know that I can respond to him and not get tired when I am meeting his needs. When he learns to do new things.

f. Her accomplishments are nice but that is not when I feel an overwhelming sense of love. It is the silly times when she is laughing and giggling. That is when you feel true joy about your children.

g. When he hugs and kisses me, when he is asleep, when I am not feeling well and he comes to comfort me, when he says that he loves me.

h. When he is happy.

i. When I see them do things that mean they are growing up to be nice people.

These data were analyzed, using the five constructs that follow.

Constructs

Five constructs in the form of questions were used to analyze the dialogue during the discussion group sessions and the responses from the open-ended questionnaires, in an effort to arrive at a deeper understanding of the parenting process. Excerpts illustrating the

discussion group sessions are provided in the Appendix. The following five construct questions were used to analyze the data:

1. What evidence was expressed by the participants that at times external factors influenced the way in which they parented even though it was in conflict with their personal belief system?
2. What evidence was expressed by the participants that they felt insecurities concerning the social and emotional growth of their children in a complex world?
3. What evidence was expressed by the participants that the group discussion related to the day care center contributed to parents examining and growing in their competency in parenting?
4. What evidence was expressed by the participants that there is a relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child?
5. What evidence was expressed by the participants that the process of parenting provides within its own context suitable opportunity for the renewal and growth of the parent as a human being?

Question 1

What evidence was expressed by the participants that at times external factors influenced the way in which they parented even though it was in conflict with their personal belief system?

A major theme expressed was that parents often felt a lack of control over their ability to respond to their child in a manner they would like to or know they should respond. As they reflected over past incidences of interactions with their children, they could identify what response might have been more appropriate.

During the reflections, lack of time recurred as a factor that influenced their behavior when parenting. For instance, this parent's statement: "I find myself telling Jennifer 'No' because it is 5:00 and I have spent a whole day at school and I have this much patience. I

simply can't tolerate it which is a shame." Another parent responded, "Time and pressures are too great and sometimes you simply can't do what you want to do." Another parent recognized the ideal condition yet acknowledged what reality did involve as she said, "Nobody wants any demands placed on them. Everybody wants their own time and space. However, all of us feel pressure we have to deal with." Another parent described the effect that being late has on her behavior as she interacts with her children: "I have a headache from being late. You are rushed and you try to get your kids to move and they move even slower. Then you end up yelling at them which upsets them."

Pressure from others or expectations set external to the individual were apparent as a factor influencing parenting behavior. As this parent tried to meet the unspoken expectations her sister-in-law had set, she discovered she was changing the expectations she had set for her own children. "There is always a normal amount of clutter in our house that never bothers me. But when I go to my sister-in-law's house, everything is so neat and perfect. Although she never says anything, I find myself constantly nagging the kids to sit still so they won't break anything or to put the toys right away so everything stays so neat."

Sometimes the pressure is much more direct, as this parent experienced. "What if you walk into a house and somebody you've never seen before starts threatening your child and making demands of him? I went to a party one time and met someone who said, 'I'm so-and-so's mean aunt. Hi, Bernie, how are you? Come over here so I can spank

you.' She then criticized me for letting my son stay up so late." Although this parent's behavior was not affected, she did begin to question her judgment in bringing the child to the party.

Sometimes the source of pressure comes from the family itself as members of the family place expectations on the one parenting. One mother felt the entire responsibility for parenting as her husband didn't see that as his role. She stated, "My husband told me one time, 'I'm not the babysitter, you are.' No arguments, discussion, that was it--he didn't want to bother with the kids." As a result, this mother felt alone and more insecure in her capability to parent since she had no one to share the responsibility. Another mother stated, "My children's expectation of me is unreal, I feel. No matter how many things I did, they would still come up with 'Let's do this.' No thanks for doing the things that went before." It would seem that this parent felt the pressure to meet the expectations set by her children; however, at the same time, she seemed to question the desirability of doing that.

Another parent experienced conflict between her parenting style and that of her husband. "Father wants to overprotect. I allow them to make mistakes and get over them. He'd like to isolate them." Another parent contributed this response to the problem: "You have to find the place where you can work together and start from there. It is a slow process."

A third source of expectations came from the job the parents held. One mother expressed it this way: "The next few weeks in my job

will be extremely busy, lots of deadlines to meet. So often we take it out on our children and they think the way you feel is their fault." This mother did perceive that meeting one set of expectations (job) affected her behavior in interacting with her children in a negative way. Expectations to return to the job after a baby has been born also directly affect the mother. One mother stated, "How many women have you known that have gone back to work just crying because they were at the point where they were going to lose their job or they had to make this choice when they weren't ready to leave that child? I have two or three friends who have gone through that." Most mothers are aware of the importance of the first year of life; however, they are forced to leave or be apart from the child because of job restrictions.

Since society provides the larger context that families live in, parenting could be affected by forces that exist in society. Several parents identified television as a factor that was influencing their children. One mother expressed: "At the end of about four hours (T.V.), she is so hyped, so wired because it's too much. I wonder what it's doing to her." Another parent perceived the import or relationship more clearly as she stated, "I find myself getting real frustrated with her sometimes wanting to be terribly feminine and girlish and thinking that she is picking this all up from television, cartoons, and too many really funny women's roles." School serves as another factor for both the parent and the child to cope with. As school's expectations for the child might differ from those of the parent, conflict arises, needing to be resolved. One parent shared a teacher comment

about her son, which stated that the child should be more compliant and normally active. The mother's reaction was, "It bothers me--why does my son have to be more compliant? How has that teacher arrived at her concept of normal? Instead of looking at the person, that teacher is looking at the behavior." Clearly this mother felt the pressure to meet some concept of "normal"; however, she preferred to recognize her child as an individual.

Another source of pressure or expectation that is even more insidious is the influence that "society" exerts on the shaping of attitudes. Despite the atmosphere and conditions that the parents create in their own homes, their children continue to be affected by outside forces. One mother provided this example: "It is still obvious in our society, you know, the difference in roles for girls and boys. As far as I'm concerned, there's no defined roles in our home as my husband and I do a lot of the same things. Yet Erin will come home from school and say, 'Boys can do more things than girls and have more fun than girls.'" One father felt the pressure directly as he stated, "I have the opposite problem, the opposite extreme. It's difficult to deal with, the stereotype for men and women. I have to deal with the relatives and peers who ask why aren't I supporting the family instead of the woman. Why am I spending the time with the children?" This father felt strongly that his role should include nurturing his children and investing of himself rather than just materialistically providing for them.

This influence on males begins very early as this situation at the day care indicates. One teacher related that "word had gotten around that little boys don't cry. Anyway it happened today, remember I told you he just cried and he was all upset. All of a sudden I saw him under the table and the lip was here and a tear was in the eye and nothing would come out and he said, 'Big boys don't cry.'" Although the teacher and the child had discussed the importance of expressing your feelings, clearly other factors were at work.

In summary, parents related that certain factors, at times, shaped their behavior in relation to parenting. Lack of time, expectations from others including children or spouse, and job expectations were immediate and specific sources of conflict. The influence of television, school as an environment for the child, and values inherent in society, for example, sex-role stereotyping, provided a more subtle influence but had an equally profound effect on parenting styles.

Question 2

What evidence was expressed by the participants that they felt insecurities concerning the social and emotional growth of their children in a complex world?

It is important to report that it is the social-emotional aspect of the child's growth that concerned this group of parents the most. A thorough examination of the transcripts indicated no conversation or remarks that discussed the physical dimension of caring for their children. Then they responded with statements such as "tall for

her age, healthy, and I think very pretty" or "he is short for his age but fast on his feet."

That parents felt most concerned about this area of growth was also evident in the responses to the second question of the open-ended survey conducted as a pretest. The question asked, "As a parent, what concerns you most about raising your child?" One parent clearly recognized the challenge for the task as she stated, "That I can help her to become a happy person (happy with herself), who has a sense of responsibility to herself and her society." Another parent expressed a similar concern, "That he is emotionally happy, physically healthy and will be flexible enough to make all the adjustment necessary as he grows up. Also that he may have many opportunities to learn and see much while he grows and that he will not be subjected to boring days with nothing to do." Another parent acknowledged the complexity of the task for the child to become a member of society due to the present condition of society. She responded, "The state that the world is in. Hard to raise a child with so much garbage thrown at them. He can't discern what is right or wrong. To help him be able to decide the right to ask why." Another parent expressed insight into her child's social and emotional development; however, she still requested more information. Her response to the question was, "My concerns change as he moves through different stages. He seems to work out those things that I am concerned about with little or no interference from me. How can I help him? What am I missing?" Another parent acknowledged the importance of her parenting on the child's growth as she wrote, "That

he has a healthy respect for schools and adults. The first years of life and school are so important because they will have impressions on you for the rest of your life." One parent with a Down's Syndrome child was most concerned about "the school I have to put her in." Another parent answered the question just with a big question mark. Again the absence of comments such as "to be successful," "to do well in school," "to make specific career decisions" might also suggest that the parents were more concerned about raising an emotionally healthy or fully actualized person.

In a previously discussed question, parents' attitude toward parenting in general was that they knew what to do; however, many external factors or pressures had come to bear on them so they couldn't act on their beliefs. From the responses to the open-ended surveys and actual quotations from the transcripts, it seems that the concept of helping children grow to be emotionally healthy adults was a specific area where these parents felt they did need more information or knowledge. This appeared to be an area where the cognitive component of a parent's attitude might be inadequate.

In reviewing the transcripts, three of the six sessions focused on the topic of expectations. Setting appropriate expectations was a major concern. One mother openly stated, "I have a hard time placing expectation because I'm so worried about doing what's best for them. I can't say I know what's best." Another mother agreed with the first one, while identifying the concern more specifically. She replied, "If I don't put expectations on my child, then could it cause my child to

say that he just wants to satisfy himself for the moment. It won't have given the child an inner drive." This parent believed that lack of expectation would harm the child's future development. Another parent questioned the placing of expectations that were too high. She contributed that "we talk about real expectation for ourselves and then face our children. We shouldn't set too high goals that you cannot meet and then become frustrated and give up." Another mother realized the results of placing expectations that couldn't be met; however, she responded by being over-protective. She stated, "I found myself holding back because I wanted her to take those things I felt she could handle. I expected her to fail but I didn't want her to risk failing. I realize now that I want so badly to have her succeed that I'm afraid to have her risk anything." Is there a range to setting expectations that encourage growth yet promote a feeling of competency on the individual's part?

One mother related expectations to physical age as she asked, "I'd like to talk about what you can expect from a child, at what age, as far as taking care of their own belongings?" As discussion followed, the participants had difficulty determining age levels because of the unique growing process of each child. What seemed to be appropriate for one parent's child was not for another. Some parents even related differences between siblings, where one child appeared capable of handling certain expectations but the other sibling was not.

A specific expectation that concerned two of the parents was the acceptance of responsibility by their children. One mother stated,

"I want him to know this did not just happen to him [he broke his lunch box while waiting for the bus]. I want him to know that he caused the action." This incident employed the same point. Another mother reported, "As far as my two girls getting along, I will hear a big smack and I ask, 'What happened, Amy?' Amy says that 'Susie ran into my fist.'" Both parents were looking for more direction so they could facilitate their children developing a sense of responsibility.

Another specific expectation involved limiting a child. One mother remarked, "My kids are conscious of developing how they feel or what's going on inside them. Both are self-driving and there's a need to temper that self-drive. Should we put limits on the child's drive? So they mind but I don't know what minding means." Is there a difference between individuals' expectations for themselves and the expectations for themselves and the expectation that society places? The entire last session dealt with this question as the participants focused on sex-role stereotyping as expectations forced on the individual from society. In the previous question in this chapter, examples of that were listed.

True growth of the individual and the setting of self-expectations became a focus for discussion. One mother revealed that "As I grew up, I fulfilled the expectations but there came a problem when no one was setting them for me and I didn't know how to deal with that--being a mother. I didn't know how to come from within and I had to develop that." This mother recognized that the true source of

expectations should be internal; however, she wasn't sure how to develop that in her child.

Good self-esteem was identified as a goal for children by the parent group. However, there was some doubt concerning its definition. When asked, "What do you mean by self-esteem?" the responses varied. One parent stated, "Self-esteem means you have to be able to trust, live in a safe environment." Another remarked, "Self esteem involves an ability or feeling of being able to give to your environment as well as take from it. You have to feel it's all right to give." A third person responded, "It's a need--that somebody needs what you have to offer." The facilitator then asked, "How do we make children aware it is OK to give or they have something to give?" The group responded by stating, "Show approval. Tell them. Show appreciation. Give a hug or kiss--praise."

Factors affecting or influencing self-esteem were discussed. One parent shared a comment from her older child's report card. The teacher had remarked that the child should be more compliant and normally active. The mother was concerned as her son was usually quiet and reserved. She asked how that comment would affect her son's self-esteem. As the group discussed it, someone suggested, "It gives him something to live up to now." Another parent wanted "normal" defined. How did teachers or parents arrive at normal?

In summary, parents might feel relatively comfortable regarding their parenting skills in most areas of their child's growth; however, all the participants expressed some concern or insecurity in facilitating

the social and emotional growth of their children. The specific concerns of this group with regard to emotional development centered on the setting of expectations, acceptance of responsibility, and being flexible and well-adjusted as an adult. As information about the growth process was presented, the participants began to perceive a process that integrated the specific concerns mentioned. It provided an approach for viewing a problem rather than a set of techniques to be applied.

Question 3

What evidence was expressed by the participants that the group discussion related to the day care center contributed to parents examining and growing in their competency in parenting?

One dimension of the discussion group approach was that it involved all the components of the parent's attitude. Parents were able to absorb new information about growth and development in a manner that was available to them through written material. However, the style might have been too difficult to understand, the information might have been conflicting, or the parents were unable to apply general principles to their particular situation. One parent expressed it in this manner: "I think the word 'parent' has a connotation that we put on it. 'Parent' means something. When I was going to be a mother for the first time, I read books and books and became frustrated because of all the different things they were telling me. Finally I threw everything out." Another parent in the last session stated, "This group has really helped me because it dealt with my concerns, my problems, not just children in general." A third parent stated,

"Expectations make more sense now. I didn't realize how the different pieces came together." A discussion group format might be beneficial since the facilitator can provide the specific information needed, in clear terms, and help the parents apply the general principles.

Another dimension was the emotional support the group provided for each member. Specific problems or concerns were discussed. Some were previously mentioned, such as comments on a report card, getting children to accept responsibility for picking up belongings, other adults being critical of their parenting style, and the role of grandparents. The reaction of the group to the problem was always one of support, both emotional and informational. The following passages from the transcripts provide a clear picture of this. The conversation was about children taking care of their own belongings.

"My brother--they have just boxes full of toys, on the main level, upstairs and downstairs and they can't play without dumping everything out. I can see right to the bottom. And the whole floor is covered and there's very little constructive play going on. Then they have nothing to do. Once they've tired of the toys, they can't think of anything else to do. Then they play with about two things. There's too many to chose from."

"First thing, all the broken toys are thrown away, no matter how much the kids like to play with them, they are not kept. Then they have just a small box all over again. Every three months I do that."

"There's another thing you can do and that is to put a bunch of them away where they can't play with them and then switch them. It's like having new ones--they're special."

"I did that one time. I decided what was good for them to play with."

"You have to let them make the decision. I made the decision and broke his heart because some of the neatest things he had were thrown out and that wasn't fair."

"Jennifer has one piece of a puzzle that's been missing for three years and one half of a baseball card; the other half is somewhere in the house. I know the feeling because I hang on to all these little bits and pieces of things thinking they're all going to come together and they never do."

"I think I hear you say a couple things. Tell me if you think they're important. Sometimes if kids have too many toys, it gets in the way of how they play and what they play. Do we want to look at play and how toys fit into play and maybe how we facilitate play in children? From my standpoint, having too many toys becomes a problem because those toys are so realistic, so specific, they lose a sense of how to play, they lose their imagination. They are too exact in their construction. This toy is a tank and it does just this thing. They are not flexible in terms of demanding you to put into them. They're here and all set and all you do is work it. As a consequence, then, we get tired of that specific thing. It does not have the flexibility to become what you want it to. I just bought my son a toy truck and he's

spending all his time playing with the box. Why is he playing with the box? Because he can do more with it than he can do with the truck. You can look at something like bathtub toys. The kids can take a couple of toys and you can do all kinds of things with them."

From this passage, there is evidence that parents were supportive of each other in sharing information to solve a problem. In addition, there is evidence that the group facilitator took advantage of the problem to provide additional information about the concept of play. This information provided some general principles that the parent could apply in future situations in terms that were meaningful to the group.

The preschool teachers as members of the group contributed in several ways. First, they were also able to model responses or to make specific suggestions for handling situations. One parent said, "How much I can demand, as far as picking up after himself, I guess that is the main thing that I have a hard time with right now."

The teacher responded, "We also have difficulty with children here, in getting children to pick things up. If you can make a game out of it, they're right there and they'll fight to get in on it, just like Tom Sawyer wanted the other kids to paint the fence with him." The other teacher contributed, "Sometimes if you work with them just to get them started, they can finish by themselves. Sometimes children see the task as so overwhelming that they just need to know they have some support." Another particular situation involved a parent concerned about a remark from their other child's teacher. The preschool teacher

was able to offer some insight into how a teacher might define "normal." At the same time, her remarks reflected a growth orientation. She responded, "Most people just think 'normal' is what the majority of kids can do at one time. However, 'normal' for one child might not be the same for another. If Brad is normally quiet, you wouldn't expect him to be very talkative."

Second, the teachers were able to provide a sense of continuity as experiences from the day care, situations at home, and comments from the group discussion were related and set the stage for future growth. Third, the teachers were better able to illustrate certain points being made by describing specific examples from the day care. One example mentioned in a previous question described a little boy afraid to cry because big boys don't cry, as the parents were discussing sex-role stereotyping. When discussing a sense of humor and good self-esteem, one teacher shared this: "A child will labor to build a pile of blocks and they will come tumbling down and he will sort of laugh at it. Look at what happened to me. But other children will be in tears over the same thing. There are times when children do not know how to feel about a situation and we let them know it is OK and we enjoy it and then they can laugh. It helps to choose what emotion to feel at that time." When discussing expectations, the teacher remarked, "The expectations I have at the center--do not hurt each other, yourselves, animals. I'm concerned if I'm challenging them enough." Clearly the teacher was also growing in her knowledge. The other teacher contributed this example when discussing expectations: "A child was

determined to get the blocks to the ceiling. He tried and tried, but they kept falling down. Finally he called another kid over to help. The child was driven inside to succeed. Sometimes kids place expectations on themselves."

An additional contribution was that the preschool teachers had more time to share their perceptions of the children in the day care center with the parents. Parents then began to develop different perspectives of their children as they saw how others perceived them. A realization then developed that a child can shift or change behavior depending on the appropriateness of the situation. The teacher commented, "You know, Ben has a very mature way of relating to other children. He is always willing to help another child, especially the younger ones. Sometimes it appears as if he is the big brother." The parent responded, "I'm surprised to hear that. At home he is the youngest and sometimes seems so babyish." From this interchange the parent broadened her concept or perception of her son as well as realizing that her son was capable to changing behaviors to fit the situation.

A final contribution was that as a result of participating in the group discussions, parents spent more time visiting or observing in the day care center. They asked more questions concerning their child's development and invested more time in their child's education. Upon interviewing the two teachers after the six sessions had been completed, the teachers reported that seven of the nine parents stayed to talk to the teacher about their child when picking up their children

on a regular basis. In addition, two of the nine parents volunteered their time to work in the day care, which they had not done previously. Possibly the parents felt more comfortable with the teachers by meeting them in a situation outside school. In addition, the time was provided to establish a relationship so that they felt freer to risk or ask questions. The teachers' relationship with the preschoolers was also enhanced as they gained additional insights into the parents. In the posttest interview, one teacher commented, "I see some children so much clearer after talking to the parents. I've been able to set better expectations for them."

In summary, a group discussion model seemed to be appropriate for influencing parents' attitudes. It involved the total person, all three components of attitudes. It allowed flexibility for meeting the needs of the group. It provided for individual differences or differences in specific areas of growth. The setting also allowed the facilitator to model the growth process so that parents could "experience" it. The added dimension of the day care encouraged continuity to the experience. The teachers were able to provide specific examples to illustrate general principles of growth, model responses for parents, and expand the parents' perception of their children. The atmosphere of the day care reinforced the principles of growth and development presented in the group. In effect, it served as a lab for the parents who volunteered their time.

Question 4

What evidence was expressed by the participants that there is a relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child?

As the group discussed parenting, a recognition developed that parents and children shared some needs in common. One parent remarked, "I think it depends on how you ask somebody to do something. We don't like to have somebody saying go do that. I get resentful when somebody says that and kids have the same feelings we have." Another parent stressed certain conditions of the growth process as she commented, "I hope my child is better able to deal with defeat than I can. If you are ever going to succeed, you have to risk."

Recognition of growth as a continuous process rather than a finished product was revealed in this statement: "It is important that children recognize we are less than perfect. I grew up as an adult thinking I had to be perfect all the time." Another parent reflected that her needs or moods affect her child with this quotation: "I noticed my kids treat me the way I treat them. If I lose my temper during the morning hours, it haunts me all day long in the way she treats me. My child seems to need me more. If I am in a good mood, she is in a good mood all day long. I see this in my children all the time."

The parents in the group seemed to be identifying common aspects of growth for themselves and their children. Another dimension to the issue of growth that concerned parents or affected them was their dual role of parents to their own children and as a child to their parents.

The change in perceptions as the parent expands his role was mentioned in this quotation: "Now I know what my mother went through, now I can see how she felt and I remember how I felt as a child." By reflecting on past experiences, this parent gained more insight into her child; however, that was not true of all members of the group. One parent responded, "That might overwhelm you, though. If I think of how she feels, I was an unhappy child and if I think she feels that same pain, I don't know who to go for, the parent or the child." Another member of the group also expressed doubt concerning past parenting experiences when she was a child. She stated, "My mother was very critical of me. It seemed that I could never meet her expectations."

A third parent also responded, "I was afraid of her disapproval--a fear of her not liking me. But maybe I was also disappointed in my mother. Maybe I disapproved of what she did." Perhaps the type or quality of past parenting influences the person's willingness to examine his own growth. Past parenting also seems to influence the expectations that parents place on their own children. One parent stated, "My dad never made it to college, but, by gosh, his kids were going to make it." Another parent also remarked, "You know, my best friend almost made Homecoming Queen in high school and now she seems so determined that her daughter will be next year's queen."

Another factor that appeared to be affecting the relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child was the recognition of different stages or places in the process. Sometimes it might be the particular stage of development that the child is in that

will determine if there will be a conflict or not. A mother illustrated that point with this example: "Jennifer is happy about going to college with me. The older one, though, sees me as a rival. I am doing the same type of thing that she is doing and she thinks I should be focusing on her activities instead of my own." The stage of development of the child determined the reaction to the mother's growth activities. In addition to the recognition of different stages of development, there was some concern expressed if the parent could change fast enough to keep pace with the child's changing stages. One mother shared that in this example: "My husband insists that Brad is too young to take the training wheels off his bike, even though Brad really wants to. Sometimes it seems as if he thinks Brad is still three rather than almost five." Perceptions of the child sometimes do not change as readily as the child's actual growth. Although the parent might recognize different stages of development, he might not recognize how the uniqueness of each child will affect this process. An example of this was provided by a mother discussing how her second child responded to her. The first child was very open, warm, and loving while the second child had tantrums, attacked things at home, and was generally hard to handle. She commented, "When he was first born, I expected him to be just like his older brother. Right from the start, though, he was different and it hasn't stopped." This provoked additional discussion concerning the individual differences in children. One comment was, "Comparisons could be good but they can be bad. The kids start to compare each other then and someone always ends up

feeling bad." Another parent remarked, "You know I find aggressive children harder to deal with than passive children." This parent seemed to be saying that some differences are better than others.

Some parents expressed a concern or recognized that conditions or situations conducive to their child's growth might be in conflict with their own needs. One parent stated, "I have a seven-year-old who likes to sleep with me. Is it O.K. for me to have one night where she isn't in bed with me?" This parent sensed a need to balance her needs and those of her child as she perceived that they might be in conflict. Another mother also recognized the conflict when she stated, "I know it's good for kids to play with pots and pans. It's good for growth and development for them to explore, but it drives me crazy." A third mother agreed, adding, "It's great to have them help you cook but the times they most want to help are the times you least have the patience and you really need a lot." Conflict also occurs in placing expectations, as this mother explained: "I expect my kids to fit into my schedule and that's hard because at the same time, I expect them to fit into my schedule, I put demands on them and sometimes they are unreasonable demands. I have to go to school. This is something I paid for--this is something I set for so that it means my kids have to fit the schedule. And sometimes they would rather just sit around the house and relax in the morning." As this mother pursued her own growth, she experienced conflict as she recognized the effect it had on her child's growth. Another mother shared that her need to have time to herself wasn't always understood by her younger daughter. She

commented, "Sometimes I just need five minutes to myself. I try then to give the kids options where they can play together or alone." Identifying the source of conflict might be the first step in resolving it.

An additional relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child involved a confusion over roles. At times, some parents saw their child as an extension of themselves, becoming confused over whose growth had occurred. One parent stated, "We put a big investment in our children. We invest a lot of time and our goals, our expectations of ourselves are placed on them because they are our extensions." Since this parent viewed her child as an outgrowth of herself, she would have difficulty differentiating her growth from that of the child. Sometimes it is the child who supports the growth process of the parent, rather than just the parent always supporting the child. When discussing how to develop responsibility in children, one parent had these insights: "A lot of what we're doing now is we're asking them to do something for us, what we're focused on." Another parent responded by saying, "I think that's what we are asking our kids to do, organize some of our stuff and theirs, too." A previous quotation discussing how the child has to fit into the parent's schedule when that parent returns to school also supports this point. It would seem that through supporting the growth process of the parent the child grows also.

In summary, several dimensions appeared when discussing the relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child. First, there was a recognition of the similarity of needs or

aspects for growth for both populations. Second, at times how the parent had been parented seemed to influence current parenting. Or possibly it even influenced the parents' willingness to examine their own parenting style. Third, the stage of development of the child and of the parent was a possible factor in determining if there would be conflict between the two. In addition, the uniqueness of each individual influences the relationship and the process of development so that one must be careful when placing expectations. Fourth, sometimes the growth process of the parent does create conflict in the relationship. Fifth, there is a mutual aspect in this relationship that occurs when the child becomes an active supporter of the parent's growth process.

Question 5

What evidence was expressed by the participants that the process of parenting provides within its own context suitable opportunity for the renewal and growth of the parent as a human being?

In the previous question, the growth of the parent and that of the child was discussed to explore the dimensions of that relationship. One dimension emerged, parenting as a source of self-renewal, which might merit further investigation.

As the parents recognized growth in their child, they experienced a joy or happiness that served to renew them. On the open-ended surveys, parents were asked to describe when they felt the happiest as a parent. Responses included such comments as: "As I watch things click [problems being solved]" or "I can remember at around nine months

or so when she could really begin to cuddle on her own, feeling a real sense of overwhelming joy." "When my little handicapped daughter spoke to me in a whole sentence." "When he is proud to show me something he has learned or discovered something and involves me in his conversations." Parents could identify joyous moments as they watched their children grow. Later in the transcripts, several quotations emerged as parents identified that joy as a source of renewal for their own lives. One parent stated, "When I really see my daughter growing, it makes everything worthwhile." Another parent remarked, "The happiness that you get from your kids is what keeps you going even though the things around you are in such a mess." The very moment of birth, five of the nine parents identified on the surveys as one of their happiest moments. Yet it was at this time that parents also expressed the realization of how much the birth of the child signified change in the pattern of their lives.

It is the issue of change that parents also perceived as a source of growth. As the child moves from infant to toddler to preschooler and so on, it is the child's growth and need for different sorts of experiences that forces the parent to change his perceptions and outlook. The parent adjusts his life to meet the changing needs of the child. One parent stated, "By the time I get used to one stage and think I've learned about that stage, she's moved on to the next." Another parent commented, "They grow so fast, it's hard to keep up with them." It is the constant change, especially as parents have more than

one child at varying stages, that prohibits the development of ruts or static lifestyles.

Another aspect of parenting that helps adults to grow is the role of play. Sometimes as the parents shared in their child's play, they experienced the same joy and pleasures that the child did. In fact, the parent sometimes used the child as an excuse to do the things that were missing in the parent's childhood. One parent related these comments on the open-ended surveys. When asked to describe when they felt happiest as a parent, the parent responded, "When I'm playing with my children. Taking trips to the zoos, parks, or farms where animals are. Enjoying thee adventures with them." Getting ready for holidays was another example that the parents discussed.

One parent stated that "getting the kids excited about Easter was probably more fun for me than for the kids. It is O.K. to celebrate a holiday for the children's sake." Even as adults, the magic of holidays generates a joy that renews them and encourages growth as they seek new ways to celebrate.

Another form of joy for parents is the unconditional love that a baby gives his parents. A parent on the open-ended survey said, "I can remember at around nine months or so when she could really begin to cuddle on her own, feeling a real sense of overwhelming joy." It is this unconditional response to the parents as the baby smiles, coos, and gurgles that triggers a feeling of joy and happiness. Again, this joy renews them in the task of parenthood, especially through the difficult times. Some babies, for various reasons, do not

automatically smile and coo. They tend to cry more, to be fussier and harder to handle. They do not automatically trigger warm and loving responses from the parent. One parent shared these comments in the discussion group: "My first child was really a colicky baby. It was just terrible. I didn't think I was going to make it as a parent at all." The absence or lack of this unconditional love made the job of parenting much more difficult. One parent also commented, "There is a world of difference between a good baby and a colicky baby. It either makes you feel super as a parent or a real flop." Unconditional love by the child, then, provides a stimulus for growth and renewal for the parent.

Data from Pre- Posttest Instruments

Parent Acceptance Scale

The first subtest of the Parent Acceptance Scale, Feelings and Respect, was examined. This subtest measured the parent's acceptance of the child's feelings and the parent's respect for the child's need to express those feelings. The data are presented in Table 1. As can be seen from the data, the calculation of the A-test revealed that there was no significant difference.

The second subtest of the Parent Acceptance Scale, Uniqueness, was then examined. This subtest measured the parent's acceptance of the unique make-up of the child. In Table 2, the data from the pre- and posttest measurements are compared. When examining Table 2, the calculation of the A-test did reveal a significant difference.

Table 1.--Parent Acceptance Scale: Feelings and Respect subtest.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	23	35	37	43	30	33	33	23	42
Posttest	25	28	40	43	40	35	37	29	40

A = 0.685 df = 8 Criterion for .05 = .278

Table 2.--Parent Acceptance Scale: Uniqueness subtest.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	21	23	33	20	24	22	30	23	33
Posttest	21	26	32	24	22	30	36	27	31

A = 0.240 df = 8 Criterion for .05 = .278

The third subtest of the Parent Acceptance Scale, Autonomous Individual, was investigated next. This subtest measured the parent's acceptance of the child as an autonomous individual. The data are presented in Table 3. The calculation of the A-test from the data revealed no significant difference.

The last subtest of the Parent Acceptance Scale, Unconditional Regard, was then considered. This subtest measured the parent's unconditional love for the child. The data are presented in Table 4.

The calculation of the A-test from these data revealed no significant difference.

Table 3.--Parent Acceptance Scale: Autonomous Individual subtest.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	42	42	45	47	38	46	46	36	46
Posttest	47	42	41	46	39	49	48	40	44
A = 0.297 df = 8 Criterion for .05 = .278									

Table 4.--Parent Acceptance Scale: Unconditional Regard subtest.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	34	17	32	32	28	27	36	36	20
Posttest	34	22	30	32	34	26	38	40	20
A = 0.439 df = 8 Criterion for .05 = .278									

The Parent Acceptance Scale also yielded a total score, which is a reflection of the composite scores of all the subtests. The data are examined in Table 5 to determine the presence of a significant difference in order to support Hypothesis 1, which is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show attitudinal changes in their acceptance of the child.

An application of the A-test to the data indicated that no significant difference was to be found.

Table 5.--Parent Acceptance Scale: Total.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	120	117	147	142	120	128	145	118	135
Posttest	127	118	143	145	141	140	159	136	135

A = 0.279

df = 8

Criterion for .05 = .278

Parent As A Teacher Inventory

The first subtest of the Parent As A Teacher Inventory, Frustration, was examined. This subtest measured the parent's frustration related to child rearing and the locus of the frustration. The data are displayed in Table 6. An application of the A-test to the data presented yielded no significant difference between the pre- and post-test results.

The second subtest of the Parent As A Teacher Inventory, Creativity, was then examined. This subtest measured the parent's acceptance of creative functioning in the child and the parent's desire to encourage or suppress its development. The data are presented in Table 7. As can be seen from the data, the calculation of the A-test

revealed that there was no significant difference between the pre- and posttest measurements.

Table 6.--Parent As A Teacher Inventory: Frustration subtest.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	28	28	29	29	25	25	27	25	34
Posttest	33	26	35	29	29	25	31	22	34
$A = 0.541$ $df = 8$ Criterion for .05 = .278									

Table 7.--Parent As A Teacher Inventory: Creativity subtest.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	32	30	30	27	26	29	28	27	32
Posttest	33	29	36	27	29	26	31	25	34
$A = 0.901$ $df = 8$ Criterion for .05 = .278									

The next subtest of the Parent As A Teacher Inventory, Control, was examined. This subtest measured the parent's acceptance of need for control over the child. The data are presented in Table 8. An

The last subtest of the Parent As A Teacher Inventory, Teacher, was then examined. This subtest measured the parent's acceptance of his role as a teacher of his child. The data from the pre- and post-test measurements are presented in Table 10. The calculation of the A-test from the pre- and posttest measurements revealed that there was no significant difference.

Table 10.--Parent As A Teacher Inventory: Teacher subtest.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	33	30	34	33	33	33	32	29	30
Posttest	28	30	39	33	35	32	35	28	37
A = 1.140 df = 8 Criterion for .05 = .278									

The Parent As A Teacher Inventory also yielded a total score, which was a composite of all the subtests. In Table 11 the data are examined to determine the presence of a significant difference to support Hypothesis 2, which states:

Hypothesis 2: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show self-perception changes in their perception of their role as facilitator of their child's growth.

An application of the A-test to the data revealed that there was no significant difference.

Table 11.--Parent As A Teacher Inventory: Total.

	Subject								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest	151	143	151	145	142	151	144	134	163
Posttest	146	137	176	145	155	144	158	126	173
A = 0.975 df = 8 Criterion for .05 = .278									

A summary of the results of the A-tests for the Parent Acceptance Scale scores is presented in Table 12. In this summary, it can be seen that only the Uniqueness subtest was determined to be significant.

Table 12.--Summary, Parent Acceptance Scale.

Subtest	A-Value	Significance
Feelings and Respect	0.685	no
Uniqueness	0.240	yes
Autonomous Individual	0.297	no
Unconditional Regard	0.439	no
Total	0.279	no

A summary of the results of the A-tests for the Parent As A Teacher scores is presented in Table 13. It can be seen that none of the results was significant.

Table 13.--Summary, Parent As A Teacher Inventory.

Subtest	A-Value	Significance
Frustration	0.541	no
Creativity	0.901	no
Control	3.625	no
Play	0.796	no
Teacher	1.140	no
Total	0.975	no

In summary, this section gave the results of the Parent Acceptance Scale, which measured the parents' acceptance of their children, and the Parent As A Teacher Inventory, which measured the parents' perceptions of their role as facilitators and supporters of their children's growth.

The hypotheses stated that there would be a change in parents' attitudes as a result of participation in a group-centered problem-solving discussion group run in conjunction with an experiential day care center. Application of an A-test yielded no significant difference in the total scores of the pre- and posttest measurements of the Parent Acceptance Scale and the Parent As A Teacher Inventory. Therefore, on the basis of the total test scores measurement, neither hypothesis warranted support. However, one subtest on the Parent Acceptance Scale yielded a significant difference in pre- and posttest

scores. That subtest, Uniqueness, measured the parent's acceptance of the child's uniqueness. This significant difference would stand in support of Hypothesis 1.

Summary

In this chapter were reported the findings of the analysis of the data derived from this study relating to the following two questions:

1. What is the relationship between parental participation in problem-solving discussion groups related to the day care experience and parents' attitudes of acceptance of their children?

2. What is the relationship between such participation in problem-solving discussion groups related to the day care experience and the parents' perceptions of their role as a supporter or facilitator of the growth endeavors of their children?

A pretest/posttest format was used to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show attitudinal changes in their acceptance of the child.

Hypothesis 2: Parents who have participated in the parent discussion group will show self-perception changes in their perception of their role as facilitator of their child's growth.

Data analysis using an A-test yielded no significant difference at the .05 level between pre- and posttest results for total test scores on the Parent Acceptance Scale. The data therefore did not support Hypothesis 1.

One subtest of the Parent Acceptance Scale, Uniqueness, did yield a significant difference at the .05 level between pre- and posttest results. This subtest, which measures parents' attitudes of acceptance of the uniqueness of their children, therefore stands in partial support of Hypothesis 1.

Data analysis using an A-test yielded no significant difference at the .05 level between pre- and posttest results for total test scores for the Parent As A Teacher Inventory. The data therefore did not support Hypothesis 2.

Data analysis was carried out at yet another level. Using five constructs stated in the form of questions, the pre- and posttest open-ended questionnaires and the dialogue from the discussion group sessions were analyzed to determine if there were sufficient data to support the constructs. The five questions stated were:

1. What evidence was expressed by the participants that at times external factors influenced the way in which they parented even though it was in conflict with their personal belief system?
2. What evidence was expressed by the participants that they felt insecurities concerning the social and emotional growth of their children in a complex world?
3. What evidence was expressed by the participants that the group discussion related to the day care center contributed to parents examining and growing in their competency in parenting?
4. What evidence was expressed by the participants that there is a relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child?
5. What evidence was expressed by the participants that the process of parenting provides within its own context suitable opportunity for the renewal and growth of the parent as a human being?

The analysis of the open-ended questions and the dialogue of the discussion groups yielded sufficient data to warrant the following assertions:

1. Parents experienced external factors that influenced the way in which they parented, even though it was in conflict with their personal belief system.

Parents related that certain factors, at times, shaped their behavior in relation to parenting. Lack of time, expectations from others including children or spouse, and job expectations were immediate and specific sources of conflicts. The influence of television, school as an environment for the child, and values inherent in society, for example, sex-role stereotyping, provided a more subtle influence but had an equally profound effect on parenting styles.

2. Parents expressed insecurities concerning the social and emotional growth of their children in a complex world.

Parents might feel relatively comfortable regarding their parenting skills in most areas of their child's growth; however, all the participants expressed some concern or insecurity in facilitating the social and emotional growth of their children. The specific concerns of this group centered on the setting of expectations, acceptance of responsibility, and being flexible and well adjusted as an adult. As information about the growth process was presented, the participants began to perceive a process that integrated the specific concerns mentioned. It provided an approach for viewing a problem rather than a set of techniques to be applied.

3. Through the group discussion related to the day care experience, parents examined and grew in their competency in parenting.

A group discussion model seemed to be appropriate for affecting parents' attitudes. It allowed flexibility for meeting the needs of the group. It provided for individual differences or differences in specific areas of growth. The setting also allowed the facilitator to model the growth process so that parents could "experience" it. The added dimension of the day care encouraged continuity to the experience. The teachers were able to provide specific examples to illustrate general principles of growth, model responses for parents, and expand the parents' perceptions of their children. The atmosphere of the day care reinforced the principles of growth and development presented in the group. In effect, it served as a lab for the parents who volunteered their time.

4. Parents perceived a relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child.

Several dimensions appeared when discussing the relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child. First, there was a recognition of the similarity of needs or aspects for growth for both populations. Second, at times how the parent had been parented seemed to influence current parenting. Or possibly, it even influenced the parents' willingness to examine their parenting style. Third, the stage of development of the child and of the parent was a possible factor in determining if there would be conflict between the two. In addition, the uniqueness of each individual influences the

relationship and the process of development so that one must be careful when placing expectations. Fourth, sometimes the growth process of the parent does create conflict in the relationship. Fifth, there is a mutual aspect in this relationship that occurs when the child becomes an active supporter of the parent's growth process.

5. Parenting provided within its own context suitable opportunities for the renewal and growth of the parent as a human being.

Parenting might serve as a source of self-renewal for a variety of reasons. As the parent recognized growth in his child, he experienced a deep sense of joy that fulfilled the parent. Also, the different stages a child passes through (infant, toddler, preschooler, and so on) stimulate the parent to change to be in tune with the child. In addition, participating with their child in play provided the same benefits of play for the parents as well as the child. Play then becomes a source of self-renewal for the parent. Unconditional love by the child for the parent also provides a source of love that fulfills and renews the parent for the task of parenting. This love stimulates the parent to invest more deeply in the child, which in turn encourages the parent to be renewed and become actualized himself. Last, the common bond of parenthood was a stimulus for discussion that promoted or encouraged the parent to reflect on past experiences. This reflection stimulated the parent to change or explore new directions as he gained different perspectives from the group.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

Introduction

In this chapter a summary of the study is presented. This is followed by the writer's reflections on parenting and reflections on public education in light of the study. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations for further study are presented.

Summary

The purpose of the writer in this study was to examine what relationship exists between parental participation in problem-solving discussion groups and parents' attitudes of acceptance toward their children and what relationship exists between such participation and the parents' perception of their role as a supporter of the growth endeavors of their children. The parent discussion groups were run in conjunction with the child's participation in a day care that served as an example of an experientially based program in which children's growth was regarded in a holistic manner.

The discussion group consisted of nine parents who were students at Saginaw Valley State College and whose children attended the day care center. They participated in a discussion group, using a

conceptual framework of dynamic holistic growth. The group was facilitated by the writer and the two day care teachers.

Two hypotheses were formulated which dealt with the attitudinal change of the parents toward greater acceptance of their child and greater self-perception changes toward their role as a facilitator of their child's growth.

The Parent Acceptance Scale, the Parent As A Teacher Inventory, and an open-ended questionnaire were administered on a pre- and posttest basis.

A set of five constructs in question form was developed, which was applied to the dialogue of the discussion groups and the responses to the open-ended questionnaires to provide further analysis in an effort to gain greater insight into the parenting process. The constructs dealt with parents' perception of the parenting process and the social-emotional growth of their children as well as their perceptions of parenting as an opportunity for self-renewal.

Even though the writer found no significant differences to support the two hypotheses, one subtest, Uniqueness, from the Parent Acceptance Scale was determined to be significant. Parents did show an increase in their awareness of their child's uniqueness.

It is possible that several factors influenced the absence of significant findings. First, it is possible that the attitude scales were not sufficiently sensitive to detect changes in the parents' attitudes, especially within the time period of the experiment. Second, it is the writer's belief that some of the experiences and

insights gained from the experiment might not manifest themselves for some time. Third, it is also feasible that, on the pretest, parents responded to the questions in a manner they thought they should respond rather than as a true reflection of their feelings. After participating in the group discussions, the parents might have come in closer contact with their true feelings and responded on the posttest more accurately. Last, the parenting process is complex and cannot be easily reduced to simple constructs or measurements.

Through the analysis of the dialogue, sufficient supporting data were identified to warrant the assertion of the five constructs.

1. Parents experienced external factors that influenced the way in which they parented, even though it was in conflict with their personal belief system.

2. Parents expressed insecurities concerning the social and emotional growth of their children in a complex world.

3. Through the group discussion related to the day care experience, parents examined and grew in their competency in parenting.

4. Parents perceived a relationship between the growth process of the parent and that of the child.

5. Parenting provided within its own context suitable opportunities for the renewal and growth of the parent as a human being.

Throughout the study, it was evident that parents perceived their role as a parent as having a significant effect on their children's development.

Reflections on Parenting

An analysis of the previous questions and their responses prompted several observations and comments. First, parenting is a process whereby parents first feel it is safe and comfortable to examine their parenting attitudes and behaviors. As parents become more aware of their parenting style, they make conscious decisions for future parenting rather than just imitating how they were parented. The process is a continuous one as parents are constantly reflecting and examining their parenting style. For example, as children enter new stages of development, parents need to adapt their behaviors to cope with the new situations presented. Through this process, parents also develop a perspective for their parenting as they consider external factors such as time constraints, family and peer expectations, and societal demands and values. As they deal with these factors, parents learn to establish priorities, possibly rearranging items as needs change. For instance, the parent might not explain a decision to a child immediately because of time constraints, expecting the child just to respond and not question. Rather than feeling guilty about a recognized poor parenting behavior, the parent would accept the situation, resolving to explain or discuss it with the child at a future time. The parent's perspective might also be more longitudinal, realizing that actions or behaviors consistent over a period of time will have a greater effect on the child than isolated instances.

The parenting process also serves as a means to improve the self-esteem of the parent, who can then improve the self-esteem of the

child. Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as a "personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself." He also stated that persons with higher self-esteem tend to assume an active role in social groups and to express their views frequently and more effectively. They tend to move more directly and realistically toward personal goals. Since they feel confident that they can impose order on a segment of the universe, which is a characteristic of creativity, they tend to approach life more creatively. Coopersmith also stated that high self-esteem is not related to wealth, education, social class, or parent's occupation. Instead it comes from the quality of the relationships that exist between the child and those who play a significant role in his life. More important, Coopersmith reported that children whose parents have low self-esteem tend to be less effective in their everyday functioning and more apt to be submissive and withdrawn.

Briggs (1970) also reinforced the importance of developing high self-esteem in children. Through work with many parent groups, she identified a quality that most parents would want for their child. She stated, "Self-esteem is the mainspring that sets every child for success or failure as a human being." She continued to state that most parents know the general goals they want for their child; however, as they experience the reality of life, they lose confidence as a parent and question how to achieve it. As parents then examine their attitudes about parenting and recognize the skills or strengths they do possess, their self-esteem does improve or increase. With a more

positive or higher self-esteem, parents feel even more comfortable parenting, growing in their relationship with their children.

Another dimension to the parenting process was its stimulus for self-renewal for the parent. Gardner (1963) stated that what really blocks self-development is the person's incapacity for self-renewal. As people mature, they tend to narrow their interests and their activities. The world tends to become ordinary, perceived in the same manner all the time. Gardner even suggested that travel might be a good stimulus for self-renewal since the person might be able to "recapture in some measure the unspoiled awareness of children" (p. 10). He continued to state that major changes such as marriage or a move to a new city would break the pattern of life, revealing the comfortable pattern that had been established. Becoming a parent would then serve as a stimulus for self-renewal as the parent would have many occasions to perceive the world through the eyes of his child.

What then prevents all people when they become parents from becoming self-renewing persons? Possibly, the one characteristic of the self-renewing process that Gardner described as self-knowledge is the missing ingredient. The lack of reflection on the experiences that parenting does provide might hinder self-renewal from occurring. The group process described in this experiment did encourage parents to explore their feelings and attitudes toward parenting, increasing the self-knowledge the parent did possess. Other characteristics of a self-renewing person would be willingness to risk failure, a capacity to give and receive love, and the development of motivation or the

existence of deeply felt issues or concerns. Parenting then would certainly provide a context or many opportunities for these characteristics to expand or develop.

In addition, a self-renewing parent would develop the renewing process in the child. Gardner stated,

If we indoctrinate the young person in an elaborate set of fixed beliefs, we are insuring his early obsolescence. The alternative is to develop skills, attitudes, habits of mind and the kinds of knowledge and understanding that will be the instruments of continuous change and growth on the part of the young person. (p. 25)

Since the parent would be aware of this process, his goals for the child would be more consistent with the attitudes and habits that Gardner described rather than a system of fixed beliefs.

Gardner did refer to parenting but only in a very narrow sense. He perceived the setting of expectations or the lack of expectations as an obstacle to developing motivation. The parenting process described in this thesis is a broader process than just the setting of expectations.

The parents' reported experiences of joy serve as another dimension to the question of what helps or hinders the self-renewal process. As the transcripts were analyzed, it became clear from the frequent comments that parents found in the joyful moments of parenthood a deep sense of personal self-renewal. One parent was previously reported as saying, "When I see my daughter growing, it makes everything worthwhile." Another said, "The happiness you get from your kids is what keeps you going even though the things around you are in such a mess." The happiness or joy in these self-reports was described as

giving parents the strength to keep going through the more dismal periods. Parents also reported experiencing considerable pleasure and joy from playing with their children. This was described as satisfaction not only from the interaction with their children but also as a situation that permitted them to engage in an activity that was self-satisfying: play for the adult. Both joy and the satisfaction derived from playfulness can, it seems, be strong factors in self-renewal.

As the individual grows, the context in which that occurs needs to be investigated so as to promote and continue that growth. In Personal Power, Rogers (1977) described why a group-centered or person-centered approach is most appropriate. He stated that in our culture and in our institutions such as schools, the belief is that man cannot be trusted--that he must be guided, instructed, rewarded, and punished. Rogers' premise was that "the human being is basically a trustworthy organism, capable of evaluating the outer and inner situation, understanding himself in its context, making constructive choices as the next steps in life and acting on those choices" (p. 15). With this natural tendency to grow, the person will strive for growth despite obstacles or problems that stand in the way. With this premise, then, the approach to effecting change in parents' attitudes also shifts. The psychological climate for growth becomes the focus, with the power shifting to the person rather than the institutions. Rogers also stated,

When this approach is made to an individual or a group, it is discovered that, over time, the choices made, the directions

pursued, the actions taken are increasingly constructive personally and tend toward a more realistic social harmony with others.
(p. 15)

The design for this study employed a group-process approach for influencing or changing parents' attitudes. Although Rogers stated that time is needed for this growth to occur, some of the dimensions were observed in the group. First, this approach did allow the unique and specific needs of the group to emerge, which then became the agenda for the group. Because these needs were more meaningful to the participants rather than a formal agenda imposed on them, their responses were meaningful and possibly more information was internalized. As the participants felt more comfortable and shared more personal experiences, they became a cohesive group that worked toward a common goal: better understanding of parenting in order to help their children. A support network then developed where members helped each other by clarifying comments, identifying with a problem so that a parent didn't feel alone, and by offering practical information or suggestions for parenting. Since the day care teachers were also members of this group, parents began to view them in a different perspective. Rather than being perceived as "experts" or labeled, they became known as individuals, which helped to develop a closer and more cooperative relationship between the parent and the teacher. After the sessions were completed, the day care teachers reported that several parents spent more time visiting and participating in the day care than before the experiment had begun. A true sense of community had developed

then, one where home and school worked cooperatively together for the benefit of the child.

The writer has learned that after the conclusion of the discussion group, the parents did meet with the day care teachers on an informal basis. The day care teachers reported that the sessions continued to serve as a forum for further discussion with the parents. Parents, in their continuing discussions about their children and the day care, would make references to topics that came up in the original discussion group, and the teacher would further discuss and elaborate on these topics.

If this study should be evaluated for success, its success should most appropriately be judged in terms of whether it served as a catalyst or vehicle for the ongoing growth of the parent. From the preceding comments, there is an indication that such an ongoing process was initiated. The parents and day care teachers could use this shared experience in the day care as a common ground or focal point to come closer together and grow further.

Through participation in the group and the discussions involving growth and development, the development of the parent as a teacher of the child also emerged. As parents acquired a better understanding of growth and the complexity of the process, their perspective of their child changed. With this more accurate or informed perception, the parent became more effective in determining the needs of that child and then providing for those needs. Also, as the parent would recognize positive growth steps for the child, his satisfaction with the role

of parenting would increase, encouraging him to continue in that direction. With a broader perspective of human growth and development, the parent would recognize all areas of development for the child and the relationship between those areas. A view of the child as a whole or total then would help the parent to be more effective in facilitating the growth of that child. All needs of the child would be examined by the parent, especially as the parent recognized the uniqueness of each child. Greater clarity of those needs would also help the parent set more appropriate goals for each child. With a better understanding of human growth and more appropriate or more specific goals set, the parent would be able to identify "teachable moments," thereby increasing the child's understanding of himself and his world. For instance, the death of a pet might be viewed as a means to explain death to a young child. The parent would keep in mind the development of the child and what information would be appropriate at that point or what the true needs would be as the parent dealt with the situation. As the parent grows then or expands his development, he becomes more effective in teaching or encouraging growth in his child.

Reflections on Public Education

What would happen if schools recognized the importance of parents and the effectiveness of small groups to influence parents' attitudes? What would happen if schools involved a majority of parents in such groups on a continuing basis? Several things might occur. First, school as a formal institution would be recognizing the importance and effectiveness of a nonformal approach. There could be a

blend of nonformal and formal that would be beneficial for all involved. Possibly, the role of the intermediate unit might change from one of intervention to one of prevention. Rather than waiting for problems to develop that then need to be corrected or remediated, the intermediate unit would be encouraging the ongoing development of all students. Support personnel such as school psychologists, social workers, or speech therapists could be effectively trained to run groups as part of their job descriptions. Another option might involve the training of classroom teachers to increase their communication skills and facility for understanding group dynamics. Classroom teachers then could conduct groups with parents so that the parents would be more effective teachers with their children as well. Possibly released time could be arranged so that meetings would fit into the parents' schedule. Another option might be to have students attend class four and one-half days while the teachers could be conducting the groups the other half day.

School personnel could start to identify common elements or concerns that ran through the groups perhaps for a particular building or even the entire district. Since the groups would be based on principles of human growth and development, it would certainly offer a very strong foundation for a district's philosophy of education. As parents became more knowledgeable, they would also become more sophisticated concerning the questions they would address to the school. For example, how does school become an integral part of the child's life? How should school shape students or prepare them for the future? What is

knowledge, or as you are looking at the total child, how do you integrate thinking about topics and how the child feels about those topics? How would a school district respond to these questions from a group of parents? How would a school district move from current educational practices to create the type of environment necessary to facilitate growth of students? Wouldn't growth of the entire staff also occur, which would then continue the cycle of growth?

If such parent-school discussion groups did occur, school personnel would certainly learn much more about the unique beauty and strength of the parents and children in the community. Schools surely would become very aware of diverse experiential backgrounds of the families and would certainly as a result be much better able to plan for the growth of the students.

Perhaps foremost of all is the very likely result that schools and communities would form a much more intimate bond and partnership. Parents would come to see school personnel as truly concerned about the parents' concerns. A trusting and open relationship could be developed so that schools could become many things for many different people. Schools might become places to which people of all ages come as a source of self-renewal.

Conclusions

Parent education should become an integral part of society. The complexity of today's world necessitates that parents have an

understanding of human growth and development to serve as a guideline when parenting.

1. Parent education should become a high priority in school programs.
2. School personnel should develop the necessary skills in order to facilitate the parents' growth and the growth of their children.
3. Society needs to develop a number of true support systems for parents.
4. All people involved directly or indirectly in the parenting process must practice the concept of positive support or unconditional regard when relating to children.

Implications for Further Research

The following represent questions and areas for further research.

1. What are the effects on parenting as parents grow in their feelings of control over their lives and their world?
2. What are the long-term effects participation in a problem-solving discussion group can have on the parenting process of the parent?
3. What is the relationship between the level of involvement of the parent in planning and studying programs and the effect such involvement can have on parenting?
4. What effect can a cross-section of parents have on the parenting process of the group members?

5. To what extent and in what ways do external factors affect the parenting process?

6. In what manner and to what extent can schools operate as a support agency for parents?

7. What differences and similarities can be noted among discussion groups that vary according to socioeconomic level, age, and geographic location?

8. What differences and similarities can be noted among matched pairs comparing mothers with fathers?

9. Can parent discussion groups be evolved among parents of kindergarten children, using the public school program as a common focus?

10. What effects do length of time and number of sessions have on changes in parent attitudes and self-perceptions?

11. What is the relationship between external factors and a parent's choice of parenting style?

12. In what ways does the growth of the child stimulate growth in the parent?

13. In what ways does the experience of joy or happiness in the parent-child relationship affect the renewal and growth of the parent?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARENT ACCEPTANCE SCALE

PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCALE
by
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INTRODUCTION

This scale was developed for the purpose of measuring parental acceptance of children. It asks parents to rate themselves on a self-inventory type questionnaire according to the feelings they have and the action they take in relationship to their child. The parents respond by checking one of five multiple choice responses which follow each of the 40 items. The object of the scale is to locate a parent on a continuum ranging from low to high acceptance according to the degree of acceptance which he has for his child.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEDULES

Although the form of the questionnaire is self-explanatory and could be filled out in the home, the group procedure offers several advantages: 1) the administrator has the opportunity to explain briefly, the contribution which their cooperation will make, reassure them of anonymity, and "set the stage," so to speak, in an atmosphere which will invite a minimum of sophistication. 2) It makes it possible to prevent any collaboration between husbands and wives. 3) Individuals will feel a certain amount of group pressure to finish in a minimum length of time, rather than having several hours, if desired, to ponder the items and responses at home.

If this schedule was administered in a home, by an interviewer, most of the above points would be satisfied.

The following introductory remarks have been used by the author before presenting groups with the schedules and are included here for what they may be worth to subsequent administrators of this scale.

I come to you, not as an expert, but as a seeker of facts. We are trying to learn more about parent-child relationships.

Many books and articles have been written which draw a picture of the ideal parent as some super-human being who probably never has or never will exist. We are not at all sure that this is necessary or even desirable in order to rear children who become happy, well adjusted adults; and who, at the same time, are able to assume the responsibilities attached to citizenship in our communities.

Some people today suggest that we are witnessing a generation of moral decay, where graft and dishonesty are prevalent in the private and public lives of Americans; where crime and delinquency rates greatly exceed the limits of respectability. The reason for this, these folks go on to say, is the lack of proper discipline and guidance within the home. If more rigid controls and discipline were enforced within the home, we would have people with a higher degree of moral integrity; people who would have learned to respect the rights of others.

On the other hand, some are suggesting that what we need is more kindness and understanding; more freedom for children to express themselves and to do as they would like.

In protest to this latter philosophy, one mother wrote the following:

"I think current teaching on child-rearing tends to alter the center of gravity of the home, making the child the center, the king, and too often the tyrant. Certainly, a child needs security and love, but I suspect the definitions of these words have gone a little astray. We should not eliminate consideration of other members of the household. I see people who were the recipients of love and tenderness, care and concern, who were the center and delight of the home. And now, grown and married, they will settle for nothing less. They were never asked to give concern, or be considerate, or enjoy seeing someone else succeed. So now they consider the husband (or wife) cold and without understanding, and the children dull and unpleasant, because they are not the center of a constantly admiring audience. No, the loving tender care that makes the child the center of the home is a dangerous preparation for being an adult."¹

From the midst of this confusion came hundreds of requests daily from parents to child specialists asking for suggestions and principles that will help in the task of rearing their

1. O. Spurgeon English, "How Family Forces Affect the Individual." BULLETIN OF THE MENNINGER CLINIC. 14:68. (March, 1950)

children. Thousands of students throughout the nation, who are eagerly anticipating marriage and parenthood, are enrolling in courses in child development and family relationships with a sincere desire to learn how to rear their children the best possible way.

We must frankly admit that we don't really know the answers to many of their questions. We have many theories and ideas which are easily found in books and magazines. But facts are desperately needed. You are the people who have the facts. You are the people who are right in the middle of the experiences of rearing children.

Our hope is that through your cooperation we may bring together the facts in a meaningful and useful way. We would like to be prepared when people ask questions, to speak with greater confidence than we can now. We would like to be able to say, "This study shows us . . .," rather than, "We think this is it."

Your honesty and frankness will determine the value of the study. Several hundred man-hours have gone into the preparation of this questionnaire. It will take you only about twenty or thirty minutes to fill it out, but you will determine its usefulness. The major part of this questionnaire will consist of statements which have 5 responses or answers following each one. Some of the answers may be familiar to you as something which you have read or heard that a parent should or should not do. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. Please do not put down book answers or ideas you have heard stated by a speaker if they do not represent your true feelings or actions. We have plenty of books and don't want any more book answers. You have the facts and we want to find out how you really feel and what you really do.

You will note that the questionnaire does not call for any mark of identification. Thus your answers, as well as the many others, will be absolutely anonymous. We are not interested in individual answers, but in how groups or large numbers of parents respond to these statements. Your contribution to the present and future parents of America will be very much appreciated, regardless of how small or how great it may be.

It is suggested that the administrator read through the directions with those about to fill out the schedule. It is important that the subjects answer all the questions.

It is very important that the parent understand that if he has more than one child, he is to use only one as a point of reference for his answers, and that he not be thinking of one child in some cases and

a different child in others. Therefore, care should be taken that the parent clearly understands the instructions on page 2 of the schedule.

Some parents may remark that some of the questions are repeated. It can be pointed out that in one case they are asked how they feel in the situation and in the other case they are asked what they do.

SCORING OF THE SCALE

Responses to the items have been arbitrarily weighted from one to five with one representing low acceptance and five representing high acceptance. Attached is a scoring key with the weights listed as numbers in front of the responses. The total acceptance score is the sum of the numbers in front of the responses marked by the subject. The possible range of scores is 40 to 200. The higher the total acceptance score, the more accepting the parent is of his child.

The acceptance scale involves four dimensions of acceptance. If sub-scale scores are desired, the item numbers are listed below for the respective dimensions.

- A. An acceptant parent is one who regards his child as a person with feelings and respects the child's right and need to express these feelings.

Items: 11, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 29, 32, 35, 36.

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

Items: 12, 13, 18, 22, 26, 27, 31, 33, 39, 40.

- C. An acceptant parent is one who recognizes the child's need to differentiate and separate himself from his parents; to become an autonomous individual.

Items: 14, 15, 16, 20, 24, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.

- D. An acceptant parent is one who loves his child unconditionally.

Items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

NOTE

It is recommended that anyone intending to use this scale first read the article "Measurement of Parental Acceptance of Children," JOURNAL OF HOME ECONOMICS, Vol. 46, No. 3, March, 1954.

SCORING KEY FOR PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE SCALE

Responses to items 1 through 10 are scored with the following weights:

Much more than usual 1	A little more than usual 3	The same 5	A little less than usual 3	Much less than usual 1
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Responses to items 11 through 40 are weighted as follows:

11. a. 3 b. 5 c. 1 d. 4 e. 2	16. a. 1 b. 5 c. 4 d. 3 e. 2	21. a. 1 b. 5 c. 2 d. 4 e. 3	26. a. 3 b. 5 c. 1 d. 4 e. 2	31. a. 1 b. 5 c. 4 d. 3 e. 2	36. a. 1 b. 5 c. 2 d. 4 e. 3
12. a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4 e. 5	17. a. 2 b. 1 c. 5 d. 4 e. 3	22. a. 3 b. 1 c. 5 d. 2 e. 4	27. a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4 e. 5	32. a. 2 b. 1 c. 5 d. 4 e. 3	37. a. 3 b. 1 c. 5 d. 2 e. 4
13. a. 5 b. 1 c. 2 d. 3 e. 4	18. a. 3 b. 2 c. 1 d. 5 e. 4	23. a. 4 b. 3 c. 1 d. 5 e. 2	28. a. 5 b. 1 c. 2 d. 3 e. 4	33. a. 3 b. 2 c. 1 d. 5 e. 4	38. a. 4 b. 3 c. 1 d. 5 e. 2
14. a. 4 b. 5 c. 1 d. 2 e. 3	19. a. 4 b. 3 c. 2 d. 1 e. 5	24. a. 2 b. 4 c. 3 d. 1 e. 5	29. a. 4 b. 5 c. 1 d. 2 e. 3	34. a. 4 b. 3 c. 2 d. 1 e. 5	39. a. 2 b. 4 c. 3 d. 1 e. 5
15. a. 2 b. 3 c. 4 d. 5 e. 1	20. a. 5 b. 4 c. 3 d. 2 e. 1	25. a. 3 b. 4 c. 5 d. 1 e. 2	30. a. 2 b. 3 c. 4 d. 5 e. 1	35. a. 5 b. 4 c. 3 d. 2 e. 1	40. a. 3 b. 4 c. 5 d. 1 e. 2

PARENT'S NAME _____

CHILD'S NAME _____

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD

Many parents say that their feeling of affection toward or for their child varies with his behavior and with circumstances. Will you please read each item carefully and place a check in the column which most nearly describes the degree of feeling of affection which you have for your child in that situation.

Check One Column For Each Item Below	Degree of Feeling of Affection				
	Much more than usual	A little more than usual	The same	A little less than usual	Much less than usual
1. When he is obedient					
2. When he is with me					
3. When he misbehaves in front of special guests					
4. When he expresses unsolicited affection. "You're the nicest mommy (daddy) in the whole world."					
5. When he is away from me					
6. When he shows off in public					
7. When he behaves according to my highest expectations					
8. When he expresses angry and hateful things to me					
When he does things I have hoped he would not do					
10. When we are doing things together					

Listed below are several statements describing things which children do and say. Following each statement are five responses which suggest ways of feeling or courses of action.

Read each statement carefully and then place a circle around the letter in front of the one response which most nearly describes the feeling you usually have or the course of action you most generally take when your child says or does these things.

It is possible that you may find a few statements which describe a type of behavior which you have not yet experienced with your child. In such cases, mark the response which most nearly describes how you think you would feel or what you think you would do.

Be sure that you answer every statement and mark only one response for each statement.

11. When my child is shouting and dancing with excitement at a time when I want peace and quiet, it:

- a. Makes me feel annoyed
- b. Makes me want to know more about what excites him
- c. Makes me feel like punishing him
- d. Makes me feel that I will be glad when he is past this stage
- e. Makes me feel like telling him to stop

12. When my child misbehaves while others in the group he is with are behaving well, I:

- a. See to it that he behaves as the others
- b. Tell him it is important to behave well when he is in a group
- c. Let him alone if he isn't disturbing the others too much
- d. Ask him to tell me what he would like to do
- e. Help him find some activity that he can enjoy and at the same time not disturb the group

13. When my child is unable to do something which I think is important for him, it:

- a. Makes me want to help him find success in the things he can do
- b. Makes me feel disappointed in him
- c. Makes me wish he could do it
- d. Makes me realize that he can't do everything
- e. Makes me want to know more about the things he can do

14. When my child seems to be more fond of someone else (teacher, friend, relative) than me, it:

- a. Makes me realize that he is growing up
- b. Pleases me to see his interest widening to other people
- c. Makes me feel resentful
- d. Makes me feel that he doesn't appreciate what I have done for him
- e. Makes me wish he liked me more

15. When my child is faced with two or more choices and has to choose only one, I:

- a. Tell him which choice to make and why
- b. Think it through with him
- c. Point out the advantages and disadvantages of each, but let him decide for himself
- d. Tell him that I am sure he can make a wise choice and help him foresee the consequences
- e. Make the decision for him

16. When my child makes decisions without consulting me, I:

- a. Punish him for not consulting me
- b. Encourage him to make his own decisions if he can foresee the consequences
- c. Allow him to make many of his own decisions
- d. Suggest that we talk it over before he makes his decision
- e. Tell him he must consult me first before making a decision

17. When my child kicks, hits or knocks his things about, it:

- a. Makes me feel like telling him to stop
- b. Makes me feel like punishing him
- c. Pleases me that he feels free to express himself
- d. Makes me feel that I will be glad when he is past this stage
- e. Makes me feel annoyed

18. When my child is not interested in some of the usual activities of his age group, it:

- a. Makes me realize that each child is different
- b. Makes me wish he were interested in the same activities
- c. Makes me feel disappointed in him
- d. Makes me want to help him find ways to make the most of his interests
- e. Makes me want to know more about the activities in which he is interested

19. When my child acts silly and giggly, I:

- a. Tell him I know how he feels
- b. Pay no attention to him
- c. Tell him he shouldn't act that way
- d. Make him quit
- e. Tell him it is all right to feel that way, but help him find other ways of expressing himself

20. When my child prefers to do things with his friends rather than with his family, I:

- a. Encourage him to do things with his friends
- b. Accept this as part of growing up
- c. Plan special activities so that he will want to be with his family
- d. Try to minimize his association with his friends
- e. Make him stay with his family

21. When my child disagrees with me about something which I think is important, it:

- a. Makes me feel like punishing him
- b. Pleases me that he feels free to express himself
- c. Makes me feel like persuading him that I am right
- d. Makes me realize he has ideas of his own
- e. Makes me feel annoyed

22. When my child misbehaves while others in the group he is with are behaving well, it:

- a. Makes me realize that he does not always behave as others in his group
- b. Makes me feel embarrassed
- c. Makes me want to help him find the best ways to express his feelings
- d. Makes me wish he would behave like the others
- e. Makes me want to know more about his feelings

23. When my child is shouting and dancing with excitement at a time when I want peace and quiet, I:

- a. Give him something quiet to do
- b. Tell him that I wish he would stop
- c. Make him be quiet
- d. Let him tell me about what excites him
- e. Send him somewhere else

When my child seems to be more fond of someone else (teacher, friend, relative) than me, I:

- a. Try to minimize his association with that person
- b. Let him have such associations when I think he is ready for them
- c. Do some special things for him to remind him of how nice I am
- d. Point out the weaknesses and faults of that other person
- e. Encourage him to create and maintain such associations

25. When my child says angry and hateful things about me to my face, it:

- a. Makes me feel annoyed
- b. Makes me feel that I will be glad when he is past this stage
- c. Pleases me that he feels free to express himself
- d. Makes me feel like punishing him.
- e. Makes me feel like telling him not to talk that way to me

26. When my child shows a deep interest in something I don't think is important, it:

- a. Makes me realize he has interests of his own
- b. Makes me want to help him find ways to make the most of this interest
- c. Makes me feel disappointed in him
- d. Makes me want to know more about his interests
- e. Makes me wish he were more interested in the things I think are important for him

27. When my child is unable to do some things as well as others in his group, I:
- Tell him he must try to do as well as the others
 - Encourage him to keep trying
 - Tell him that no one can do everything well
 - Call his attention to the things he does well
 - Help him make the most of the activities which he can do
28. When my child wants to do something which I am sure will lead to disappointment for him, I:
- Occasionally let him carry such an activity to its conclusion
 - Don't let him do it
 - Advise him not to do it
 - Help him with it in order to ease the disappointment
 - Point out what is likely to happen
29. When my child acts silly and gigly, it:
- Makes me feel that I will be glad when he is past this stage
 - Pleases me that he feels free to express himself
 - Makes me feel like punishing him
 - Makes me feel like telling him to stop
 - Makes me feel annoyed
30. When my child is faced with two or more choices and has to choose only one, it:
- Makes me feel that I should tell him which choice to make and why
 - Makes me feel that I should point out the advantages and disadvantages
 - Makes me hope that I have prepared him to choose wisely
 - Makes me want to encourage him to make his own choice
 - Makes me want to make the decision for him
31. When my child is unable to do something which I think is important for him, I:
- Tell him he must do better
 - Help him make the most of the things which he can do
 - Ask him to tell me more about the things which he can do
 - Tell him that no one can do everything
 - Encourage him to keep trying
32. When my child disagrees with me about something which I think is important, I:
- Tell him he shouldn't disagree with me
 - Make him quit
 - Listen to his side of the problem and change my mind if I am wrong
 - Tell him maybe we can do it his way another time
 - Explain that I am doing what is best for him

33. When my child is unable to do some things as well as others in his group, it:
- a. Makes me realize that he can't be best in everything
 - b. Makes me wish he could do as well
 - c. Makes me feel embarrassed
 - d. Makes me want to help him find success in the things he can do
 - e. Makes me want to know more about the things he can do well
34. When my child makes decisions without consulting me, it:
- a. Makes me hope that I have prepared him adequately to make his decisions
 - b. Makes me wish he would consult me
 - c. Makes me feel disturbed
 - d. Makes me want to restrict his freedom
 - e. Pleases me to see that as he grows he needs me less
35. When my child says angry and hateful things about me to my face, I:
- a. Tell him it's all right to feel that way, but help him find other ways of expressing himself
 - b. Tell him I know how he feels
 - c. Pay no attention to him
 - d. Tell him he shouldn't say such things to me
 - e. Make him quit
36. When my child kicks, hits and knocks his things about, I:
- a. Make him quit
 - b. Tell him it is all right to feel that way, but help him find other ways of expressing himself
 - c. Tell him he shouldn't do such things
 - d. Tell him I know how he feels
 - e. Pay no attention to him
37. When my child prefers to do things with his friends rather than with his family, it:
- a. Makes me wish he would spend more time with us
 - b. Makes me feel resentful
 - c. Pleases me to see his interests widening to other people
 - d. Makes me feel he doesn't appreciate us
 - e. Makes me realize that he is growing up
38. When my child wants to do something which I am sure will lead to disappointment for him, it:
- a. Makes me hope that I have prepared him to meet disappointment
 - b. Makes me wish he didn't have to meet unpleasant experiences
 - c. Makes me want to keep him from doing it
 - d. Makes me realize that occasionally such an experience will be good for him

Parent Acceptance Scale

Name: _____

Total Score: _____

A. 11. _____

17. _____

19. _____

21. _____

23. _____

25. _____

29. _____

32. _____

35. _____

36. _____

Total: _____

B. 12. _____

13. _____

18. _____

22. _____

26. _____

27. _____

31. _____

33. _____

39. _____

40. _____

Total: _____

C. 14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

20. _____

24. _____

28. _____

30. _____

34. _____

37. _____

38. _____

Total: _____

D. 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Total: _____

APPENDIX B

PARENT AS A TEACHER INVENTORY

PAAT

Name _____ School _____

Check one—Mother _____ Father _____ Grandmother _____ (Write in) _____

Child's Name _____ Sex of child—Boy _____ Girl _____

Language of child—Spanish _____ English _____ Bilingual _____ Age of child _____

Mode of Administration?

1. Group in Spanish
2. Individual in Spanish
3. Group in English
4. Individual in English

Directions:

You will be reading some statements on feelings about your child. This is not a test. We are asking that you express your feelings about your child. For each statement, circle only one answer. If there is no doubt in your mind about a statement, then you will circle either STRONG YES or STRONG NO. Otherwise, circle either YES or NO. Continue until you have answered all 30 statements. Take your time.

1. I get tired of all the questions my child asks.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

2. My child should be able to make noise during play.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

3. It is all right for my child to disagree with me.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

4. My child needs to play with me.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

5. Much of my child's learning will take place before he enters school.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

6. I like my child to make up stories.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

7. It gets on my nerves when my child keeps asking me to watch him play.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

8. I want my child to say more than I do when we talk.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

9. Playing with my child makes me feel restless.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

10. It is hard for me to tell when my child has learned something.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

11. When my child doesn't know an answer, I ask him to guess.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

12. I get tired of all the fears that my child talks about.
13. There are some things I just don't want my child to talk about.
14. If I spend a lot of time playing with my child he will disobey me more often.
15. It is all right for my child to have a make-believe friend.
16. I want my child to play with toys made for boys and with toys made for girls.
17. My child bothers me with questions when I am busy.
18. I like my child to be quiet when adults are talking.
19. I feel able to choose new toys for my child.
20. It is difficult for me to think of things to say to my child during play.
21. When my child plays with toys, the pretending seems foolish.
22. My child is punished for fighting during play.
23. While we play, my child should be the person in control.
24. Playing with my child improves the child's behavior.
25. When I play with my child I feel the need to talk like a child.
26. I want my child to have all of his questions answered.
27. It's all right for my child to get dirty while at play.
28. When at play with my child, I prefer games that have rules rather than the make-believe kind of play.
29. My child learns new words when we play.
30. I feel able to give my child the proper preschool experience at home.
31. I get upset when my child tries to solve a simple problem in the wrong way.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

32. It's okay for my child to interrupt me when we play.
33. I feel play must be stopped when my child becomes angry at a playmate.
34. I try to praise my child a lot when we play.
35. More of my child's personality learning at this age takes place by watching people and things rather than by being told.
36. It is all right for my child to spend a lot of time playing alone.
37. While at play my child can take out as many toys as he wishes.
38. I provide chances for my child to make up his own mind about a lot of things.
39. It is difficult for me to stay interested when playing with my child.
40. I scold my child when he doesn't learn.
41. My child wants to play too long at one time.
42. When my child shows off I ignore it.
43. I feel unhappy when I don't know an answer to my child's questions.
44. I imitate my child's speech when we play so that the child understands.
45. It is easy for me to use toys when teaching my child.
46. I seldom tell my child his work is good or bad so that my child can make up his own mind.
47. I want my child to put the toys away before going to bed.
48. It's all right for my child to have secrets from me.
49. My child learns by playing with other children.
50. If we play whenever my child wants to, not much learning will take place.

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
---------------	-----	----	--------------

Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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Strong Yes	Yes	No	Strong No
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PAAT Scoring Sheet FORM B

<u>Item</u>	<u>Strong Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Strong No</u>
1	1	2	3	4
2*	4	3	2	1
3*	4	3	2	1
4*	4	3	2	1
5*	4	3	2	1
6*	4	3	2	1
7	1	2	3	4
8*	4	3	2	1
9	1	2	3	4
10	1	2	3	4
11*	4	3	2	1
12	1	2	3	4
13	1	2	3	4
14	1	2	3	4
15*	4	3	2	1
16*	4	3	2	1
17	1	2	3	4
18	1	2	3	4
19*	4	3	2	1
20	1	2	3	4
21	1	2	3	4
22	1	2	3	4
23	1	2	3	4
24*	4	3	2	1
25	1	2	3	4
26	1	2	3	4
27*	4	3	2	1
28	1	2	3	4
29*	4	3	2	1
30*	4	3	2	1
31	1	2	3	4
32*	4	3	2	1
33	1	2	3	4
34	1	2	3	4
35*	4	3	2	1
36*	4	3	2	1
37*	4	3	2	1
38*	4	3	2	1
39	1	2	3	4
40	1	2	3	4
41	1	2	3	4
42	1	2	3	4
43	1	2	3	4
44	1	2	3	4
45*	4	3	2	1
46*	4	3	2	1
47	1	2	3	4
48*	4	3	2	1
49*	4	3	2	1
50	1	2	3	4

*Reversal Scoring Items

FRUSTRATION ANALYSIS* 1 2 3 4

2. Noise permitted during child's play
7. Responds favorably to child's call to observe play
12. Child allowed free expression of fears and anxieties
17. Child's questions accepted even when parent is busy
22. Fighting at play handled without punishment
27. Child may get dirty at play
32. Child may interrupt dyadic play with parents
37. Child can play with as many toys as he wishes
42. Pays attention to child's showing off
47. Respects child's play as work in process

*A high score means that the parent handles the situation in a non-frustrating way whereas a low score on the item indicates a locus of possible frustration in parent-child interaction.

PARENT AS A TEACHER
PROFILE

Parent _____

Child _____

School _____

Date(s) _____

Explanation: The items on the Parent As a Teacher Scale (PAAT) have been restated to indicate feelings and beliefs that are seen as desirable for parent-child interaction, based on principles derived from child development. A score of one (1) indicates parents' self-perception is low in that area while a score of four (4) is high.

The PAAT is used with permission of Robert D. Strow, College of Education, Arizona State University.

CREATIVITY ANALYSIS					PLAY ANALYSIS				
	1	2	3	4		1	2		
1. Child's questions encouraged	.	.	.	.	4. Believes child needs to play with parent	.	.	.	.
6. Likes child to make up stories	.	.	.	.	7. Comfortable in playing with child	.	.	.	.
11. Encourages guessing	.	.	.	.	14. Believes child will respect parent who plays with him	.	.	.	.
16. Toy selection not sexually biased	.	.	.	.	19. Able to choose new toys	.	.	.	.
21. Child's pretending seems natural	.	.	.	.	24. Believes playing with child improves child behavior	.	.	.	.
26. Willing to express uncertainty in answering child's questions	.	.	.	.	29. Child learns new words when playing	.	.	.	.
31. Lets child experiment with problem solving	.	.	.	.	34. Recognizes that the play process is rewarding	.	.	.	.
36. Child's playing alone acceptable	.	.	.	.	39. Can stay interested in playing with child	.	.	.	.
41. Accepts child need for long play periods	.	.	.	.	44. Does not use child-like language	.	.	.	.
46. Lets child judge own work (refrains from judging)	.	.	.	.	49. Believes children learn by playing with other children	.	.	.	.
CONTROL ANALYSIS					TEACHING LEARNING ANALYSIS				
3. Child allowed to disagree with parent	.	.	.	.	5. Believes much learning occurs before school	.	.	.	.
8. Wants child to talk more than self	.	.	.	.	10. Can tell when child has learned	.	.	.	.
13. Child permitted to talk about any topic	.	.	.	.	15. Accepts child's make-believe companions	.	.	.	.
18. Child may talk when adults are talking	.	.	.	.	20. Able to respond to child during play	.	.	.	.
23. Wants to share play dominance with child	.	.	.	.	25. Does not talk down to child but uses typical language	.	.	.	.
28. Wants to honor child strength	.	.	.	.	30. Feels capable of providing a learning environment at home	.	.	.	.
33. Positive management of conflict (not stopping play)	.	.	.	.	35. Believes child learning occurs more by observation than by being told	.	.	.	.
38. Child has chances to make decisions	.	.	.	.	40. Child's learning failures not punished (scolding)	.	.	.	.
43. Comfortable in not knowing all the answers to child's questions	.	.	.	.	45. Easily uses toys in teaching child	.	.	.	.
48. Child permitted to have secrets from parents	.	.	.	.	50. Believes playing with child increases child's learning	.	.	.	.

APPENDIX C

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Pre _____ Post _____

1. Please describe your child. (How do you see your child?)
2. As a parent, what concerns you the most about raising your child?
3. Describe when you have felt happiest as a parent.

APPENDIX D

EXCERPTS FROM PARENT DISCUSSION

GROUP TRANSCRIPTS

EXCERPTS FROM SESSION I

Facilitator:

Let's summarize the goals for our children.

- 1) The parent wants the child to have tender, loving care. She has a deep interest in her child; through happiness found here, [the child] will find love.
 - 2) Parent wants child to be flexible and adjustable. It is one of the most important things a child can have.
 - 3) The parent wants the child to learn to love - to love people in general as human beings.
- (Parent: Is it important to love yourself? [question asked in background]).
- 4) Parent wants child to be happy, creative.
 - 5) Parent wants child to be an independent, whole person. Child now seeks out task and finds solutions.
 - 6) Goal is to have child be an independent person.
 - 7) Parent feels the day care will be good because child is very shy.
 - 8) Child is "vehemently" independent. Goal is for child to learn to love learning.

Parent:

What is a whole person?

Facilitator:

We have many parts to us - intelligence, thinking, feeling, working; we enjoy, and we can feel angry. Sometimes we look at only one part of the child instead of the whole child. We want to help them develop in all relationships when we look at all parts of life. We want to focus on what will become an entire.

EXCERPTS FROM SESSION II

Facilitator:

All right, here are a couple of things I've heard. Getting a child to be self-directed versus having to be directed over again; and at what stage in being directive over him, do we get the child to become more of a boss over himself? I heard another very important thing from Linda; she was sitting very quietly, and only said one thing, "we need to look at our own behavior also." Can we focus on how we're in control of our own lives, and what we do as patterns? I don't like to use the word modeling, but, in part, I think that was what Linda was saying - let's look at what children see. What else?

Parent:

I think that something really essential is self-esteem.

Parent:

I think that if the other problem was off my mind, I'd have a lot more creative ideas.

Facilitator:

What problem is that?

Parent:

This messy business I'm living in ... you know, I found that I took responsibility for five people messing up the house, and I was the one who felt guilty about it, and I was the one who took the responsibility, and I finally decided -- hey, I refuse to live with all this guilt and all this responsibility when everybody's doing it. When the youngest one in the house is almost five, I think that everyone should start, you know, so I got rid of the guilt, and now I have to learn to have the other four people take responsibility, and at that point, I'll be

Excerpts from Session II

Page 2

home free.

Parent:

We were talking about clutter - having the kids take care of their belongings, and your belongings, but I can remember the lightest point in my life when I was standing somewhere in the middle of Florida, and I had a backpack, a kid, and a diaper bag, and my wife had the same thing -- a backpack, a kid, and a diaper bag, and we were light. There was no clutter - nothing to carry around, nothing to organize in our heads and I think that's what we are asking our kids to do - organize some of our shit and theirs, too.

Parent:

Organize mine?

Parent:

Yah, that's your stuff - you bought it for them.

Parent:

You play with toys?

Parent:

Sure!

Parent:

It's true; but I'm having a little hard time taking it.

Parent:

You're right, I bought it.

Parent:

You bought it, but you bought it for them.

Parent:

But I bought it for them to get out of my hair.

Excerpts from Session II

Page 3

Parent:

I'll bet stuff she wants him to pick up.

Parent:

I agree. I think you burden your children with toys, with too many toys. My brother - they have just boxes full, on the main level, upstairs and downstairs, and they can't play without dumping everything out. I can see right to the bottom. And the whole floor is covered and there's very little constructive play going on.

Parent:

Then they have nothing to do. Once they're tired of the toys, they can't think of anything else to do.

Parent:

Then they play with about two things.

Teacher:

There's too many to choose from.

Parent:

First thing, all the broken toys are thrown away; no matter how much the kids like to play with them, they are not kept. Then they have just a small box all over again. Every three months I do that.

Teacher:

There's another thing you can do, and that is to put a bunch of them away where they can't play with them, and then switch them. It's like having new ones - they're special.

Parent:

I did that one time. I decided what was good for them to play with.

Excerpts from Session II

Page 4

Parent:

They're (the children) always with me, though.

Parent:

You let them make the decision. I made the decision and broke his heart because some of the neatest things he had, and that wasn't fair.

Parent:

Jennifer has one piece of a puzzle that's been missing for three years, and one-half of a baseball card; the other half is somewhere in the house. I know the feeling, because I hang on to all these little bits and pieces of things thinking they're all going to come together, and they never do.

Facilitator:

Richard, you're going to take notes on the topics? I think I heard you say a couple things. Tell me if you think they're important. Sometimes if kids have too many toys, it gets in the way of how they play and what they play. Do we want to look at play, and how toys fit into play, and maybe how we facilitate play in children? From my standpoint, having too many toys becomes a problem because those toys are so realistic, so specific, they lose a sense of how to play, they lose their imagination. They are too exact in their construction. This toy is a tank, and it does just this thing. They are not flexible in terms of demanding you to put into them. They're here and all set, and all you do is work it. As a consequence then, we get tired of that specific thing. It does not have the flexibility to become what you want it to. I just bought my son a toy truck, and he's spending all his time playing with the box. Why is he playing with the box?

Excerpts from Session II

Page 5

Parent:

Because he can do more with it than he can do with the truck.

Parent:

You can look at something like bathtub toys. The kids can take a couple of toys, and you can do all kinds of things with them.

Facilitator:

Do we want to take a look at play?

Parent:

Yes.

Parent:

Gorilla T.V. That little thing in the home that sends electrical impulses out - 1,000 every half second. You know, T.V. There was a book called "Gorilla T.V." Talking about T.V. in general, my daughter goes into the T.V. room Saturday morning about 6:00 a.m. - can't wait until it goes on; and I know this is a lot of other kids because I've given a lot of interest inventories to kids, and they all say Saturday morning cartoons. At the end of about four hours she is so hyped, so wired, because it's too much, and I wonder what it's doing to her.

Parent:

My eight-year old - I have to drag him out of bed on school mornings, but on Saturday morning - he's out of bed, and the T.V. is on with a bowl of cereal.

Parent:

It's like a person drinking a coke - it's addictive. I've enrolled him in the "Y" - I've done all sorts of things, and it's right back to T.V.

Excerpts from Session II

Page 6

Teacher:

I found with nice weather, a little different structure will take her out of that environment.

Parent:

After an hour or so they get tired and leave the room - I'm still watching, but mine say heck with T.V., and go play games.

Facilitator:

One of the things I think you are asking, is how do we motivate children to be interested in other things? What motivates children in their interests? Children's interests are the subject of much research. That's a good topic.

Parent:

I have one who's a little older, and I don't want to think negatively, but he's responsible for what he does, and he should feel bad if he does something bad, and I don't think of it as a value judgement, but I could give an example. I hesitate and wonder.

Facilitator:

Give me an example.

Parent:

Today I picked him up from school, and his plastic lunchbox had one side all smashed out. I asked him what happened to this lunchbox, and he usually arranges it so that it happened to him. The story was, it hit the sidewalk; and I said just be honest, so he admitted he threw it. I told him he would have to use this lunchbox until the end of the school year. I would use the strong tape on it, and we would tape it.

Excerpts from Session II

Page 7

I have friends who would say, "Well, they aren't that strong anyway."

Facilitator:

How do I identify that as an issue?

Parent:

You would say that you have to take the responsibility.

Teacher:

How old is he?

Parent:

Six and a half.

Parent:

He knows he has to take care of his things.

Parent:

As far as my two girls getting along, I will hear a big smack
and I ask "What happened, Amy?" She ran into my fist.

Parent:

Or they come home from school all covered with mud. Somebody
threw me into the mud, or somebody tripped me. They never start out with
"I did this."

Facilitator:

Ownership of behavior? Will we discuss that?

Parent:

You mean, "Yes, I did do this?"

Parent:

It leads later on to outright lying.

Excerpts from Session II

Page 8

Facilitator:

You are concerned that it will get into a case where a child is
distorting the truth.

Parent:

Yes. He will probably believe it, too.

Facilitator:

It would get to the point where he was not very genuine in his
relationships?

Parent:

You want to build a conscience. You want them to be able to express
emotions.

Facilitator:

Are you wondering if you should blame him or not?

Parent:

I want him to know this did not just happen to him. I want him to
know that he caused the action.

EXCERPTS FROM SESSION III

Facilitator:

It's been two weeks since we have been together. Self-esteem will be our focus for this week.

Parent:

I brought something that bothers me. [Reads a statement from teacher regarding second grade son.] It bothers me - why does my son have to be more compliant, normally active? He is normally quiet. What do you think that is doing for his self-esteem?

Parent:

It gives him something to live up to now.

Facilitator:

How does your son feel about that?

Parent:

My husband read it to him, but I did not want him to think the teacher thought he was different from others.

Facilitator:

What did the teacher mean by "normal" in that case?

Parent:

She was trying to give him a compliment. He is quiet and reserved. He is not performing the way she wants him to perform.

Facilitator to Teacher:

What do you see as normal for the kids here?

Teacher:

They are all individual. There is a "normal" for each child.

Excerpts from Session III

Page 2

Facilitator:

What does it do to our self-esteem when we are told we are not good as we are -- you have to be something other than what you are?

Parent:

Instead of looking at the person, the teacher is looking at the behavior.

Teacher:

As a teacher, the first ones you take care of are the disruptive ones, the next are the ones who are mad, and the last are the quiet ones. It might show she cared enough about him that she noticed a change.

Facilitator:

How can you decide what is normal for a child? The teacher decided what is normal by taking a cross section. If we view normal as what is healthy for one's own growth, then normal is whatever is in the best interest in your own growth as a person. Normal for me might not be normal for you. What do you notice in your children? Are they different?

Parent:

My two are different people - like night and day.

Parent:

What I do with one can be destructive if I do it with the other.

Facilitator:

Do you feel his self-esteem was better last year? What builds up self-esteem? What hurts self-esteem? What do you mean by self-esteem?

Parent:

Self-esteem means you have to be able to trust - live in a safe environment.

Excerpts from Session III

Page 3

Parent:

You have to know a teacher cares.

Parent:

Self-esteem involves an ability or feeling of being able to give to your environment as well as take from it. You have to feel it's all right to give.

Parent:

It's a need -- that somebody needs what you have to offer.

Facilitator:

How do we do that -- make them aware it is OK to give or they have something to give?

Parent:

Show approval. Tell them. Show appreciation.

Parent:

Give a hug or kiss - praise.

Facilitator:

What's the difference between appreciation and praise?

Parent:

I think of it more in a sense of praise being you are good because ...
Appreciation is coming from myself. Praise is judgemental.

Parent:

How about encouragement instead of praise?

Parent:

Appreciation involves acceptance of individuality - praise is controlling. I can accept more easily those whom I don't have a lot

Excerpts from Session III

Page 4

to do with. I can let them be. I'm not sure acceptance and letting them be is the same thing. I have more difficulty with people dear to me.

Do you have trouble accepting your child? Is acceptance involved?

Parent:

Do you expect, or need more from those close or dear to us?

Facilitator:

What about accepting me if I were your child? The quiet, imaginative child compared to more aggressive.

Parent:

Some parents always try to separate their children.

Parent:

Comparisons could be good, but they can be bad. They compare each other, then stick with the expected.

Facilitator:

It seems like acceptance comes into focus when we view expectations.

Parent:

I find aggressive children harder to deal with than passive children.

Facilitator:

Why do you find one easier to deal with?

Parent:

I don't know. It is easier to work with a passive child.

Parent:

I wonder, also, when we were talking about our parents, do we have some experience where we have expectations laid on us, and did we feel accepted?

EXCERPTS FROM SESSION IV

Facilitator:

An example I see a lot of times with moms is, "Yes, I know it's good for kids to play with pots and pans." "It's good for growth and development for them to explore, but it drives me crazy!" Conflict - how do we feel about those things?

Parent:

Get plastic - they don't make noise.

Parent:

It's great to have them help you cook, but the times they most want to help are the times you least have the patience, and you really need a lot. I find myself telling Jennifer "NO" because it's 5:00, and I have spent a whole day at school and I have this much patience, and I simply can't tolerate which is a shame.

Parent:

Time and pressures are too great, and you can't ...

Parent:

This is what I try to do. I try to put her off. I can't do this right now; I have things to get ready, and I have to leave again for another class, and we can do it on Saturday when we have lots of time. I really like to enjoy it. When my temper is just below the boiling point, I don't even want to attempt it.

Facilitator:

Could you have them do it by themselves?

Parent:

That's what I try to do. The two older ones and Jennifer -

Excerpts from Session IV

Page 2

anything she can do, she's allowed to do. Getting things out of the refrigerator, making sandwiches, but I just feel badly because the kids, we were always doing things, making jello, fancy salads, and it seems like with her, I'm not spending the time and I should.

Parent:

On the way over here, I felt I was late and Bernie insisted he was hot, and I wanted the heater on so he cracked the window, turned the heater on and off, turned the air conditioner on, and I said he just had to stop.

Parent:

I have a headache from being late, too. I went to the gas station, and didn't know that when you pay first, the thing turns off 60¢ before the end. I thought I wasn't getting any gas, and I thought I don't have the time for this. I wanted \$5.00 worth of gas, and had to borrow from my neighbor, and I thought I wasn't getting any gas, and I thought I wasn't getting any gas, and I asked the guy, and he said "you're getting gas; you just don't realize it." I just thought I ... I didn't have any gas, or any money, or any time. Anyway, I'll never go back there again.

Parent:

You're rushed, and you try to get your kids to move, and they move even slower.

Then you end up yelling at them, which upsets them.

Parent:

I think it's a big expectation. I expect my kids to fit into

Excerpts from Session IV

Page 3

my schedule, and that's hard because at the same time I expect them to fit into my schedule, I put demands on them, and sometimes they are unreasonable demands. I have to go to school. This is something I paid for - this is something I set out for so that means my kids have to fit into my schedule.

Parent:

And sometimes they'd rather just sit around the house and relax in the morning.

Parent:

They get upset, and then they have to blow off steam the same as we have to do.

Parent:

We have to work around their schedules, too.

Parent:

When our kids clash, most of the time it's over being somewhere on time.

Parent:

When you feel pressures, at least you understand why you're going and they don't. Jennifer doesn't need to come to school, she doesn't want to, and then you say I have to go.

Parent:

I sometimes have an opposite problem where I explain exactly what the morning activities are going to be, and they're out there saying, "Come on, Dad, let's go," and then I get frustrated because they're putting a demand on me to keep up with what my planned schedule was.

Excerpts from Session IV

Page 4

Parent:

Nobody wants any demands placed on them.

Parent:

Everybody wants their own time and a space. All of us feel pressure.

Parent:

I think because we feel demands placed on us, like going to school or that test, we transfer those demands; or I transfer the demands to my kids. I don't mean to. It's just that's how you...

Parent:

If I've got to be somewhere, I have to be somewhere, and I don't say to Mary, "Let's sit down and finish the rest of your game," or whatever.

Parent:

I try to schedule important things, but it doesn't always work.

Facilitator:

It seems that part of what you're describing is a growing distancing from your children versus your plan of life for you, and perhaps your family - that you are growing apart and you need to communicate where you are going.

Parent:

I think school can be very upsetting to children. When all of a sudden you are not placing them first, or it doesn't seem like you're placing them first, you've got this certain thing you have to do. It's

Excerpts from Session IV

Page 5

been that way with me going full time for two years. My schoolwork has to come first at times. I found a lot of resentments, especially with my oldest child. She blames school for everything. It's not true, but she focuses on that. I think the trouble with schoolwork is, you have to take it home with you. Some jobs do demand it, and some jobs don't. With school you've always got that pressure.

Parent:

My boys are a bit younger, but the problem is the opposite. When they get days off, and I can't get someone to watch them, they come with me to class. They really feel good about that.

Parent:

My younger ones do. Jennifer is happy about going to the college. The older one sees me as a rival. I'm doing the same type thing she is, and she thinks I should be focusing on her activities instead of my own.

Parent;

We have our schedules fixed.

Facilitator:

You might want to talk about how we communicate expectations, and how we deal with those. We might also want to talk about how much our children are conceptualizing, identifying with, feel like they are participating in the plan of life we have for ourselves. It certainly seems like we are expecting them to be supportive to our plan of life, supportive by meeting your time schedule. How much are they identifying with, or conceptualizing, or feeling like they are participating in?

Excerpts from Session IV

Page 6

Ann, you mentioned that one of your children you think feels part of it, really likes going to school.

Parent:

I'd say, for the most part, that Jennifer does because, as you say, she identifies with it. She'd get the vacations I do, so she feels very much part of that. She drives here every time during the day that I do, she comes here, too, so that's the ideal, I suppose, but that's not always possible. She at least has a good idea of what's going on - probably better than my other children. The eight-year old is too involved in his own activities to give a care. As long as there is food in the refrigerator, or meals are there, he's that kind of a child. He's not that demanding, nor overly sensitive.

Facilitator:

It seems to me that as we participate, we tend to meet these expectations. We might want to focus on what we do to communicate that the importance of my meeting those expectations, and how well I've done in meeting those expectations so I receive those important to the other person, and that there's a reflection so they see this as an on-going situation that we are growing together, in so that what they've done is important versus a situation where the child may feel that they are not really a participant in, or important to, the parent or family in meeting that expectation, but rather that expectation has just been laid on them. I can give you an example. I have very high expectations for my son in taking care of the sheep down at the barn. I did find myself in a situation where he came through, and he's been doing it when I'm not there. Yesterday he gave me a call - one of the lambs was sick.

Excerpts from Session IV

Page 7

This was about 5:00 p.m., and later in that evening we went through the crisis of trying to save the lamb. Later I did say, "Josh, I so much appreciate what you did. Look at all you've done. Everyday after school you've gone down and taken care of those sheep. Because you're that responsible, you were able to find this lamb, and let me know - that is really important because Daddy can't be there all the time. I don't know what we'd do without you." Typically, I don't know that I spend time doing that with him. I wonder how often we should. I have gotten into hassles - all right, I won't do the chores, or I will sell the sheep. But that's a real struggle. But that struggle comes when we start to become distant from one another, and it's like we are no longer identifying with the same goal in life. Mom's off to school, and that doesn't have anything to do with me. The question, I guess, is are there things we can do to help children feel like they are participating -- getting the family toward that goal?

Parent:

I just think sometimes the goals are not clear. My thirteen-year old sees this as something that's tearing the family apart. She cannot see the purpose of my going. My husband is working out of town, and I'm going to school, and she's focusing on going to school instead of the other problem - that school is the scapegoat. She sees that as the focusing point. I guess mine is a unique situation. But I think you're right as far as telling a child we do appreciate what they do. Too often we ... I have this idea that everyone should cooperate simply because that makes the family unit run better.

Parent:

Explain why they cannot do something, not just you will not do.

Let them know why.

Parent:

Let them know why it is neat that they do do it, in the case of Julie having to babysit, which she alternately resents and enjoys; and let her know this is necessary in order for me to go to school. The basic problem is she still doesn't see why. I'm two months away from a degree, and I guess the kids just don't really realize what a degree means.

Parent:

When I started school, we sat down as a family and talked about what it would mean, and Mary, at that time, was 2 - 2½, and she was bouncing off the couch; but we asked her some questions at 2½, and she could answer them in very concrete terms. She knew what was going on, at least for that moment; and we have made an effort ever since, because our schedules are so tight that every time there is a big change, we discuss it ahead of time. We ask the kids ahead of time, "What do you think of this?" "What would you do if ...?" "What don't you want to do, or what do you want to do about it?" They're both really supportive of me going to school. It's the everyday things that go on that are a problem because they're watching a T.V. show, or doing their painting, and it's this moment. They understand the big concept, but the day-to-day ones ... My schedule is different from theirs right now.

Parent:

It's always everyday things we get bogged down on. You can always look at the long-range things, but if I can just get through this day.

Excerpts from Session IV

Page 9

Parent continued:

What if you walk into a house, and somebody you've never seen before starts threatening your child and making demands on him? I went to a party one time, and met someone who said, "I'm so-and-so's mean aunt." "Hi, Bernie, how are you. Come over here so I can spank you." I said, "You've got to be kidding. She said, 'You're probably more scared than he is. Come over here.'" I was real embarrassed. Then she said, "It's past your bedtime; get over there and lie down." He started crying.

Parent:

Situations like that catch you off guard. They come up out of the blue, and you don't know what to say.

Parent:

Nothing has ever prepared you for something like that.

Parent:

I saw just the opposite thing. I was looking for an apartment, and there must have been six little kids in this one house, all under five; those kids were just everywhere - enough noise for a circus, and two ladies, apparently the mothers were having the best conversation, and it's crazy time everywhere else. I thought, "How could they just not even be bothered by it."

Parent:

You know, no one has the right to tell me what to do, and she said, "You ought to be spanked; it's past his bedtime." I just said, "Go away."

Excerpts from Session IV

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Facilitator:

What kinds of problems do we encounter setting expectations?

Parent:

I went to get my prescription filled, and forgot my money. The kids kept saying, "You've got a dollar, two dollars," and all those people were standing around. You feel ... oooh, please shut up, and tell me when we get home.

Facilitator:

When you place unrealistic expectations on a child, the child's never going to win. Their self-esteem is going to go ... that cannot meet these kinds of expectations.

Parent:

We talked about that several weeks ago with our parents. You just quit trying because you could never meet anything; a "B" was supposed to be an "A," and, after a while, you consider yourself a loser and act accordingly. It's hard to overcome that.

Parent:

When my boys do something good, or something to please me, I tell them "that's really great" and I wish you could see their faces.

I give a lot of credit for trying. My thirteen-year old has not been doing well in eighth grade, and she's in the lowest English class. It's a matter of maturity, not a matter of grades. I don't want her to take hard classes in ninth grade because I'm afraid. We've fought over her schedule. She doesn't have command of the English language - how is she going to take Spanish? I wanted her to take reading skills, and I

Excerpts from Session IV

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have no way to converse with the counselor, and she was coming back and telling me.

Facilitator:

Maybe she has another feeling.

Parent:

We finally balanced it. She did take the reading skills; I allowed her to take the Spanish.

Facilitator:

You chose one; she chose one?

Parent:

No; I gave in. If she took the reading skills because I felt she needed it. She is in the lowest group. She's reading about a fifth grade level. I found myself holding back because I wanted her to take these things I felt she could handle, but she's got to risk failure. We talked about that before, too. She's had just a hard time in eighth grade. I hated to see her start out that way in high school, too.

Parent:

You're expecting her to fail.

Parent:

I realize that - I want so badly to have her succeed I'm afraid to have her risk anything.

Parent:

I have trouble deciding what expectations to put on my kids. I expect my kids to be well-mannered, you know, basic manners. I want my kids to respect other members of the family. When they disagree,

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I expect them to do it constructively, not hit Mommy or Daddy. They can yell, but it's got to be constructive; but I have a hard time placing expectations because I'm so worried about doing what's best for them. I can't say I know what's best.

EXCERPTS FROM SESSION V

Parent:

These things have to be done, and it took time; but we got things done. Then we did what he wanted to do. I wanted him to respect me as much as I wanted to respect him. He was about eleven.

Parent:

What about the child's expectations of you? My children's expectation of me are unreal, I feel. No matter how many things I did, they would still come up with "Let's do this." No thanks for doing the thing the thing that went before.

Parent:

It could be part of the problem of single parenting. You're trying to be two parents, and satisfy the needs of that child. If there were a man around helping to take care of the child, he would be taking some of the time.

Parent:

My husband told me one time, "I'm not the babysitter, you are." No argument, no discussion, that was it - he didn't want to bother with the kids.

Parent:

I think one of the most important things in our family is planning. I sit down before the crisis occurs, I tell them what I need or want, then the crisis never occurs. Everybody knows my expectations, and I know theirs.

Facilitator:

Can we balance expectations in terms of what we need or what we can tolerate? We think of what is good for the kids and what you can

Excerpts from Session V

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tolerate. Does that cause inconsistency with the child? That's a good question.

Parent:

They need to understand that you are angry, upset, etc., that those feelings are part of life.

Parent:

It's important that children realize if the home is not up to par, it is not because of them. So often we take it out on our children, and they think the way you feel is their fault.

Parent:

I try to be careful if I'm angry or tired that my child doesn't see it because if she does, she is at the same place. She then needs me twice as much.

Facilitator:

, What are other examples of increased demands you are experiencing that decreases your ability to tolerate?

Parent:

Job expectancy. The next few weeks will be very busy - pressures, etc. I try to make sure I have some times where I don't have anything planned. In some of those blocks, there's time for just the two of us.

Facilitator:

What is good quality time?

Parent:

When I'm in a good mood.

Parent:

Quality time for me is when my child is the center of my attention.

Excerpts from Session V

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Parent:

Loving interaction.

Parent:

Enjoyable times together - going to dinner together, going to school carnivals, things that are important to the children.

Parent:

I felt responsible when things didn't go right in our family unit; and I'd apologize because I felt he had the expectation everything should go right. In a way, I worked him out of the family unit by doing what he should have been doing.

Parent:

My expectations of the children's behavior is lower. It's easier for me to deal with the children.

Facilitator:

What do the children expect of the father? What is the role of the father?

Parent:

The role of the father is essentially the same as the mother - 50% - that's the ideal. You're talking about models. This is what you should be, but how do you get there?

Parent:

Father wants to overprotect. I allow them to make mistakes and get over them. He'd like to isolate them.

Parent:

You have to find the place where you can work together, and start from there. It's a slow process.

Excerpts from Session V

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Parent:

It seems the traditional role is the father goes out, works five days a week; he comes home and wants to sit down, read the newspaper, and watch the news; and the woman, whether she works or not, cooks the meals, and on Saturday, he's working on the car, and on Sunday a little time is squeezed in.

Parent:

The difference is the women don't have the time anymore to be a homemaker, so men have to share.

Facilitator:

We try to look at children as first-class citizens. If we look at ourselves as being a child-centered nation, our community, or our family in terms of how child-centered we really are, can we really have any such child-centeredness, or first class respect, if we live in a world with so much prejudice against women?

Parent:

Indeed we can't.

Parent:

We have to work at it.

Teacher:

"Nova" on PBS program showed how parents and teachers bring out aggression in the way they discipline boys and girls. In decision making, boys are brought up to be assertive and make decisions, and girls are brought up to follow and listen.

Excerpts from Session V

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Parent:

Nursery rhymes tell the same thing - snips and snails and puppy
dog tails.

Parent:

Traditionally, that's one thing that is harder for women to do - to
express anger, to talk about feelings, and not getting emotional about it.
It's easier for a man to look at a situation, decide he doesn't like it,
and walk away from it or deal with it, where a woman doesn't know what
to do about it.

Parent

How do we transfer that to our kids?

Parent:

Talk it out. Don't be afraid to show your feelings of anger. Let
the children express their anger.

EXCERPTS FROM SESSION VI

Parent:

When we were talking about the schools, the girls were wearing uniforms. Last year, where my boys were going to school, they had to wear navy blue pants and light blue shirts. This school where they go to now - they don't. But I try to counteract that what they learn at school by things at home, by doing things that are mostly what a woman does - dishes, mop up the floor, clean up what the dog did, help with whatever it is. And it helps. I try to explain to them.

Parent:

How do you get them to do it?

Parent:

I have a good excuse - I can't bend over.

Parent:

One of the things that bothered me this last week was that I was cooking bacon and Mary was watching me, and all of a sudden a bunch of it (bacon grease) spattered all over and I got burned - not severely, but Mary immediately said, "I want Daddy, I want Daddy." I didn't know whether she was saying that because Daddy would come and control the situation, and I was incapable of controlling the situation in her mind; or she was scared and wanted another parent, and I wondered, "am I fostering something in her that says Mommy isn't capable, and Dad can figure it out?"

Parent:

Or was it because you were in a stress situation that she felt someone who was not in a stress situation could help.

Excerpts from Session VI

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Parent:

I don't know now - I'm wondering.

Parent:

I have a friend in one of the classes whose husband is a doctor, and she has three kids ... She said there's the doctor sitting right there and they say, "Mom, Mom." She has all the responsibility, all the problems.

Parent:

It is still obvious in our society, you know, the difference, or maybe it's just the young age, but my kids, as far as I'm concerned, there's no defined roles in our ... because I can take our kids more, but my husband and I do a lot of the same things, yet Erin will come home from school and say, "Boys can do more things than girls and have more fun than girls" and all that.

Facilitator:

She'll say that from school?

Parent:

My son, and I'd say, "Well, whatever they want to do."

Facilitator:

Who would say that?

Parent:

Neil, my seven-year old son.

Parent:

My Erin is starting to question me now. Last summer, and it was the first time she had ever played with little boys, and most of them are about a year older, and she never questioned the idea that women could

Excerpts from Session VI

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not do a lot of things, and it was the sports mostly.

Parent:

That's Jennifer - she wants to play for the Lions. You know, she doesn't want to play for a girls' football team, she wants to play for the Lions. I think I told you before about the ... weekend that where Jennifer is always trying to come up with something that boys can do that girls cannot, and so forth, and the only thing I've been able to tell her is about mother and father; that boys can never be a mother. So far, she's not come up with anything that I could definitely tell her she couldn't do. She has the same problem; she plays with boys, and she'll go through this role-matching thing.

Parent:

Erin's not macho, she's just really concerned that she doesn't want anyone to tell her that she can never do something. I don't think it's bad that she doesn't want to play with dolls right now or ever.

Parent:

No, because who is going to force the child to play with dolls. You want to play with dolls, or you don't want to play with dolls. I like stuffed animals and real animals, and I never really cared much about dolls . . .

Later in same session . . .

Facilitator:

I think the issue of whether women are more emotional than men has to do with, has society from early on in life, taught men that they better repress their feeling, so as a consequence, women are more emotional than men because men have repressed their emotions. Not that they didn't have

Excerpts from Session VI

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the capabilities. I think Marilyn is asking a good question there.

That's hard to deal with.

Teacher:

We have right here at the center, word has got around, that little boys don't cry. Anyway, it happened today - remember I told you he just cried, and he was all set, and all of a sudden I saw him under the table, and the lip was here, and a tear was in the eyes, and nothing would come out, and he said big boys don't cry. A big macho student was here, and he said, "Gee, I cried the other day," and we tried, but it's happening all the time.

Facilitator:

It'll happen when you think you're in control of the situation like Bonnie did. It'll happen from a kid talking to a kid. You work in a public school, you'll see that. Little kids will bring those prejudices from home. Would each one of you be comfortable with their boys crying as they get older?

General consensus:

Yes.

Facilitator:

Would you be comfortable with them playing with dolls?

Parent:

I had a doll when I was a little girl, and I saved it for my boys.

Facilitator:

Would your husband let them? That's the more important question.

Excerpts from Session VI

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Parent:

The boys were playing with it for a couple of months, and all of a sudden it just disappeared. And I know the kids didn't lose it, and I didn't put it away. I think he just threw it away. I never thought about it. It just hit me now, all these years later. Why did that doll disappear like that?

Parent:

I have my doll with me tonight in the truck. It has brown hair and it's called Raggedy Andy, and has green pants and a big gold button.

Parent:

We went to first grade and saw the art work. The children drew their mothers and fathers, and I said, "let me pick out my own." The only mother on the whole board who had pants on was me.

Parent:

I saw a mother last night at swimming classes - it was parent's night - calling her son a sissy, and telling him to take off his goggles. I just wanted to take my hands around this woman's neck. He would not jump off the diving board. Jennifer didn't jump off the diving board either. If she doesn't want to jump off the diving board, she doesn't have to. And it makes no difference whether she's a boy or girl or whatever.

Teacher:

Why didn't you say something?

Parent:

I don't even know her.

Excerpts from Session VI

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Parent:

Well, I saw a woman take her child in a grocery store and start slapping him because he ran away, asserting his independence, and I said something to her while she was disciplining him. I said, "That's enough," and everyone around the store turned around and looked, and she stopped; but she was beating the kid. I could have screamed "abuse."

Parent:

Did she say anything to you, Richard?

Parent: We talked for a minute. I said to her, "You should be proud of your son, so independent, so trusting."

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