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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE NEEDS OF EAST LANSING,  
MICHIGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUNGSTERS FROM SINGLE-  
PARENT FAMILIES IN RELATION TO THEIR ADJUSTMENT  
IN ASSUMING THEIR NEW ROLES.

Michigan State University, Ph.D., 1973  
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MICHIGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUNGSTERS FROM  
SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES IN RELATION  
TO THEIR ADJUSTMENT IN ASSUMING  
THEIR NEW ROLES

By

Carolyn Lewellen Farquhar

A THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE NEEDS OF EAST LANSING,  
MICHIGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUNGSTERS FROM  
SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES IN RELATION  
TO THEIR ADJUSTMENT IN ASSUMING  
THEIR NEW ROLES

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## PURPOSE

This study was undertaken to ascertain and examine the main concerns of middle-school children and their parents in single-parent families. The study also sought to determine if and how these concerns might handicap children in our society, in order that insights into possible assistance for adjustment might be suggested. Specific areas studied included the child's self-concept, his urgency of concern, and his adjustment to school and life in general. Consideration was also given to the roles of various community agencies in the provision of programs designed to foster the adjustment and communication of children and parents during and after the trauma of divorce or death.

## PROCEDURE

This study was conducted with children and their parents on a volunteer basis. The population of the sample was generally made up of academic, professional and business people. The families studied included one black family, one Spanish-American family--the remainder were white.

### Sources of Data

Data were collected through the use of a questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with both children and their parents; the parents answering as they thought their child would have answered. In addition the parents supplied some background and personal data.

The school counselors provided some additional information about the child's adjustment.

From items on the questionnaire, scales were developed. The Scales of the Child's Well-Being included the Child's Self-Concept, his Urgency of Concern (the intensity of the child's concern caused by the crisis of the death of one of his parents or of divorce) and the Child's Adjustment. The Child's Emotional Support contains the scales of the Custodial Parent Relationship, the Absent Parent Relationship, the Significant Other Relationships, and the Quantity and Quality of Emotional Support Relationships. Additional areas examined included

School Relationships, the Teacher Relationships, the Counselor Relationships and the Peer Relationships.

### Treatment of Data

The following hypotheses were tested:

#### Hypothesis 1:

The child's self-concept as perceived by the child himself and the custodial parent will be positively related to quantity and quality of the emotional support the child receives.

#### Hypothesis 2:

The child's urgency of concern as perceived by the child himself and the custodial parent, will be less when he receives strong emotional support.

#### Hypothesis 3:

The child's adjustment, as perceived by the school counselor, will be good when the child receives strong emotional support.

### Findings

The data supported, at a minimal level, the first hypothesis that a high self-concept was related to good quantity and quality of relationships. There was stronger evidence that the self-concept related to the custodial parent's relationship and the significant others who had meaningful relationships with the child. There was a negative correlation with the child's self-concept and a relationship with the school counselor.

There was not a significant correlation between the self-concept and the individual emotional support scales. There also was no significant correlation from the child's perception. None of the widowed parent or child's correlations were significant. Many of the correlations of the widowed families were negative.

In the second hypothesis, the urgency of concern was strongly related to the significant other, quantity and quality of relationships and the custodial parent's relationship, all from the parent's perspective. The less support from these relationships, the more concern the child seemed to experience. Parents of children who had strong emotional support, on the other hand, thought the children usually tended to think well of themselves, their abilities and capacities.

In support of the third hypothesis, the child's adjustment was related to the custodial parent relationship from the parent's perspective. There also was a positive relationship between the child's adjustment and the total sum of emotional support relationships. The support of significant others is also positively related to the child's adjustment.

Again, there was no significant correlation between the child's perspective and the child's adjustment. None of the absent parent relationships, from any perspective, indicated a significant correlation.

The area of need as revealed by the data can be categorized under two broad "families": Support and Tools for Coping.

Family of Needs Determined

They are:

Support--A parent and friends who care; a sense of belonging; time, support and understanding to work things through and adjust, are a part of the support area.

Tools for Coping--include the state of well-being, a sense of self-respect, confidence in self, coping ability, ability to take risks and better ways of relating with others.

Other Findings

The divorced custodial parents seemed to adjust better than the widowed parents to the new situation after the trauma involved in becoming a single parent. This might be because a non-supportive environment required more ability to handle problems immediately.

Children of widowed families tend to receive more sympathy and support from teachers than children of divorce. Emotional adjustment problems of the latter may be ignored by the school.

Well-adjusted children tended to have less trauma because of the crisis they were experiencing than less well-adjusted children. They also tended to have a good relationship with their custodial parents and to have at least one, often more, significant person close to them.



### Suggested Programs

Some of the programs which proved helpful were (1) recreational, to provide opportunities for development of good rapport between parent and child, between peers and between parents, (2) emotional support, such as rap groups, and (3) educational instruction for improving methods and skills of relating and interacting.

### Recommendations

Areas needing further research include examining needs of different ethnic groups, different communities, and comparing needs of single parent families with two-parent family situations. The traumatic period for children of divorce, before the break actually takes place, is an area demanding attention. Single-parent family life is a very fertile area for study and more research is needed to help these parents and children find suitable solutions to their problems.

DEDICATED TO

my children,

Roger, Linda, Jacquelyn, Jim, Steve, and Mark

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Although some attention has been given to programs for adults in single-parent families, more needs to be done to help the children who find themselves in this situation. An amazingly high percentage of children fall into this category and the number is increasing.

### NEED FOR THE STUDY

The literature indicates that the proportion and absolute number of children of divorce among our total population are steadily increasing. Ober reports that " . . . one of every four minor children lives in a home that has been torn by divorce or separation . . . children of one-parent families are multiplying at an unprecedented rate. . . . " He goes on to say that:

. . . six out of seven divorced persons remarry. Nearly half of all remarriages fail again. Two of every three divorces involve children, making more than a half a million children affected annually by the breakup of their parents' marriage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Ober, "Parents Without Partners--With Children of Divorce," Explaining Divorce to Children, ed. Earl A. Grollman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 142-56.

Landis points out that there is a high relationship between the failure of parents in marriage and the failure of children in their marriages; that children of divorce have less confidence in their ability to have successful marriages.<sup>2</sup>

Sprey asks:

Why is it that children in broken homes do not welcome a new parent with open arms and again settle gladly within the security and normalcy of a new and presumably happy family? The fact that we cannot answer this question reflects more than anything else our basic ignorance about the way children participate in the divorce process. . . . It seems, therefore, that whether or not children will adjust to the remarriage of the custodial parent will depend on what took place before the divorce and during the subsequent period of single-parenthood.<sup>3</sup>

Problems of adjustment for children in this period of single-parenthood have both long- and short-range repercussions on the child. This period affects the manner in which he will adjust to his reconstructed home if and when his custodial parent remarries and it will also affect his adjustment to later relationships.

Therefore, it is important to study this adjustment period in an attempt to help each child make the best adjustment possible in order to lay the foundation

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<sup>2</sup>Judson T. Landis, "Trauma of Children When Parents Divorce," Marriage & Family Living, XXII (February, 1960), 7-13.

<sup>3</sup>Jetse Sprey, "Children in Divorce: An Overview," Explaining Divorce to Children, ed. Earl A. Grollman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 42-62.

for productive and satisfying relationships now and for the rest of his life. In order for the child to adjust well to his new roles as a child in a single-parent family, he must develop flexible skills of adaptation.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to ascertain and examine the main concerns of middle-school-age children and their parents in single-parent families. The study also sought to determine if and how these concerns might handicap children in our society, in order that insights into possible assistance for adjustment might be suggested. Specific areas studied included the child's self-concept, his urgency of concern, and his adjustment to school and life in general. Consideration was also given to the roles of various community agencies in the provision of programs designed to foster the adjustment and communication of children and parents to the trauma of divorce and death.

#### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Literature, pilot interviews, and personal experience indicate some concerns of East Lansing, Michigan middle-school youngsters from single-parent families in relation to their adjustment in assuming their new roles. The following Major- and Sub-Hypotheses were tested in the study:

Hypothesis 1:

The child's self-concept as perceived by the child himself and the custodial parent will be positively related to quantity and quality of the emotional support the child receives.

- a. This self-concept will be positively related to emotional support from his custodial parent relationship.
- b. This self-concept will be positively related to emotional support from relationship with his absent parent.
- c. This self-concept will be positive when the child has a strong relationship with some significant others.

Hypothesis 2:

The child's urgency of concern as perceived by the child himself and the custodial parent will be less when he receives strong emotional support.

- a. This urgency of concern will be less when the child has a strong relationship with his custodial parent.
- b. This urgency of concern will be less when the child has a strong relationship with his absent parent.
- c. This urgency of concern will be less when the child has a strong relationship with some significant others.

Hypothesis 3:

The child's adjustment, as perceived by the school counselor, will be good when the child receives strong emotional support.

- a. The child's adjustment will be good when the child has a strong relationship with his custodial parent.
- b. The child's adjustment will be good when the child has a strong relationship with his absent parent.
- c. The child's adjustment will be good when the child has a strong relationship with some significant others.

## ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE STUDY

As a result of the questions raised and implications from the literature, the following assumptions are made:

1. Middle-school children can be helped in their adjustment in and to single-parent status.
2. The child's relationship with the custodial parent is extremely important to the child's adjustment to the crisis situation which caused the single-parent aspect of the family.
3. Types of problems of adjustment which could benefit from assistance for middle-school-age children can be determined and/or predicted.
4. A suggested program for support for children of single-parent families can be planned to help meet these anticipated needs.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the following concepts will be defined as:

Single-parent family.--A family in which the children are living with one parent; the parents having been separated by divorce or death.

Middle-School children.--6th, 7th, and 8th grade youngsters.

Custodial parent.--The parent with whom the child/children live.

Absent parent.--The parent who does not live with the family.

Significant others.--Concerned family or friends who give emotional support to the child.

Child's self-concept.--How the child feels and thinks about himself.

Urgency of concern.--The intensity of the child's concern caused by the crisis of death or divorce, about certain aspects of adjustment, usually indicated during the period of initial adjustment to the crisis.

Child's adjustment.--The school counselor's perception of the child's school adjustment and of his coping in general.

Emotional support.--Quality and quantity of close relationships which are meaningful to the individual.

School success.--Child's performance in doing adequate school work and in relating with the teachers, counselors, and his peers.

Financial situation.--Pressures/strain/comfort caused by the finances of the home situation.

Extended family.--A large, closely knit unit of relatives and/or close friends which may include a number of generations.

Psychological state of the child's well-being.--The child's self-concept, his initial adjustment to the crisis (urgency of concern), and the child's adjustment.

Custodial parent's adjustment.--The manner in which the custodial parent is coping with his situation, his ability to deal with reality, and help his children.

#### SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

A goal for this study was to collect data which could be instrumental in helping plan a program to aid in the support and adjustment of single-parent youngsters. Information was sought from parents who did wish to cooperate or who did feel such a need for their child. If a child wished to participate even though the parent did not want to, this participation would be dealt with in implementing the program but not in collecting the data.

The study was limited to children dealing with adjustment to death or divorce as the cause of their parent's absence. There may be some similarities of

problems faced by children of separated parents; both for parents temporarily absent recurringly, or for parents absent for months or years at a time for occupational as well as marital reasons. Since this is much more ambiguous, children from this situation were not included in collecting the data. Any similar need of these children could be dealt with in the implementation of the program.

Children from reconstructed families were not included in this study. These children would have lived with single-parents at some time in the past, but their problems now would be quite different--those dealing more with adjustment to a new family structure, the addition of a new parent, and possibly more children.

This study is further limited to consideration of the role of the school counselors and teachers, the YMCA staff members, and parents of the youngsters involved, for the suggested program.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The general nature of the study is described in Chapter I. First, introduction and need are stated, next the purpose was given, then the hypotheses of the study with the assumptions underlying the study. Next, concepts are defined and the scope and limitations of the study are discussed. The general organization of the study is indicated.



Chapter II is devoted to a review of the literature related to divorce, bereavement, broken homes, child adjustment, father-child relations, mother-child relations, and child rearing.

The methodology and design of the study are described in Chapter III. Sample selection is described, questionnaire development, interview technique, and counselor participation are discussed. Then scale development and analysis of data are dealt with.

Chapter IV contains the presentation and analysis of the data. This includes additional analysis of unhypothesized results.

The component parts of Chapter V are: the summary which includes the family of needs determined by the data, the findings related to the hypotheses, and other findings; a statement of conclusions; a discussion of proposed programs; and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Little research has been directed to problems of helping children cope effectively with their new roles in single-parent families. Literature does indicate, however, that support can help the child through his hardships; that with guidance he can find security in the new setting of his life.<sup>1</sup> The adjustment in this critical period is particularly important because it lays the foundation for productive and satisfying relationships both in the present and in the years ahead.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE OF THE CHILD

The main concern of this study is on the well being of children of single-parent families. Consideration of some of the important elements involved--the child's adjustment to life, his urgency of concern, and his self-concept--are supported by literature. Another important component of this study is the emotional

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<sup>1</sup>Louise Despert, Children of Divorce (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1953).

support of the child. The specific composition of support for each child is different but is made up of such factors as the adjustment of the custodial parent, relationships with the custodial parent, the absent parent, significant other people important to his life, siblings, and the school situation with teachers, counselors, and peers all playing a role.

### Child's Adjustment

Adjustment problems for children in this period of single-parenthood have both long- and short-range repercussions on the child. This period affects the manner in which he will adjust to his reconstructed home if and when his custodial parent does remarry and it will also affect his adjustment in later relationships. Landis points out that children of divorce have less confidence than most in their ability to have successful marriages.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, among others, it is important to study this adjustment period in an attempt to help each child make the best adjustment possible.

Stroup writes that "the single most powerful factor in the personality development of the child is

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<sup>2</sup>Judson T. Landis, "Trauma of Children When Parents Divorce," Marriage and Family Living, XXII (February, 1960), 7-13.

the happiness and stability of the home in which he spends his early years."<sup>3</sup>

Landis found that children from the ages of five to eight at the time of the parents' divorce tended to feel more secure, to rate themselves as happier, to be less aware of personal conflicts, and to have less feelings of inferiority than children at other age groups. This evidence would seem to indicate that children who had faced the crisis when they were small would feel more secure and confident (better adjusted) than the children who had been making the adjustment more recently at a more difficult age for adjustment.<sup>4</sup>

Despert makes the point that:

. . . not all children of divorce are in trouble. Many have found a new balanced structure for their lives. Many have accepted the division of their time and love between parents who live apart, or have fixed on a step-parent or other satisfactory substitute for the missing parent. . . . The children of divorce who are unhappy and ill-adjusted are only a fraction of all unhappy children.<sup>5</sup>

### Child's Urgency of Concern

In divorce, the child often is very uncertain of himself and what is happening around him. As Despert

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<sup>3</sup>Atlee L. Stroup, "Marital Adjustment of the Mother and the Personality of the Child," Marriage and Family Living, May, 1956, pp. 109-13.

<sup>4</sup>Landis, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Despert, op. cit., p. 23.

points out, he may have only bits and pieces of information which he tries to fit together and very possibly comes up with very misconstrued ideas. He is comparatively defenseless.<sup>6</sup>

Having only partial information and limited understanding, the child has no control over the situation upon which the direction of his life depends. He probably is fearful and may feel some responsibility for the problems between his parents. He most likely fears rejection from one or both of these important people in his life.

Pollack tells of a child whose mother and father were divorced. The child said to a playmate, "Maybe she'll get mad at me and divorce me too."<sup>7</sup>

Children often jump to conclusions and it is hard to be aware of where the confusion exists. All of this suggests a need to determine how much such specific factors as confusion, loneliness, self-guilt, resentment, seeing self as being used, redefining relations with parents, new adjustment with peers, and adjusting to remarriage are disturbing the child.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 165-66.

<sup>7</sup>Jack H. Pollack, "Seven Mistakes Divorced Parents Make," Parents Magazine, XLII (March, 1967), 48, 76, 78, 90.

Pollack cautions about abruptly upsetting the child's routine, because he feels continuity for a child helps him to maintain a feeling of security.<sup>8</sup> This suggests exploring mobility in relation to the child's emotional support.

### Child's Self-Concept

The child's self-concept is a third aspect of "State of the Child" which will be assumed to be crucial in the child's adjusting and adapting to his circumstances in relation to his new life after the crisis. How the child perceives himself in large measure affects how he will react, his attitudes, and behavior in response to the crisis. The three areas are so closely inter-related that there is much overlapping.

### Adjustment of the Custodial Parent to the Death or Divorce of Mate

Burchinal, Despert, Herzog and Sudia, and Cath agree that attitudes and behavior of the mother (the usual custodial parent) constitute the significant and crucial matter in the child's adjustment to the crisis situation. It is important, therefore, to assist the parent to search and find answers for herself in

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

order that she may help the children search and find answers for themselves.<sup>9</sup>

Despert suggests that:

. . . understanding yourself and your child will help. If one is prepared for the difficulties, forewarned of the traps, and expects oneself and one's child to experience such emotions as guilt, resentment and hostility, the situation is relieved of a large part of its sting.<sup>10</sup>

Parents have a better chance to help the child release painful emotions rather than intensify them and therefore prevent explosive emotions from coming between themselves and their children.

Despert goes on to say:

We can count on a child's comparative flexibility and resilience to bring about--with one parent's help--many changes for the better in his adjustment to divorce. Of more critical importance are the feelings and the attitude of the parents, for on their stability and their courage in facing new situations the child's adjustment depends.<sup>11</sup>

Herzog and Sudia also point to the importance of the mother's behavior and attitudes with regard to the father and the children and the current circumstances.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Lee G. Burchinal, "Characteristics of Adolescents from Broken, Unbroken, and Reconstituted Families," Marriage and Family Living, XXVI (1964), 44-50.

<sup>10</sup>Despert, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>12</sup>Elizabeth Herzog and Cecilia E. Sudia, Boys in Fatherless Families, U.S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Office of Child Development, Children's Bureau, 1970).

Cath feels that:

. . . it is not just the external events that determine the outcome of loss in terms of eventual ego strength or weakness, but more often, how these actual events are handled by the victim of the loss, and how this loss is interpreted by significant others. It is usually not one or a single event, no one set of attitudes, but rather the day-to-day adjustment in family interaction and the continual conscious and unconscious interpretation of how the loss has been experienced that finally brings some understanding. The loss of a parent may bring a temporary regression or a more permanent ego impairment.<sup>13</sup>

This leads to the conclusion that the custodial parent's adjustment and the amount and quality of time spent with the child are extremely important to the child in his adjustment.

Nye<sup>14</sup> and Goode<sup>15</sup> both indicate that failure of good adjustment in broken homes may stem from concentration of tensions and conflict at the time of the break that has an impact on the children. After the period of adjustment, a new equilibrium is established,

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<sup>13</sup> Stanley H. Cath, "Divorce and the Child: 'The Father Question Hour'," Explaining Divorce to Children, ed. Earl A. Grollman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 86-121.

<sup>14</sup> Ivan F. Nye, "Child Adjustment in Broken and Unbroken Homes," Sourcebook in Marriage and the Family, ed. Marvin B. Sussman (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1959), pp. 50, 435.

<sup>15</sup> William J. Goode, After Divorce (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), pp. 17, 381.



each member playing new roles (less clearly defined, largely free of the unbearable conflicts of the previous unhappy marriage).

Despert points out that:

. . . the family now tends to be smaller and less sturdy than in the past. At the same time it is subject to far greater strains. Each member asks more of every other member, each relationship is intensified, each short-coming is more painful.<sup>16</sup>

(This would seem to be equally true for parent/child relationships as well as for marital relations.)

During the adjustment period the pleasant memories produce feelings of longing while the hostile feelings produce feelings of hurt and guilt. Both kinds of feelings together produce grief. Working together and against each other, the feelings actively bring about a more rapid adjustment.<sup>17</sup>

Burns states that there are many physical symptoms and feelings of ambiguity which are so painful that divorced persons usually try to protect themselves by limiting the number of places they go, the things they do, and the people they see. Feelings of guilt, self-accusations because of things they might have done differently often bother them.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Despert, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>17</sup>Cath, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>18</sup>James J. Burns, "What It Means To Be Divorced," Pastoral Psychology, September, 1958, pp. 45-48, 50-52.

For the adult, the grief process after a divorce is just the reverse of grief after death, according to Oates. We tend to repress and deny all the positive feelings and tend to vilify and derogate the former mate. The parent in this vilification and derogation is likely to do the most damage to the child. The damage is a double harm: the parent (1) destroys every good impression the child has of the other parent, and (2) creates a credibility gap between himself and the child. The child's experience of the other parent may be very different. Furthermore, the child even in the face of the truth of what the parent says against the other parent, will tend to reject the wisdom of the parent who did the vilifying.<sup>19</sup>

Cath proposes that the parent remaining with the child may be so absorbed by his own loss that he has little energy to love the child--which produces the effect of the double loss for the child.<sup>20</sup>

When the child feels the parents' "truth" and not the "whole truth," he feels betrayed--possibly estranged from both parents and troubled by his own incapacity to feel much of anything for anybody. With

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<sup>19</sup>Wayne E. Oates, "A Minister's Views on Children of Divorce," Explaining Divorce to Children, ed. Earl A. Grollman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 157-78.

<sup>20</sup>Cath, op. cit., p. 96.

the parents tearing down each other, the child feels that part of his own character and personality are impaired.

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship of the State of the Child with other interrelated variables. One of the major factors is the custodial parent and child, which includes the emotional support, the quality and quantity of contact of the relationship, and the closeness of perceptions of the parent to the child's point of view.

#### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Relationships important to the child are involved in the emotional support he experiences. A variety of relationships in addition to those already mentioned--custodial parent; absent parent; significant others (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, family friends); school relations with teachers, counselors, and peers--all are important to the security and stability of the child in his new life style.

#### Parental Relationships

In regard to his relationship with his parents, the child knows that the parents divorced each other, and he might be concerned about his own fate. What if a parent becomes angry with him? Pollack points out that the child loves and respects both his parents. He may

feel betrayed by the parental loss, or the tearing down of parents if indulged in by one or both of the ex-spouses--this tearing pulls the child apart because he is of both parents.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, if the child is forced to take sides he then feels guilt, resentment, and disloyalty. The only way for the child to resolve his conflict is to separate from both parents, so a double loss occurs for him, at least psychologically.<sup>22</sup>

Custodial Parent Relations.--Supervision of the child is difficult and demanding, as Herzog and Sudia indicate, because of the struggle against over-possessiveness, over-permissiveness, and control. All the physical and emotional demands are a great psychological drain. The single parent experiences many different kinds of demands on his time.<sup>23</sup>

An interesting socialization feature described by Goode is that:

. . . the primary character of the status of mother may be viewed so that all other role obligations are residual, compared with the other major statuses, that of mother is more likely to be viewed as first call on her energies. The legitimacy of non-maternal responsibilities is questioned unless it can be shown that the maternal responsibilities

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<sup>21</sup>Pollack, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>23</sup>Herzog and Sudia, op. cit., p. 66.

themselves are being properly met; and the clarity and moral force of this prescription are greater than for her other statuses.<sup>24</sup>

"When the father is away for long periods," Lynn and Sawrey found, "the mother tends to demand from her children obedience and politeness rather than happiness and self-realization."<sup>25</sup> This study deals with Norwegian boys and girls so its adaptability to our society may be limited. However, if it were applicable, this could suggest points of conflict in parent-child relations.

In situations of divorce and father absence, Goode found that:

. . . the greater the emotional difficulties experienced by the divorcee, the more likely is she to claim that there was some period during the divorce when the children had been harder to handle. This relationship does not change with increasing time since the divorce.

He also found that:

. . . when the divorcee claims that the children were easier to handle after the ex-husband's visits, she

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<sup>24</sup>William Goode, "Pressures to Remarry Institutionalized Patterns Affecting the Divorced," A Modern Introduction to the Family, ed. Bell and Vogel (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p. 319.

<sup>25</sup>Lynn had worked with Tiller with Norwegian data. Tiller wrote up part of the analysis of the data and published it. "The mother's reaction to husband absence is reflected in her treatment of the child and this treatment in turn affects the child." P. O. Tiller, "Father Absence and Personality Development of Children in Sailor Families," Nord Psykol Monogr., No. 9 (1958); David B. Lynn and William L. Sawrey (using the same data which Tiller analyzed), "The Effects of Father Absence on Norwegian Boys and Girls," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology (September, 1959), 258-62.

is more likely to say that he should visit more frequently; if they were harder to handle she is more likely to want the ex-husband's visits to be less frequent.<sup>26</sup>

There is an association between the divorcee's claim that her children were too young to know or remember their father and her claim that there had never been any period where the children had been more difficult to handle, according to Goode's findings.<sup>27</sup> It would seem to follow that the custodial parent's adjustment would be positively related with ease of handling her children and their age at the time of separation.

Nye found that adolescents from broken home families showed significantly better adjustment than those from unhappy broken families in relation to psychosomatic illnesses, delinquency behavior, and parent-child adjustment. In general, children from families broken by divorce do not have poorer adjustment than children from families broken in other ways. Children living in one mother households scored higher in parent-child relationships, but in other ways their adjustment levels generally were similar to those of other youth.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Goode, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>28</sup>Ivan F. Nye, "Child Adjustment in Broken and Unbroken Homes," Marriage and Family Living, November, 1957, pp. 56-61.

Schaeffer and Bayley found a problem which could be expected, that "subjective financial stress and negative emotional states had significant negative correlations with later ratings of positiveness of mother-child interaction."<sup>29</sup>

Research by Stoltz showed that compared with mothers who don't work, employed mothers are more likely to be widowed, divorced, or separated. This could indicate that, in many cases, working mothers work because they need to do so.<sup>30</sup>

All these facets of the new relationship being formed between the custodial parent (usually the mother) and the child need to be considered. The type of relationship between the absent parent (usually the father) and the child also has the potential of being a strong element in the emotional support of the child, therefore this also is important to examine.

Absent Parent Relations.--Cath writes:

For a child, one of life's greatest tragedies is the reality loss of a parent. Such loss brings pain that is often felt throughout a lifetime and poses one of the greatest challenges to the child's future development.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Earl S. Schaeffer and Nancy Bayley, "Consistency of Maternal Behavior from Infancy to Preadolescence," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXI (July, 1960), 5-6.

<sup>30</sup>L. Stoltz, "Effects of Maternal Employment on Children," Child Development, XXXI (1960), 749-82.

<sup>31</sup>Cath, op. cit., p. 86.

Much of the research in father-absence centers in the areas of sex-role identification and behavior problems. The findings do indicate that the reasons for the absence are important to the child because his self-concept seems much affected. If his father were absent for approved reasons, and the community response were supportive, the child was likely to idealize the father during his absence. If the absence were for an unacceptable reason, the child's self-concept was low.<sup>32</sup>

Herzog and Sudia suggest that some homes are broken precisely because the father is not able to meet the requirements of his role, that some unbroken homes contain fathers whose presence seems of dubious benefit, and they question whether an inadequate father is better for the child's development than no father at all--they feel it depends on a great many factors and individual characteristics.<sup>33</sup>

The male model, according to Cath, may be the nonpresent father, which could be a negative model. It could be of a brute or of a deserter. The boy's dependency on a female sometimes results in insecurity or the need to deny the importance of women and intensifies his need to rebel. Because of these phenomena a fatherless

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<sup>32</sup>Herzog and Sudia, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 71.



boy may also become increasingly motherless. He has little chance to temper a fantasy with the reality of a relationship that involves give and take.<sup>34</sup>

#### Significant Others' Relationships

The more intimate the family friends, the less likely is the family to experience desertion and divorce, says Zimmerman.<sup>35</sup> It would seem that the more support from family and friends, the more potential stability is lent for the necessary emotional adjustment, for a family recovering from a crisis once it does occur.

#### SUMMARY

The process of adjusting to the crisis of death or divorce is a crucial time in the development of a child in a single-parent family, but he can be helped. The adjustment of the custodial parent is especially influential in how the child will adjust--the day-to-day interpreting of how the loss is taken, understanding and working things through, for oneself and with the child. Knowing some of the problem areas can help avoid clashes that could cause difficulty between family members.

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<sup>34</sup>Cath, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>35</sup>Charles C. Zimmerman and Lucius F. Cervantes, Successful American Families (New York: Pageant Press, 1960), pp. 70-87.

Many problems of divorce are due to the tensions and conflict at the time of the break rather than the adjustment to the broken home as such. The time of realization of the crisis, when the adult is experiencing the physical symptoms and beginning the ambiguous healing process is a time when divorcing parents can do a great deal of damage to their children. Destroying the good image of the other creates a credibility gap between parent and child and may thus cause a double loss for the child. Having only bits and pieces of information, and feeling insecure may cause much confusion, misunderstanding, fears, guilt, and loneliness in the child.

The child's self-concept seems to be affected by the acceptability of the reasons and the social interpretation of the father's absence. The male model was formerly assumed to be a crucial influence necessary for healthy development of the child, especially a boy. Herzog and Sudia raise some question as to the type of male models--whether they are present or not present, which itself is a model, and whether a negative present model is better than no model.

Some of the best ways to off-set the difficulties of divorce or death for the child, seem to be to present the best possible parental adjustment with strong emotional support through contact with parents and many friends and relatives, and to be sensitive to the child and aware of his needs.

Despert says:

Divorce is not automatically a destructive experience. It may also be a cleansing and a healing one, for the child as well as for the parent: He can be relieved of guilt and fear; he can be assured that his parents' love for him is no less than it was before. With guidance he can find security. . . . Divorce is only what the human beings involved may make of it. All change is difficult and divorce, whatever else it may be, is change.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Despert, op. cit., p. 18.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The realization of the need for a study such as this grew out of conversations with the principals of the two East Lansing Middle Schools, a representative of the administration of the East Lansing Public Schools, and the middle school counselors. The writer also discussed needs of these children with YMCA personnel, mental health specialists, church pastors, and members of the Michigan State University faculty--all of whom agreed on the need for such a study and made helpful suggestions regarding procedures.

### SAMPLE

#### Definition of Population

The population of the study was composed of all East Lansing middle-school youngsters from single-parent families whose parents gave permission for their child to be interviewed and who themselves were willing to participate. Thus it is an "intact" population. All

the participants were concerned with adjustment to death or divorce as the cause of their partner's or parent's absence.

These youngsters from the middle-school population were selected for the project because they were old enough to be somewhat independent in their mobility and activities, yet they were young enough to be significantly helped by assistance with adjustment before such problems became too hard set.

With reference to socio-economic and educational factors, the middle schools have a heterogeneous population. On observation it appeared that the parents were predominantly high-level executives from governmental positions and business concerns, local business men, and professors from Michigan State University. Yet the population also included nonaffluent factory workers and housekeeping help. Only families from the professional and business groups volunteered to participate in the study.

### Selection of Sample

The potential number of single-parent families in East Lansing with 6th-, 7th-, or 8th-grade children was estimated at about 100. The sample for the study consisted of the parents and their middle-school children who responded to a letter explaining the project.

A letter was prepared, explaining the needs of children from single-parent families for assistance in adjusting to the crisis and aftermath of divorce or death. This letter was sent to the parents of the total middle-school population, about 1,100, so that the interested single parents would select out themselves and their children for further contact.

General forms included with the letter were to be returned to the schools or to the counselors. This procedure was designed to indicate sanction of the project by the schools to the responding parent, as well as to impart a feeling of purposefulness of the study.

#### FIELD WORK UNDERTAKEN

The interviews with professional personnel began in the spring, 1972. By the end of May the letter was approved by the middle-school counselors and the school administration representative. The East Lansing Public Schools in cooperation with the YMCA helped in getting the 1,100 letters mailed to all middle-school parents in East Lansing. Responses came in to the three counselors during the last two weeks of school.

Appointments were made by the investigator to interview both the parent and the child later in the summer.

The interviews were administered between July and October. Time spent with the parent was usually an hour to two and a half hours, depending on the amount of sharing involved. The interview with the child usually took a half hour, again depending on the exchange of information. An attempt was made not to cut anyone off prematurely.

Data were analyzed between April and May.

It was deemed desirable to get additional information from the counselor's perceptions. In order to do this, permission of parents needed to be obtained for the release of such confidential information by the schools. This was accomplished by mid-April although three of the families had moved during the year, two left the area.

Early in April, 1973, the Board of Judges rated questions for the various scales built for the study.

#### PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPATION

A Board of Experts was selected for consultation in preparing the questionnaire and scales and in examining resultant data. These well-qualified and knowledgeable experts agreed to assist with the project:

Dr. Margaret Bubolz, Professor and Chairman of the Family and Child Science Department, specialist in family relations;

Dr. Donald Melcer, Associate Professor of Family and Child Science and Institute of Family and Child Studies; Program Coordinator of Married Student Unit and Day Care Center;

Dr. Jane Oyer, Assistant Professor of Family and Child Science, specialist in family life and audiology emphasis;

Dr. David Imig, Assistant Professor of Family and Child Science and family life specialist, Cooperative Extension;

The Rev. Paige Birdwell, pastoral counselor, director of youth education and activities, group leader and resource person for single adults, Edgewood United People's Church.

This group of professional leaders served as consultants as the investigator undertook preparation of the questionnaire and planning of the project in general. Their consultation at the formative stages was very helpful and supportive. Their different perspectives and unique suggestions provided breadth of development that would otherwise have been impossible.

### Judges

Dr. Oyer, Dr. Melcer, and the Rev. Birdwell served the investigator as judges on the Board of Experts in assisting with the scale development. Their



categorization and re-categorization as clarification developed more clear-cut scales was very helpful.

### Counselors

Ms. Sandy Vaughn--McDonald Middle School counselor has been confidant of many middle-school children for a number of years.

Ms. Lois Frears--second-year counselor at Hannah Middle School who is building confidence in her relationships with many of the middle-school youngsters.

Mr. Wally Juell--the male member of the counseling team of the middle schools who divides his time between the two schools. He has built many relationships with boys and girls who especially can benefit from a dynamic male model.

The middle school counselors agreed to fill out questionnaires for their clients. They filled in information for those students of whom they had knowledge. Some of the students were known to the counselor only through a recreation program so information on the questionnaire was not obtained for them.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### Preparation

The questionnaire was designed to get at the child's present support system as it exists with his custodial parent, his absent parent, his family, and

significant others. It was designed to obtain data concerning the quality and satisfaction, as well as the extent of the support system for the child. School relationships were also investigated, as well as those of the teacher, counselor, and the peer group. The extent and rank in importance of the child's concerns in relation to the crisis of separation were included. An important source of information for planning a program around the child's needs was found in ideas about what the child or the family itself had done in an attempt to deal with these concerns.

One item on the questionnaire is the counselor's rating of each student as to his school adjustment. The child's general adjustment to life was also given a rating. A "1" was considered good adjustment and a "5" was poor adjustment.

Counselors gave the custodial parent a rating as to adjustment. This rating was based on being alone in dealing with school concerns for his or her child and how he functioned. One of the counselors felt he could not put a rank above or below three for any parent he didn't know relatively well. The investigator assigned a rank of three to any of the parents who were unknown to the counselors, assuming that unless there had been particular difficulty or outstanding behavior with

either parent or child, the counselor would have been likely to meet the parent and have a more definite impression.

The investigator also gave a rating to each parent. This score was intended to represent the interviewer's impression of the parent's general adjustment and ability to deal with the child constructively.

The parent's ranking of the same concerns in the manner he feels the child would perceive the situation is an attempt to determine understanding, empathy, and perspective of the parent in relation to his child.

Many of the items were taken from a questionnaire developed and used by Goode in his 1956 research on divorced mothers of Detroit.<sup>1</sup> These items were included to obtain background data on the parent's situation. They included professional and educational information about both parents, a brief marriage history; some general physical, financial, and emotional reactions of the custodial parent to the stresses of the divorce or death, current child-care arrangements, absent-parent-child relations in the case of divorce, and the parent's estimate of the effect of the divorce or death on the child.

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<sup>1</sup>William J. Goode, After Divorce (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), pp. 357-66.

Background information has extensive implications. With whom the child is living, and the reason for the parent's absence, gives the general setting of the home and possible relationships. The number of brothers and sisters living in the home and the ages of these children gives information concerning the child's built-in support system. The age of the child, the length of time since the family crisis that caused the single-parent status may indicate developmental or sequential phases which may be pertinent in the child's adjustment.

Some of the basic considerations for asking questions effectively to get the kind of information desired are suggested by Payne, who lists such ideas as the importance of simplifying and clarifying, using familiar words (but as few as necessary), grouping questions where the same introduction applies to several questions. Provision needs to be made for clear understanding and clear definitions. He also points out that it is important to allow for well-balanced choices and to provide adequate alternatives.<sup>2</sup>

Different types of questions were used to obtain different kinds of information, e.g.:

Who do you think cares most about you and what happens to you? Anyone else?

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<sup>2</sup>Stanley L. Payne, The Art of Asking Questions (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951).

This question solicits the respondent's first impression, not a selection from several choices. The composition of his answer gives an impression of the respondent's feelings and an interpretation of his home situation.

Multiple-choice questions were used to obtain information about specific choices, e.g.: items 91-95, relating to the cycle of adjustment to the crisis of death or divorce. When multiple-choice questions got beyond three choices, it was helpful to hand the respondent a card on which the alternatives were listed.

Many two-way, yes-no questions were used. This type of question reduced issues to simple terms so they were easy to record and tabulate. However, "no" may mean "not taking sides" as well as being the negative answer. Also qualified answers, e.g. "yes, if . . . ," "no, unless . . . " causes difficulty in scoring and tabulating responses. Some respondents will add qualifiers while others will only assume them and not voice the same qualifier even though they may be considering it.

### Interview Technique

The parent as well as the child answered the questionnaire, the parent answering for the child, in order to compare the child's and the parent's perception of the child's needs. This information indicates the parent's understanding, or need for understanding, of his child's situation and could be helpful in understanding

the parent's relation with the child; it could be an important factor in planning programs for the child and/or the parent.

Generally the parent was given the questionnaire first so that he/she would know the contents of the items and thus be relieved of anxiety about the child's being interviewed. In this way rapport was built up through the interest of the interviewer in both the parent and the child, through freedom from parental anxiety and through the child's curiosity and desire to know and be included in what was going on.

Interviews were conducted separately and privately, usually in the homes of the interviewee. Several times, however, interviewees preferred to come to the interviewer for privacy or quiet.

In discussing the responses to his study, Goode said,

. . . very few respondents deliberately and consistently lie about themselves. Once an atmosphere of emotional protection and understanding has been created and the respondent has developed a "set" toward dealing with these rather delicate matters, we can in general count on continued cooperation. . . . In general, it seems reasonable to suppose that the respondents were trying to tell the truth.<sup>3</sup>

Goode also pointed out obvious factors of bias to obtaining satisfactory answers from his research, which also applies to this study: (1) Respondents tried

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<sup>3</sup>Goode, op. cit., p. 24.

to tell the truth, but it is possible that in this area they could not do so and (2) The mothers might have been unable to perceive easily the difficulties that the divorce (death, also in this study) made for the children. Consequently, he was cautious in accepting the answers of his respondents, particularly if they claimed that the effects did not seem to be serious. On the other hand, such claims did tell them about their own focus, the adjustment of the respondents.<sup>4</sup> This also could be applicable to this study.

As Payne points out, administering a questionnaire is a social process and it was necessary to observe subliminal clues and to establish rapport. The interview was carried forward through a natural flow of conversation and through use of transition phrases. Occasional probing was useful on more difficult issues. The process of terminating was important also; the interviewer was careful to express appreciation for efforts of the respondent and not cut off too briskly.

The questionnaire was constructed with the idea of drawing the respondent into the interview and arousing his interest by asking simple questions about himself and building to more complex issues. An attempt was made to minimize defensiveness, to avoid tricky questions, and "talking down."

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 316.

Free response questions were used to get priorities. Follow-up questions were used to obtain further elaboration to better understand free responses.

#### SCALES DEVELOPMENT

In order to obtain a score for adjustment and relationships, it was necessary to organize the questionnaire items into separate scales.

The investigator grouped the questions in different categories logically to form the scales. The Board of Judges, formed from experts in family relations and human values, was selected to act as advisors for this procedure. Three of these experts acted as judges and also grouped the questions from the questionnaire to the category they felt was appropriate (List of Scales, Appendix C).

The following are the criteria used for inclusion of questionnaire items as part of a scale:

Of four professionally qualified judges,

- a. Three must agree that the item belongs to a given scale and to that scale alone, or
- b. All four must agree that the item belongs to a given scale, even though two of the judges see the item as belonging to other scales, as well.



## Examples of fulfilled criteria:

Judges	#1	#2	#3	#4	(total agreement)
Item 19	F	F	F	F	
Item 32	G	G	G	EFG	
Item 59	A	AC	A	AE	(qualifies under provision b)

Some items did not meet criteria for inclusion so the questions were edited to include the condition: "scored in terms of the custodial parent (absent parent, significant other, etc.)."

A footnote was added to some items with E and F category confusion.

Inasmuch as most custodial parents are mothers and most absent parents are fathers, judges failed to make distinctions between the designator "custodial" versus the designator "mother." Therefore, in treating items such as 63.a. Do you feel supportive of your mother's/father's role? Yes, No; the response E and F was given by all four raters--meaning that they failed to make the observation that this item related only to the custodial parent in the item itself. Thus a confusion enters because the E response is not possible because the F scale is the absent parent's relationship. Data from item 63.a. are analyzed in terms of either the absent or the custodial parent, therefore all E and F ambiguities are arbitrarily reduced to account for this confusion, before screening on the criteria for inclusion.

The judges were again given the list of problem items with appropriate notations and the judges then regrouped the items. From this process the scales were formed.

The scales include:

State of Child's Well-Being

Scale A--Child's Self-Concept

Scale B--Child's Urgency of Concern

Scale C--Child's Adjustment

Emotional Support

Scale E--Custodial Parent Relationship

Scale F--Absent Parent Relationship

Scale G<sup>1</sup> (was D)--Number of Significant Other Relationships

Scale G<sup>2</sup>--Quantity and Quality of Relationships

School Relationships

Scale H--Teacher Relationship

Scale I--Counselor Relationship

Scale J--Peer Relationship

Scale K--Custodial Parent's Adjustment

Each of the Scales A - K, with their respective component questions, may be found in Appendix C. The scoring for each of the questions with its ratings from the judges is also included.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

Each of the child's responses and each of the custodial parent's responses were tabulated. One table was constructed for each scale. Because counselor scores were not available for each child, counselor scores were not used in correlations. These scores were used for insights into patterns and understanding implications.

An objective of this study was to determine whether or not there is any relationship between the Child's Emotional Support System and his State of Well-Being and their respective component parts. Parent's

and child's scores for each scale were transferred to computer cards. The data were processed by means of the Control Data Corporation 6500 computers at Michigan State University Computer Center. All of the correlations were figured on these computers.

#### HYPOTHESES TESTING

The significance of each correlation was tested for each of the three hypotheses. Each of the hypotheses was tested from different perspectives of parent and child perceptions.

##### Hypothesis 1:

Analysis was to be correlation of Scale A (Self-Concept) with Scale G<sup>2</sup> (Emotional Support--Quantity and Quality of Relationships)

- a. Scale A (cp)<sup>1</sup>/Scale G<sup>2</sup> (cp)<sup>2</sup>
- b. Scale A (cp) /Scale G<sup>2</sup> (pp)
- c. Scale A (pp) /Scale G<sup>2</sup> (cp)
- d. Scale A (pp) /Scale G<sup>2</sup> (pp)

##### 1a. Correlation of Scale A with Scale E (Custodial Parent Relationship)

- a. Scale A (cp)/Scale E (cp)
- b. Scale A (cp)/Scale E (pp)
- c. Scale A (pp)/Scale E (cp)
- d. Scale A (pp)/Scale E (pp)

##### 1b. Correlation of Scale A with Scale F (Absent Parent Relationship)

- a. Scale A (cp)/Scale F (cp)
- b. Scale A (cp)/Scale F (pp)
- c. Scale A (pp)/Scale F (cp)
- d. Scale A (pp)/Scale F (pp)

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<sup>1</sup>(cp) = child's perspective

<sup>2</sup>(pp) = parent's perspective

1c. Correlation of Scale A with Scale  $G^1$  (Emotional Support)

- a. Scale A/(cp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (cp)
- b. Scale A/(cp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (pp)
- c. Scale A/(pp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (cp)
- d. Scale A/(pp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (pp)

Hypothesis 2:

Correlation of Scale B (Urgency of Concern) with Scale  $G^2$ .

- a. Scale B/(cp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (cp)
- b. Scale B/(cp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (pp)
- c. Scale B/(pp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (cp)
- d. Scale B/(pp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (pp)

2a. Correlation of Scale B with Scale E.

- a. Scale B/(cp)/Scale E (cp)
- b. Scale B/(cp)/Scale E (pp)
- c. Scale B/(pp)/Scale E (cp)
- d. Scale B/(pp)/Scale E (pp)

2b. Correlation of Scale B with Scale F.

- a. Scale B/(cp)/Scale F (cp)
- b. Scale B/(cp)/Scale F (pp)
- c. Scale B/(pp)/Scale F (cp)
- d. Scale B/(pp)/Scale F (pp)

2c. Correlation of Scale B with Scale  $G^1$ .

- a. Scale B/(cp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (cp)
- b. Scale B/(cp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (pp)
- c. Scale B/(pp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (cp)
- d. Scale B/(pp)/Scale  $G^1_1$  (pp)

Hypothesis 3:

Correlation of Scale C (Child Adjustment) with Scale  $G^2$ .

- a. Scale C/(cp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (cp)
- b. Scale C/(cp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (pp)
- c. Scale C/(pp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (cp)
- d. Scale C/(pp)/Scale  $G^2_2$  (pp)

## 3a. Correlation of Scale C with Scale E.

- a. Scale C/(cp)/Scale E (cp)
- b. Scale C/(cp)/Scale E (pp)
- c. Scale C/(pp)/Scale E (cp)
- d. Scale C/(pp)/Scale E (pp)

## 3b. Correlation of Scale C with Scale F.

- a. Scale C/(cp)/Scale F (cp)
- b. Scale C/(cp)/Scale F (pp)
- c. Scale C/(pp)/Scale F (cp)
- d. Scale C/(pp)/Scale F (pp)

3c. Correlation of Scale C with Scale G<sup>1</sup>.

- a. Scale C/(cp)/Scale G<sub>1</sub><sup>1</sup> (cp)
- b. Scale C/(cp)/Scale G<sub>1</sub><sup>1</sup> (pp)
- c. Scale C/(pp)/Scale G<sub>1</sub><sup>1</sup> (cp)
- d. Scale C/(pp)/Scale G<sub>1</sub><sup>1</sup> (pp)

Comparisons also were made between the scores of the parent and of the child on the same items of each scale.

Each scale was analyzed as to score distributions and questions answered significantly by each sub-group.

Distinctions were made between divorced families and widowed families where it seemed pertinent.

## SUMMARY

The sample was an intact population of volunteer parents and twenty middle-school children from single-parent families in East Lansing, Michigan.

A questionnaire was prepared for use in collecting data concerning emotional support and relationships of these middle-school children. The parents answered

the same questions as their child did in a way they thought their child would answer. Background information was also asked of the parents to provide information concerning the general setting of the home and possible relationships.

The interview was conducted in a manner designed to build rapport and draw the respondent into the interview and arouse his interest.

Middle-school counselors assisted by providing information wherever possible for items on the questionnaire and by providing scores of their impression of adjustment for the child in school and in general life situations, and of the custodial parent whenever possible.

Scale development was achieved by the investigator and a panel of judges grouping items from the questionnaire into appropriate categories. Through clarification these items became the scales A - K.

Data were tabulated and correlations figured to test each of the hypotheses. Scatter graphs were constructed to analyze the particular placement of each respondent in relation to the others. Comparisons of the score of each parent and child on each item were observable.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### INTRODUCTION

Since the main purpose of this study was to determine the needs of middle school children from single-parent families in East Lansing, Michigan, one of the important steps was to determine the kind and the amount of emotional support these children receive; their psychological well-being, their self-concept, the urgency of concern they experienced and their over-all adjustment.

#### SAMPLE RESPONSE

Sixteen single-parent families with twenty middle school children responded to the letter asking for volunteers who were interested in the problems of single-parent families. This group composed the sample for the study. One family was interviewed and shortly thereafter moved to a neighboring community.

In addition to the sample, another family responded to the letter but moved before the interview could be arranged. One parent agreed to the interview if the

child wanted to participate, but the child was hesitant so the family was not included in the study. Two other children were hesitant because they were resistant to being classified as children of single-parent families. The appointment was arranged with the parent and when that was completed the child was asked for an interview and readily agreed. This was accomplished seemingly happily and willingly with no problem.

One widowed mother was very strongly against her children being set apart or singled out and wanted no part of the project.

There was one mother who had remarried but who responded for an interview anyway. The investigator contacted her to thank her for her interest and to explain the project more specifically. The mother said she wanted to be interviewed because she thought she and her son had some information they could share that would be helpful. It was generous of them and very helpful to see the situation from their perspective. (See Additional Information, end of Chapter IV.)

#### SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The sample was composed of twenty middle school youngsters whose parents volunteered. The parents and children both agreed to be interviewed. Ten of the children were male and ten were female. All the children



but one boy lived with their mothers. The father whose son was living with him had been widowed for five years. Of the women living with their children, four were widowed and eleven were divorced.

Of the children interviewed there were four pairs of siblings, e.g., three were brothers and sisters and there was one pair of sisters. The children ranged in age from 12 to 14-1/2 years. Eight were between 12 and 13; nine were between 13 and 14; and three were between 14 and 15 years of age.

Ten of the children, 50 percent, were living in single-parent families by the time they were 9 years of age. As many as 75 percent or fifteen children by the age of 7 were living with only one parent. Twenty percent of the children were already separated from one parent between the ages of 2 and 5. The crisis which caused single-parent status for 30 percent of the sample population occurred during the tenth and eleventh years of the children's lives.

#### Time Since Separation

Four children of the sample, 20 percent, have been adjusting to the crisis of divorce within the last six months or less. They were in a crucial period of adjustment at the time of their interview. Some of them were having a difficult time. For some, much of the adjustment

had been worked out before the separation was actually affected.

Most of the children, 60 percent, had faced the crisis situation one and one-half to five years ago. The crisis occurred three to five years ago for ten of these children. Twenty percent of the children have been living as children in single-parent families for more than eight years.

### Siblings

Twenty percent of the children of this study live in families with five or six brothers and sisters. Only two children of the twenty in the sample have a large family, seven children, living together in the home. Only two of the children are living alone with their single parent (one of these children does have a grandfather and two grown siblings). Seventy-five percent of the children have one, two or three siblings living with them.

There is additional sibling support for five of these youngsters because they have brothers and sisters who do not happen to be living in the home. In each of these cases there seems to be a warm relationship and concern on the part of the older siblings for the younger.

Forty-five percent of the single-parent families in this study are families with four or more children. Seventy percent of these single-parent families have

three or more children. In most of these crisis situations, many children are involved but they do have the potential of offering each other support and comfort.

#### Stability of Residence

Of the twenty children studied, one moved within six months of the mother's divorce. Another family moved three years ago at the time of divorce. One family with two of the children in the study moved two years ago, with the divorce having been six months before. Two more children of the study, one family, came here one year ago; the divorce having been two and one-half years before the move. A fifth family had lived here two years; they also had moved since the divorce, which had taken place five years ago.

Of the remaining thirteen children of the study, six already have or have planned to move by the end of the 1973 school year. The custodial parents of these families are divorced, except for the widowed father who moved because of his recent marriage.

The four widowed mothers have been established in East Lansing for five years or more; they are not planning to relocate. One divorced mother has been here five years and also is not planning to move. Moving the family seems to be more closely associated with divorced than with widowed single parents.

Of the eleven parents who did move since divorce or have planned to move within the year, seven have returned to college. Four mothers are full-time students and three are part time. All but two of these custodial parents who did attend school were divorced rather than widowed. However, one widow of nine years completed a Ph.D. after her husband's death and another widow of two and one-half years has taken several courses to get started back to school.

The academic setting of East Lansing attracted the single-parents who chose to be full-time students here and the convenience of the campus encouraged long-time-resident single parents to take advantage of academic opportunities in reorganizing their lives.

Financial considerations also influenced moving within the community. Four of the mothers who had been divorced had been established here four or more years, and they needed to sell their homes because of financial pressures following the divorce. Two of these mothers had been divorced; one, eight and one-half years ago, and the other, eleven years ago; the other two were divorced six months and two and one-half years ago, respectively.

Financial stress and perhaps needs for higher academic achievement, to prove oneself, seem to be associated with divorce more than it does with widowhood.

In this study, mobility also seems to be related to financial stress and academic opportunity. Divorcees appear to be more mobile than widows.

#### Custodial Parent's Work Background

At the time of the interview, eleven of the custodial parents were working full time as well as caring for their families. One was working part time and four were not working. Two of the mothers who were not working were divorced, and three of the four were attending college classes.

At the time of separation only seven of these parents were working full time; two were working part time and in addition to the four who were not working at the time of the interview, there were three others who were not working then. However, one took a job within a month.

Three of the custodial mothers worked full time, only at the beginning of their marriages. Four other custodial parents, including the father, worked during all the time of their marriages, three working full time and one working part time. Three worked once in a while, two worked seldom, and two worked several years at the end of their marriages, seemingly in preparation for the approaching divorce.

One of the custodial parents has earned a Ph.D. while being on her own after her husband's death. Five of

the women earned M.A. degrees, five have a B.A. or a B.S., two have attended a year or two of college, and three had completed high school.

These custodial parents worked in such positions as teachers (five), governor's planner, social worker and nurse, two were in business and two were office workers, two were graduate assistants, and one was a librarian.

Only seven of the custodial parents were working at the time of separation from their partners, however as mentioned, two probably were working in preparation for the separation. At the time of the interview, only five were not working full time. Parents had felt needs to go back to work if they weren't working, whether solely for financial needs or for social and personal needs as well. Only 18 percent of the divorcees could afford the luxury of not working and they were attending school, while 40 percent of the widows were not presently working. One, however, was attending several classes at the university.

#### Absent Parent's Backgrounds

Of the absent parents, four had Ph.D.s, five had M.A.'s, six had either a B.A. or a B.S. and one had completed high school. Six of them were professors, one was a lawyer, two were engineers, one was a librarian (the deceased mother), four were in business, one was a machinist and one was in the military service. Five of these parents were deceased.

Fourteen ex-spouses reported that their former mates were steady workers. The other two were steady when they worked (one worked no summers and the other was on line lay-offs).

### Marital Background

The ages at marriage of the custodial parents ranged from 17 to 29, with 50 percent of the custodial parents having been married between the ages of 19 and 21. The mean age was 20 and a half. Their spouses' ages ranged from 18 to 35 years of age with the mean being 22 and a half. Thirty-eight percent of the spouses were 22 or 23 years old at the time of their marriage.

Custodial parents of this study had known their spouse from four and one-half months to six years before marriage. The mean length of time was two years. Fifty percent of the couples had known each other for two or three years before marriage.

The couples' engagements ranged from one week to three years in length. The median engagement period was six months. Forty-four percent of the couples were engaged between four to eight months.

The marriages lasted from seven to twenty-six and one-half years with the median being fifteen and one-half years. Forty-four percent of the marriages lasted nineteen years or more. Four of those seven were terminated by death.

The separation period for the couples being divorced ranged from no prior separation to two and one-half years. The median separation period was ten and one-half months. Seventy-two percent of the couples were separated a year or even less waiting for the divorce.

The crisis had taken place eleven years ago for one child and was as recent as three months for another. The median length of time since the crisis was three and one-half years ago with 44 percent of the single-parent families of the study experiencing the trauma between three and five years ago.

#### CHILD CARE

Since most of the children are middle school age, there may be younger brothers and sisters, but, especially, when there are older siblings, custodial parents of this study tended to depend on the public school and the children themselves for their care.

The parents felt that care for their child, when the custodial parent needed to be away, was good or excellent.

Of the activities most handicapped by having full-time responsibility of raising the family, the custodial parents seemed to feel most with regard to job possibilities--one mother said she was less anxious to relocate. Others mentioned next, trips, dates and



education as being hampered. As Dr. Donald Melcer (of the Department of Family and Child Sciences, Michigan State University) expressed it, "In the years I have worked with single parents, most of the parents who have the children feel the pressures and find it difficult at times, but I don't know of one of them who would change places with their ex-spouse and give up custody."

## CHILD CONTACT

### Custodial Parent

While some parents work and others remain more in the home, some families interact with each other a great deal and others go about their own activities individually. For such reasons it was difficult, but a rough estimate of time spent together by the custodial parent and child was obtained. It was defined as a time in which they were in close physical proximity with the probability of some interaction.

Custodial parent contact varied to a great extent. The contact each day during the school week is represented by the first number of Table 4-1 and the hours a day on the week-end days is represented by the second number of each pair.

Many children who enjoy quiet activities may be in the home more physically, but may be as involved in things other than parent relationship as a child who spends more time outside the home.

Table 4.1  
Hours Per Day Spent Together by Custodial  
Parent and Child

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2—3

2—5

3

3-----

3—6

4—5

4—8

4—10

5—8

5—10

5—12

5—14

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Each broken line represents "all the time." The number of lines connecting the two numbers indicate the number of relationships with those same hours estimated as being together.

The amount of time absent parents actually spent in contact with their children was of course more specific and therefore easier to identify than the time custodial parents were with the children. Among other reasons, the fact that some absent parents were living in the same city and that others were in other parts of the country caused a great variation in the visitation time of parent and child (see Table 4-2).

Table 4.2

Absent Parent Residence in  
Relationship to Child

Local	Away	
	Close	Distant
5	6	3

Five absent parents saw their child weekly, one had visits biweekly, and two had time together monthly. One child spent eight weeks of the summer, one spent six weeks and four spent four weeks of the summer with their absent parent. Two other children had one week and three had only a few days of vacation with their father during summer vacation. As for holidays, one child had many and one had none with the father. Six spent a few holidays and three spent half of the holidays with their absent parent (see Table 4-3).

Table 4.3

## Absent Parent Visitation

<u>High Frequency</u>				
Anytime	Weekly	Bi-weekly	Monthly	
0	5	1	2	
<u>Low Frequency</u>				
8 Wks	6 Wks	4 Wks	1 Wk	Few Days
1	1	4	2	3
<u>Holidays</u>				
Many	Few	None		
3	6	1		

Five of the fourteen fathers lived in the local area while nine lived at a distance. Six are nearby in Flint, Detroit, Kalamazoo, and Indiana so visitation was relatively convenient. One father stationed at distant points of the country and world visited his daughter 6-10 days a year. Of two others, one lived in California and the other in the Southwest, so essentially summer visits and every other Christmas were the extent of their time with their children.

Two of the fathers located in the area at the time of the interview will have moved to distant points by the end of the 1973 school year. Since five of the absent fathers are deceased, this will leave only three of the

absent parents living in the same locality with their children.

#### ABSENT PARENT VISITATION EFFECTS

Since visitation of the absent parent involves only the divorcees there were eleven mothers responding to these questions. Six of the eleven, 55 percent, wanted their ex-husbands to see the child more; one mother commented that her ex-spouse does more since he doesn't live with them. Three wanted the same visitation, while only one wanted less and one didn't know.

Five of the mothers said children were harder to handle after visiting the absent parent. Six said the children were about the same. One, who said they were about the same now, felt they had been harder to handle at first. None of the mothers felt it was easier to handle the children after their having visited their fathers.

Two of the mothers who felt it was harder to handle their children after visits to the fathers still wanted their ex-husbands to see the children more. Only one mother who felt the children were harder to handle after visiting their father did want less visitation for the father. The other two mothers, who felt handling the children after their seeing their fathers was more difficult, wanted the same visitation times to continue.

Four of the six mothers who felt the children were about the same to handle after visits with their father wanted more child visitation with their fathers. One of the other two mothers, feeling that the children were the same in ease of handling after visiting their father, wanted the same visitation and the sixth mother didn't know.

Seven of the custodial parents of the total sample, including the parents whose spouses were deceased, felt that the children were never difficult to handle. Three of these seven had fathers who had passed away rather than left because of divorce. Four mothers felt the most difficult period for them in handling their children was in the rebuilding period<sup>1</sup> of their adjustment, however one of the mothers said that she had been the hard one to handle; the children had handled her. These are give-and-take situations; the child often helps in the adjustment.

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<sup>1</sup>We find that at times of crises most people tend to have trouble with their general health, sleeping, loneliness, etc. There seems to be a cycle of adjustment to the crisis of single parenthood:

- a - realization of separation
- b - resolution (death or divorce)
- c - grief
- d - initial adjustment
- e - public phase
- f - rebuilding adjustment

Wayne E. Oates, "A Minister's Views on Children of Divorce," Ch. 7 Explaining Divorce to Children, ed. by Grollman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 157-78.

Of the other mothers, one felt the period of initial adjustment<sup>2</sup> and one felt the period of resolution<sup>3</sup> were the more difficult times to deal with their children. The time of realization of the crisis<sup>4</sup> was the most difficult time for three of the divorced mothers to handle their children.

Eight custodial parents, 50 percent of the sample, thought that their children felt about the same about their absent parents. Four of these parents were widowed, and three of the widowed parents thought the children didn't think about the absent parent very often. Four of the divorced mothers thought their children loved their fathers less than they had during the marriage, while one felt the children loved their father more and another did not know whether the father was loved more; but the relationship seemed better than it had been during the latter part of the marriage.

#### EFFECTS OF CRISIS ON THE CHILD

In considering the effects of divorce or death of a parent on the child, five of the custodial parents, all divorced parents, felt the change had provided a healthier environment for the family. Four felt it had been harder

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

but better. Seven parents were concerned about the absence of the male model living in the family.

One mother expressed concern about her daughter getting a realistic view of man's role in the household in terms of psychological differences between the male and the female. She also was concerned about not having a second adult available--another person to give reassurance. Actually she feels things are working out better than she had thought they would.

A mother of a quiet introverted very intelligent boy is similarly concerned for her son whose father died. She feels he won't have the number of opportunities he otherwise would and she is trying to help him find places where he can explore and develop his special areas of interest. Things are working out better than expected at first--both are coping well.

Another mother feels that no single person can rear children, that two genders are necessary or that there is an imbalance. However, she does feel that there is a better balance since her divorce; that it is better because more balance is being done now. Things are working out much better than she expected. The mother is finding she is capable and she enjoys making her own decisions.

On the contrary, one mother felt humiliated and that the children would be warped without their father; she felt that they couldn't live without him. She was



concerned about her son's becoming homosexual without his male image and about her daughter, because she loved him so much. After the divorce, things have worked out better than expected with the children and she herself did not die. She feels both children are comfortable with themselves, more than with some children with fathers at home. Scout leaders and teachers have helped.

A widow of one and one-half years was mostly concerned about holding the family together and about the children's education. She was in between both families, with neither, but held in Michigan because of financial aid. An older son was causing difficulty with the other children and it would help her if he would "come around."

The father knew his wife's illness was terminal, and he realized that there was no sense in looking back. There was no way it would be any different. He felt it as a challenge to see how good he was; to see if he could overcome the problems. He felt inadequate about doing things that the mother would have done; things which haven't been done--cleaning and social graces--he can't do all he wants to. Things are working out somewhat as he expected. He has some problems with the girls and how to get them to do things, some personal problems, when to give in and when to say no.

One mother was concerned about the fact that she and her spouse never argued so the children never knew

anything was wrong. They thought that their mother was sick. She is worried that the kids may wonder if they can "trust Mom" because all of a sudden there is no father. She tried to explain recently (the divorce was three years ago) but she feels they still may not fully understand. Things are working out as she expected they would. (She has since left school and her two children are living with their father.)

Financial security was a concern in one case. This mother is one of the four who has not gone back to work since her husband's death four years ago. An older son had a lot of time with his dad, perhaps he had been pushed too high; it might have been difficult for him to live up to his father's standards. He wasn't pressured any special direction and he could develop in his own way. The father expected so much and would have given so much more to compensate for the pressure. The mother was concerned that the son in this study hadn't reached that point of relationship with his father. However, expectations of the future are working out as she had anticipated.

One divorced mother was mostly concerned with holding things together for her children and protecting them from feeling guilty. Her main interest was to work toward their accepting the situation and thinking things through. As things are working out the oldest child

still has the hardest time accepting the divorce--it never stops being a problem.

Providing a healthier environment was the goal of one divorced mother who felt that her spouse was difficult and that the children would do better living with her. She feels guilty about having had more children after she realized she had made a poor choice of a marriage partner. She was particularly concerned about her children not having a man living with them. She felt it was hard, but all in all it worked out better this way. This mother is concerned because things have been difficult in ways she couldn't anticipate. She would not have expected it to take so much time to adjust to moving and she feels she hasn't done as well as she would wish with the amount and form of hostility the children are expressing.

A recently divorced mother is concerned with the long-range effects to her children, about their marital adjustment later. She also is concerned about the difficulty of day-to-day life--about the rightness of the choice, for the kids. As things are working out she feels that things are better, that they are all happier, that her ex-husband is pleasant and easier to get along with.

Another mother is concerned about an older daughter and she feels this child is in for a lot of

trouble. She won't see her dad or a counselor; she is just ignoring the situation, not facing reality.

In one family, the father unexpectedly died two weeks after Kennedy's assassination. At that time they all had talked about death, and the father wanted her to raise the children the way he told her to: children first. This mother felt prepared for her husband's death even though it was a shock. She went on, "business as usual." Her baby had died the year before and her pediatrician coached her then to not fall apart so others wouldn't; he said that the kids will react like she did. They talked about their father as a part of life, not a crutch, but reality to live with. She did say that the father's family felt she was awful, that she didn't cry or break up and that they still have little or nothing to do with her (after nine years). She feels that her plans were laid out by a psychologist and were pretty true--things are working out as she expected.

The most recently divorced mother of the survey hopes that the children can continue to love and respect both parents and have a relationship with both. She feels her ex-husband is sick and needs understanding and patience. At the time of the interview the middle school-aged daughter refused to see her father. Things did not happen as expected; her spouse's behavior has

been erratic. She was surprised at his lack of responsibility.

One of the divorced mothers of long standing feels sure that children have more (difficult) adjustments in an unhappy home than in a single-parent home. She has seen to it that her sons have had other male exposure, however. Things are working out as she had expected.

Divorce was an overall relief for one family whose situation was bad because of alcohol. The children wanted the divorce. Two sons loved both parents but the other children (five) did not feel loyalty to their father. They all knew they would make it. Things have worked out much better than this mother would have expected.

Six of the custodial parents thought that things worked out better or much better than they expected as they were anticipating the effects of the crisis on their children and themselves. Seven parents felt things were working out as they had expected, with three anticipating things to go smoothly and four expecting things to be difficult in some ways. Three of the seven parents felt that things are more difficult than they had anticipated. These three mothers are divorced and unresolved hostility and friction are elements of each situation. The five parents, single because of death, felt things are going as well as or better than expected. Eight of the divorced

parents are doing as well or better than expected, even though two are finding it difficult, as expected.

### SELF-ACTUALIZATION

The fact that most of the custodial parents of this study felt that things have worked out as well or better than they expected might be related to the fact that as people have an opportunity to cope with difficult situations and find that they are able, they experience self-actualization. In connection with this, a question was asked the parents about being able to do something they might have wanted to do but not been able to achieve until now.

One of the most important areas for achievement of these parents was the professional achievement and recognition. This was important for more than half of the group in the study. Being an individual with the freedom to make their own decisions and build confidence in themselves was another important area. One parent took pleasure in being free socially and in being able to put her family in a solvent financial condition. Only three felt that they had not been able to do something that they had wanted to do before but never done. Each of these was widowed. Maybe the need to prove oneself is more associated with divorce than with the death of a

partner. Most of the parents took pleasure in discovering that they could achieve on their own.

#### REMARRIAGE

The question of remarriage comes up. As Goode points out, society pressures unmarried mothers toward marriage.<sup>4</sup> Eight of the custodial parents in the study are between the ages of 30-39, five are between 40-49 and three are between 50-60.

Of all the parents interviewed, only three said they had decided never to remarry. One of these, a mother of six, said she had almost decided: a valuable relationship, yes; marriage, no. Another said she had decided and still felt this way: love, yes; not marriage; and the other who had twice married and twice divorced her husband changed her mind from "never" to probably wanting to remarry by the age of 50. If it were not for her daughter, she would like a meaningful relationship, living with a man, but not marriage. One other, a mother of seven, said there is a possibility of love but marriage is another question.

Thirteen of the parents still believed in love and marriage and would like to remarry but were willing to take what comes, as it comes. One woman commented that

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<sup>4</sup>Wm. J. Goode, After Divorce (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), pp. 2-6-16, 209.

society is too hard on men so that remarriage is not a realistic expectation for her. The custodial father was the only one who stated that he expected to remarry. The women all thought the right situation would be nice, but had no real prospects.

#### IDEAL SITUATION

In fantasizing about the work situation, five custodial parents like what they are doing and would like to continue in the same line, perhaps with more time, energy and higher pay. Several will plan to work more as their children get into high school. One wants to be treated more professionally so she can use her own professional judgment. Several would like to teach and do more academic work. One wants to be a secretary. The type of job with interesting duties and people were mentioned as a concern by ten of the sixteen; the hours of work were of special concern to three and the financial aspect is a main consideration to three.

Six of the mothers wanted to be better mothers, have more time with their children and be able to provide more stability at home. Three stated satisfaction with the progress of their children as is; two felt a need for male images for their children; two wanted improved behavior of their sons; one wanted children to finish their education; one wanted the children to become independent



and self-supporting; and one specified qualities of a well-adjusted individual which she wanted for her children.

As far as finances were concerned, two mothers wished for \$2,000-\$6,000 more a year. Eight custodial parents said they were doing all right but could use more money; two needed more in order not to have to worry about making ends meet; one wanted enough to retire and not have to work in an unpleasant job situation anymore. The most recently divorced hoped to be supported for three years until she could get on her feet and support herself and the children.

Some other things parents had thoughts about were:

1. In relation to the children, several wanted help with their children and with their development.
2. For themselves, they wished to feel more confident and to have more peace of mind. One mother said that now they were okay. For the last two years they had been happy.
3. Socially, one mother wanted more friends, another wanted more social life--she said she was sick of women, others wanted people to be more adjustable and more tolerant.
4. Such things as travel and attending scientific meetings were also felt to be desirable.

## METHOD OF ANALYSIS

For analysis of the data to support or reject the hypotheses, simple correlations were figured. Correlation coefficients below .05 would probably be a chance factor of the sample employed. A correlation of .444 would indicate a meaningful relationship between two factors at a .05 level of confidence.

The levels of significance used for this study were the .05, .02, .01, and .001. The .05 level means that the probability of a result in this direction being an accidental characteristic of this sample is one in twenty or 5 percent and the probability of this being a sampling error is less than 95 percent. The probability of the result in this direction being due to chance alone is 5 percent.

## EVIDENCE APPLIED TO HYPOTHESIS 1

Hypothesis 1 states:

Hypothesis 1:

The Child's Self-Concept as perceived by the child himself and the custodial parent will be positively related to Emotional Support, Quantity and Quality of Relationships.

- a. This Self-Concept will be positively related to Emotional Support from his Custodial Parent Relationship.
- b. This Self-Concept will be positively related to Emotional Support from his Absent Parent Relationship.

- c. This Self-Concept will be positively related to Emotional Support from the Number of Significant Other Relationships.

Hypothesis 1, that strong emotional support correlated with the child's self-concept, has not been supported. From the child's perspective, it approached significance since it was at the .10 level of confidence.

The sub-hypothesis that the Child's Self-Concept was positively related to the Emotional Support from the Custodial Parent Relationship was supported. It was significant at the .01 level of confidence.

The sub-hypothesis that the Child's Self-Concept was positively related to the Emotional Support from his Absent Parent Relationship was not supported.

The sub-hypothesis that the Child's Self-Concept was positively related to Emotional Support from the Number of Significant Other Relationships was supported at the .05 level.

The child's self-concept, based on his parent's model of acceptance of the child was related to how the child saw his relationship with his custodial parent and the number of significant people who were important to him. When the child saw these relationships as valuable, there was a positive correlation.

The Total Scores of the Sum of the Child's Emotional Support includes the Custodial Parent Relationship,

the Absent Parent Relationship, the Number of Significant Other Relationships and the Quantity and Quality of Relationships. These Scales were viewed as a Total Sum of the Child's Emotional Support and also as individual relationships.

The child's perspective and the parent's perception of the child were considered. These perceptions were examined as a total for the children and also for the parents. They were then divided into groups of divorced or of widowed families for further study.

#### Correlations of Child's Self-Concept

Table 4.4 presents the correlations of the Child's Self-Concept with the Child's Emotional Support scores, both totals and individual scales from the perceptions of the parent and the child. Both the Total and the child's perception of the Sum of the Emotional Support Scales correlated with the parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept Scale at the .05 level of confidence. However, the parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept and the Sum of Emotional Support from the parent's perception was nonsignificant. All of the Child's Self-Concept scores from the child's perspective correlated nonsignificantly with the Total Sum of Emotional Support and the Sum of Emotional Support from both the child's and the parent's perceptions.

Table 4.4

Correlations of Scale A: Child's Self-Concept with the Child's Emotional Support, Individual Scales E, F, G<sup>1</sup>, G<sup>2</sup> and Totaled Scales from Child's and Parent's Perceptions Total Sample  
(N = 20)

Group	Emotional Support Child's Perception				Emotional Support Parent's Perception				Sum of Emotional Support		
	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	CP	PP	Total
CP	.287	.096	.340	.061	.226	.077	-.116	-.146	.311	.230	.058
PP	.661 <sup>a</sup>	-.052	.534 <sup>a</sup>	.115	.320	.314	.269	.250	.497 <sup>b</sup>	.214	.479 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Significance at .01 = .561

<sup>b</sup>Significance at .05 = .444

CP = Child's Perception

PP = Parent's Perception

With reference to the individual Emotional Support Scales from the child's perspective, more of the correlations were higher from the parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept, e.g., the .01 level for the Custodial Parent Relationship and .02 for the Number of Significant Other Relationships, than the Child's Self-Concept from the child's perception. None of the correlations from the child's point of view were significant. The parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept correlated nonsignificantly with both the child's perspective on the Absent Parent Relationship and the Quantity and Quality of Relationships.

Table 4.4 shows that none of the parent's perception or the child's perception of the Child's Self-Concept correlated significantly with any of the individual scales of the Child's Emotional Support from the parent's perspective.

The hypothesis that the Child's Self-Concept would be positively related to the Emotional Support that the child received was not supported by the data of the total sample.

Table 4.5 summarizes the correlations of the Child's Emotional Support with his Self-Concept for the sub-groups of both divorced and widowed families. Dividing the data into these two groups brings out some differences.

Table 4.5

Correlations of Scale A: Child's Self-Concept with the Child's Emotional Support, Individual Scales E, F, G<sup>1</sup>, G<sup>2</sup> and Totaled Scales from Child's and Parent's Perceptions, Widowed Families and Divorced Families

Group	Emotional Support Child's Perception				Emotional Support Parent's Perception				Sum of Emotional Support			N
	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	CP	PP	Total	
DCP	.280	-.165	.528 <sup>b</sup>	.268	-.260	-.442	-.064	.114	.414	-.205	.086	14
WCP	.437	--	.056	-.327	.400	--	.040	-.739	.034	-.614	-.094	6
DPP	.730 <sup>a</sup>	.072	.698 <sup>a</sup>	.141	.308	-.357	.276	.302	.707 <sup>a</sup>	.232	.567	14
WPP	.246	--	.093	.028	.234	--	-.701	-.436	.125	-.549	.006	6

<sup>a</sup>Significant at Divorced, .01 = .661; Widowed .01 = .917.

<sup>b</sup>Significant at Divorced, .05 = .532; Widowed .05 = .811.

DCP = Divorced Children's Perception, WCP = Widowed Children's Perception,  
DPP = Divorced Parent's Perception, WPP = Widowed Parent's Perception.

As for the divorced parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept, the Total Sum of the Child's Emotional Support scores correlated at the .05 level and the child's perception of his Emotional Support correlated significantly at the .01 level for divorced parents. The widowed parent's correlation was not significant between the parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept and either of the Total Sum of the Child's Emotional Support or the Sum of Emotional Support from the child's perception.

In the third correlation of this category as shown in Table 4.5, the sum of the Child's Emotional Support scores from the parent's perspective, neither the divorced parent's nor the widowed parent's correlation was significant from the parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept. This higher correlation of the Child's Self-Concept and the Child's Emotional Support for the divorced parents and their children was not expected, nor were the nonsignificant and negative correlations of the widowed parents and their children. These results could be due to a quirk in the make-up of these particular groups because of the small number in the sample--only six widowed children and fourteen children of divorce. Because of the consistency of the scores this seemed probable. There also was the possibility that this correlation might be the one in twenty, e.g., at the .05 level of confidence, which might accidentally seem significant.



Because the size of the divorced group is fourteen children (minus two for statistical correction) rather than the twenty of the total sample, the correlations in Table 4.5 are figured at a different value to indicate a significant level. With a sample of fourteen, .661 is significant at the .01 level .612 at the .02 level, .532 at the .05 level. For the widowed group with a sample of six (minus two for correction) .917 is significant at .01, .882 at .02, and .811 at .05.

None of the Summed Emotional Support Scales, Total, from the child's or from the parent's perspective, correlated with either the divorced or widowed children's perceptions of the Child's Self-Concept.

In the correlation of the parent's perceptions of the Child's Self-Concept with the child's perspective of his Emotional Support, both Custodial Parent Relationships and the Number of Significant Others, the divorced parent's correlations, again, were significant at the .01 level of confidence while there was no significance for the correlation of the widowed parents. Of the correlations of the child's perception of his own Self-Concept and his Emotional Support none approached a significance at the .05 level of confidence, however.

The divorced child had a nonsignificant correlation between his Self-Concept and his Custodial Parent's Relationship in contrast to the correlation at the .01

level of confidence of the parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept and the child's perception of his Custodial Parent Relationship.

In divorced families the correlation of the parent's perception of the Child's Self-Concept was correlated significantly with the Number of Significant Other Relationships.

None of the correlations were significant between Child's Self-Concept and individual scales of emotional support either from the parent's or the child's perception.

An unexpected finding shown on Table 4.5 was the lack of positive correlation of the Absent Parent Relationship with the Child's Self-Concept. In general, the correlations were not significant, but the inclination was negative.

Also, the child's perception of his Self-Concept with both the Custodial Parent Relationship and Absent Parent Relationship was nonsignificant.

#### Analysis of Distribution of Scores on Scale A

Scores were obtained for each scale by adding the number assigned for each of the answers to each of the questions which was included on the scale.

It was hoped that analysis of the distribution of scores on the questions which made up Scale A might illuminate some of the reasons for unexpected results.

Studying the parent-child interaction of the divorced and the widowed families might clarify some of these confusing phenomena. Scales E, Custodial Parent Relationship; F, Absent Parent Relationship;  $G^1$ , Number of Significant Other Relationships; and  $G^2$ , Quantity and Quality of Relationships were also studied for clues to understand the data better.

As Table 4.6 indicates, there was close agreement between the children and parent's feeling that things were not much worse off because of the crisis of death or divorce that had affected their lives. Fourteen children and twelve parents responded "no" to question 46. Four children and six parents did feel they were at a disadvantage because of the single-parent status, mainly because of opportunities that would have been available had the other parent been with the family at the present time. Children expressed loneliness generally as their reason for negative reaction. One family has suffered harrassment from the father and they had felt much confusion; they were bitter, angry and confused, according to the school counselor. Another child's reaction was to feel sorry for the father.

The widowed children's scores ranged in a fairly even distribution. By contrast, most of the widowed parents felt that their child did not feel much worse off because of the other parent's death, whereas a larger

Table 4.6

Distribution of Points on Specific Questions Which  
Make Up Scale A: Child's Self-Concept

Group	Points										N
	Child's Perception					Parent's Perception					
46. Do you feel that you are much worse off since the divorce/death?											
	no	(5)	(3)	(1)	yes	no	(5)	(3)	(1)	yes	
DF	11		1	2			8	1	5		14
WF	3		1	2			4	1	1		6
Total	14		2	4			12	2	6		20
53. Do you feel at peace (comfortable, easy) with other people?											
	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	
DF	12		0	2			9	0	5		14
WF	4		1	1			5	0	1		6
Total	16		1	3			14	0	6		20
59. Do you think that you can do what you want to do? (You are able to do what you would really like to do. If you make up your mind you want to do something, can you?)											
	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	
DF	11		1	2			12	0	2		14
WF	6		0	0			5	0	1		6
Total	17		1	2			17	0	3		20
60. Do you think that you can do what you have to do? (You are able to do what you have to do.)											
	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	
DF	12		0	2			12	0	2		14
WF	5		1	0			6	0	0		6
Total	17		1	2			18	0	2		20
61. Do you feel any special concern about your future? (confident to handle things)											
	no	(5)	(3)	(1)	yes	no	(5)	(3)	(1)	yes	
DF	6		4	4			11	2	1		14
WF	3		3	0			3	3	0		6
Total	9		7	4			14	5	1		20
62. Do you feel control of yourself as a person? (Emotionally, not as an object to others.)											
	yes	(5)	(3)	(1)	no	yes	(5)	(3)	(1)	no	
DF	14		0	0			9	3	2		14
WF	5		1	0			6	0	0		6
Total	19		1	0			15	3	2		20

proportion of the divorced parents seemed concerned about the child's being worse off for the experience.

There was a similar distribution between parents and children on question 53. Sixteen of the children and fourteen of the parents felt that the child did generally feel comfortable with others. Six parents felt that their children did not feel comfortable with others while only three of the children said they did not feel comfortable with others. Most of the widowed children, both by their own and their parent's perception, felt comfortable with others.

Questions 59 and 60 brought agreement of parents and children in their ratings of the child's being able to do what he wants and has to do. That he is able to do this, the respondents were in agreement. The two children and two parents responding to question 59 and three parents in response to question 60, felt the child was not able to do what he needed to do because he could not get permission or the money and would be tied down. One parent commented that the child had difficulty because of being belligerent, another felt that the child was insecure. A high proportion of the widowed families, both from the child's and the parent's perception, agreed that the child was able to do what he wanted and had to do.

There was more discrepancy in the scores of the parents and the children in question 61, where the

child's concern about the future was explored. Only nine children, but fourteen parents, felt that the child did not feel concern about the future. There were six children and only one parent who did feel that the child was concerned.

Several of the children were concerned about their ability and about growing up. One child expressed concern about "getting going" again. Another was concerned about being able to "make it." Others were concerned about such life choices as a future occupation. Some of the children were more preoccupied with more specific things such as "being first in a skating competition," "getting into the Air Force," and "getting my teeth straightened."

The widowed children's scores were spread evenly across the range. Parents of these children also seemed to think their children had little concern about the future.

Nineteen children and fifteen mothers felt that the child did feel control of himself as a person. Widowed families also fit this pattern with all expressing confidence that the child felt control of himself. This might have been a more threatening question which the child had to answer affirmatively or "lose face." Perhaps it was something he couldn't even admit to himself. All the children said that they did have control

over themselves with only one giving a qualified answer. More of the parents expressed uncertainty of this factor with three qualified answers, e.g., sometimes, yes and no, etc. Two parents felt the child was not able to cope, to control himself when he needed to.

#### Matching Parents for Parent-Child Pairs

It was interesting to look at the distribution of the parents' and the children's scores for Scale A as summarized in Table 4.7. These scores were distributed very similarly numerically along the range of scores from 11-21. Twenty-one, or 52.5 percent, of the parent and child scores were grouped in the range of the top three scores of the scale, indicating strong self-confidence of and in the child. Thirteen of these were at the highest

Table 4.7

Distribution of Scores for Custodial Parents and  
Their Children on Scale A:  
Child's Self-Concept Scale

Groups	Scores											N
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
DCP	0	0	2	0	3	0	1	0	3	1	4	14
WCP	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	6
Total	1	0	3	0	3	2	1	0	3	1	6	20
DPP	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	6	14
WPP	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	6
Total	4	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	3	1	7	20

score of the scale. Eight of the parent and child scores, 20 percent, were grouped in the lowest three scores, with five of those on the lowest score. Four of the lowest five were parent scores for their child and only one was a child's own score. Eleven, 27.5 percent, scored in the mid-range.

Five widowed parents rated their child at the mean or above, but four of their children's scores were at the mean or below. One brother and sister from a widowed family had scores of 21. Their mother tends to overcompensate and scored 17 and 19 for their self-concept.

Figure 4.1 shows the relationship of each parent-child pair and the relation of their scores for Scale A: Child's Self-Concept. Even though distribution of scores in general was fairly even between parents and children, this graph demonstrates that many specific parent-child pairs did not agree on that particular child's Self-Concept score.

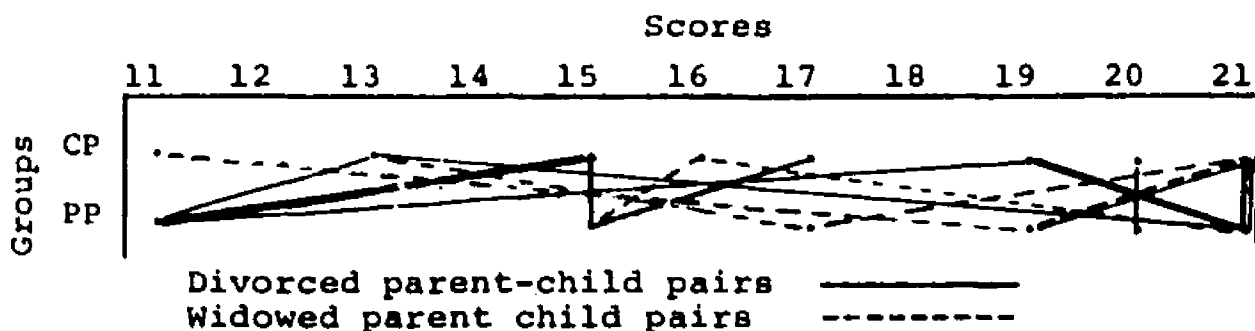


Figure 4.1

Comparison of the Distribution of Parent-Child  
Scores on Scale A, Child's Self Concept



Putting the same data in graph form, as in Figure 4.1, shows the discrepancies of the interrelationship of the parent-child pairs much more clearly than the numerical representation of Table 4.7, which tended to mask the interrelation. Figure 4.1 demonstrates the number of close relationships and also emphasizes the differences of scores of some of the parent-child pairs.

Five parents expressed less confidence in their child than their child expressed for himself. To the contrary there were four parents who expressed much more confidence in the child's having self-confidence than the child did for himself. Eleven parents and their children were close on their scores; were two points or less apart on their scores. Eight of those pairs rated the child's self-concept within the top three scores.

Three of the parents predicted exactly how their children would score their answers on Scale A (see Table 4.8). Five of the parents answered as their children scored their answers for five of the six questions on the scale. Thus 40 percent of the parent-child pairs of the study appear to be in close communication. Three parents answered four of the questions as their child did and five parent-child combinations' answers matched on three questions. There were two parents and their children who answered the same on only two of the questions and two parent-child pairs who answered similarly on only one

question. No parent and child combinations missed on all of the questions. Widowed family scores were evenly distributed.

Table 4.8

Number of Questions on Which Parent and Child  
Gave Identical Answers on Scale A:  
Child's Self-Concept

Parent-Child Agreement	Number of Questions						N
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
DF	1	2	2	3	3	3	14
WF	1	0	3	0	2	0	6
Total	2	2	5	3	5	3	20

The number of points of variance between the parent-child pairs is shown on Table 4.9. The difference ranged from no discrepancy with three pairs who made perfect scores in matching answers, to twelve points apart, which three other parent-child pairs scored. There was a fairly even distribution of scores along the twelve-point

Table 4.9

Discrepancy of Points Between Parent and Child  
Pairs on Answers to Questions on Scale A:  
Child's Self-Concept

Groups	Scores													N
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
DF	3	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	14
WF	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	6
Total	3	0	4	1	2	2	0	0	3	0	2	0	3	20

range. Twelve of the parents, 60 percent, agreed with their child's answer for the child, at a five to zero point range. Eight parents, 40 percent, ranged from eight to twelve points, the lower range, from agreement with their child's answers. Widowed families also had evenly distributed scores.

Examining Correlations with  
Scale A: Child's Self-Concept  
for Relationship Patterns

The four Emotional Support Scales have been studied in detail with relation to the Child's Self-Concept Scale. Now other correlations of significance at the .02 or more level will be investigated for this scale.

A correlation of .001 and .01 was often obtained when scales were composed with composite scales of which they also were a part. All of this type of correlation was ignored in this study because interrelationships of independent scales was sought.

In addition to the Self-Concept correlation with the Number of Significant Others from the child's perspective and the Custodial Parent Relationship from the child's perspective which correlated at the .02 and .01 levels respectively, these correlations for divorced families were both at the .01 level. The Counselor Relationship Scale from the parent's perspective correlated, but in a negative direction.

Some of the children with a high self-concept score but who probably are inwardly unsure (perhaps even acting belligerent or cocky, as a cover), have little regard for the structure of school which represents establishment. There are others who are eager for approval because of their own low self-concept. They try hard to please, to gain recognition and attention. The larger group of children who make up the middle group tend to feel more secure but to find it not "cool" to have too much of an "in" with teachers and counselors. They do satisfactory work, stay out of trouble but aren't concerned with earning approval from school personnel.

Many of the children who have high self-concepts tend not to exhibit much urgency of concern after a crisis such as a divorce or the death of a parent.

#### EVIDENCE APPLIED TO HYPOTHESIS 2

Hypothesis 2 states:

##### Hypothesis 2:

The Child's Urgency of Concern as perceived by the child himself and the custodial parent will be less when he receives strong emotional support.

- a. This Urgency of Concern will be less when the child has a strong relationship with his custodial parent.
- b. This Urgency of Concern will be less when the child has a strong relationship with his absent parent.
- c. This Urgency of Concern will be less when the child has a strong relationship with some significant others.

The hypothesis that the Child's Urgency of Concern as perceived by the child and the custodial parent will be less when he received strong emotional support is supported at a minimum level. Table 4.10 shows the Totaled Sum of Emotional Support Scales correlated with the child's and the parent's perceptions of the Child's Urgency of Concern Scale was significant at the .05 level of confidence. The Sum of Emotional Support did correlate at the .01 level with the Child's Urgency of Concern, from the parent's perspective.

The sub-hypotheses were not supported. The individual Emotional Support Scales were not significant when correlated separately with the Child's Urgency of Concern Scales although some parts of the scores, those of the parent's perception of the Child's Urgency of Concern, were.

#### Correlations of Child's Urgency of Concern

In surveying the totaled and individual Emotional Support Scales, Table 4.10 shows that none of the scores of the Urgency of Concern from the child's perspective is correlated at a significant level with any of the Total Sums of Emotional Support or with any of the individual Emotional Support Relationship Scales.

The parent's perception of the Child's Urgency of Concern Scale correlated with both the Total Scale of

Table 4.10

Correlations of Scale B: Child's Urgency of Concern with the Child's  
Emotional Support, Individual Scales E, F, G<sup>1</sup>, G<sup>2</sup> and Total Scales  
(N = 20)

Group	Emotional Support Child's Perception				Emotional Support Parent's Perception				Sum of Emotional Support		
	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	CP	PP	Total
CP	.355	.007	.388	.184	-.060	-.105	.253	.431	.369	.247	.414
PP	.343	-.278	.081	-.072	.464 <sup>b</sup>	.076	.645 <sup>b</sup>	.486 <sup>b</sup>	.027	.678 <sup>a</sup>	.469 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Significant at .01 = .561

<sup>b</sup>Significant at .05 = .444

Emotional Support at the .05 level and also with the Sum of Emotional Support Scales from the parent's perception at the .01 level (almost .001 level). As mentioned, the parent's perception of the Urgency of Concern was correlated with the parent's perception of the Individual Emotional Support Scales: the Custodial Parent's Relationship at the .05 level, with the Number of Significant Other Relationships at the .01 level and the Quantity and Quality of relationships at the .05 level.

The parents' scores of the Urgency of Concern correlated significantly with the parent's perceptions of the Sum of the Emotional Support Relationships at the .01 level.

There were many more significant relationships between scales from the parent's perceptions of the child's situation than from scores of the child himself. The children's scores tended to be nonsignificant.

When Table 4.11 is studied in relation to divorced and widowed family responses, the divorced child's perception of the Urgency of Concern and the Quantity and the Quality of Relationships correlation was significant at the .05 level. None of the widowed children's scores on the Urgency of Concern correlated with any of the Emotional Support Relationships at a significant level.

The divorced parents' pattern of response of the Urgency of Concern related to Emotional Support was

Table 4.11

Correlations of Scale B: Child's Urgency of Concern with the Child's  
Emotional Support, Divorced Families and Widowed Families

Group	Emotional Support Child's Perception				Emotional Support Parent's Perception				Sum of Emotional Support			N
	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	CP	PP	Total	
DCP	.416	-.052	.521	.181	-.071	-.074	.309	.569 <sup>b</sup>	.470	.279	.466	14
WCP	.162	--	.089	.196	.202	--	.364	--	.161	.181	.193	6
DPP	.427	-.052	.293	.115	.442	.505	.667	.576 <sup>b</sup>	.352	.774 <sup>a</sup>	.756 <sup>a</sup>	14
WPP	.144	--	-.482	.764	.241	--	.352	-.489	-.537	-.721	.667	6

<sup>a</sup>Significant at Divorced .01 = .661; widowed .01 = .917

<sup>b</sup>Significant at Divorced .05 = .532; widowed .05 = .811



somewhat similar to the total group of parents' correlations (eleven of the fourteen parents in the total sample comprise the divorced group).

The parents' perceptions of the child's Urgency of Concern correlated with the Total Sum of Emotional Support at the .01 level of confidence, with the Sum of Emotional Support from the parents' perception at the .01 level. (The widowed parents' scores correlated only at the .10 level.)

Looking at the Emotional Support Scales individually, the parents' perceptions on the Urgency of Concern correlated with the Quantity and Quality of Relationships at the .05 level.

Although they were not at a significant level, there were many more negative correlations for scores of widowed parents than of divorced parents. These negative correlations are all with scales of emotional support from meaningful relationships to the child.

Two of the three negative correlations in the divorced family relationships are connected with the Absent Parent Relationship.

Of the Urgency of Concern correlations, only one, from the children of divorce, was significant.

### Analysis of Distribution of Scale B Scores

As shown on Table 4.12, Scale B questions also will be analyzed in an attempt to detect clues of understanding from the distributions of the scores (scoring is discussed on page 82).

Children were asked to rank their concern as to the importance of each item on a scale from 0 to 4. According to their responses to question 64, both the children from divorced and widowed families had scores indicating an even range of confusion as a result of death of a parent or of divorce. Although the scores of the parent's were also evenly distributed, more of the divorced mothers' responses showed concern that their child felt confusion about the divorce. The widowed parents tended to be less concerned that their children had experienced confusion in relation to their parent's death. Actually, the children had expressed by their responses to question 64 an even range of concern about being confused in relation to the crisis.

Responses to question 65 indicate the children in divorced families tended to feel more resentment as a result of the divorce and their parents tended to expect them to feel more resentment. The children of widowed families, by contrast, tended to feel little or no resentment and the parents seemed to expect this reaction. Because of the counterbalance between the divorced and

Table 4.12

Distribution of Scores on Specific Questions Which  
Make Up Scale B: Urgency of Concern

Group	Child's Perception					Parent's Perception					N
	Important		Little Concern			Important		Little Concern			
(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)		
64. Confusion because of divorce/death											
DF	3	2	4	3	2	2	4	4	3	1	14
WF	3	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	3	1	6
Total	6	2	4	5	3	3	4	5	6	2	20
65. Resentment because of divorce/death											
DF	2	4	4	3	1	2	5	4	1	2	14
WF	1	0	1	0	4	1	0	0	2	3	6
Total	3	4	5	3	5	3	5	4	3	5	20
66. Loneliness because of divorce/death											
DF	0	2	1	1	10	2	3	3	2	4	14
WF	2	1	0	1	2	1	3	1	1	0	6
Total	2	3	1	2	12	3	6	4	3	4	20
67. Redefining relations with parents (working out new ways to relate to them).											
DF	2	0	3	4	5	0	4	6	2	2	14
WF	1	2	0	0	3	1	1	1	2	1	6
Total	3	2	3	4	8	1	5	7	4	3	20
68. Self-guilt because of divorce/death											
DF	2	0	0	3	9	1	2	3	1	7	14
WF	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	6	6
Total	2	0	1	3	14	1	2	3	1	13	20
70. Seeing self as pawn because of divorce/death											
DF	0	2	0	2	10	0	3	1	2	8	14
WF	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	2	4	6
Total	0	2	0	2	16	0	3	1	4	12	20
71. Adjusting to remarriage after divorce/death											
DF	3	2	1	2	6	3	4	3	2	2	14
WF	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	4	6
Total	5	3	2	2	8	3	4	5	2	6	20

widowed, the total scores were evenly distributed along the range of points for question 65. The distribution of scores for parents and children matched well.

Table 4.12 shows that the distribution of scores from widowed children was evenly distributed along the range of scores representing loneliness, but this left a slightly higher proportion of widowed children indicating that they tended to be lonely while most of the children of divorce claimed that they were not.

Responses to question 67, redefining relationships with parents, indicated little concern to most of the children with their scores pretty evenly distributed along the range of points. There was a slight tendency for divorced children to feel less concern than their parents thought they did. Widowed parents' scores were very evenly distributed along the range as were their children's. The concern of the divorced parents might be due to the child's choice of relationships, quantity and quality, whereas the widowed parent would be aware of the child's being more dependent on the custodial parent as his only choice.

The scores concerning self-guilt were well spread along the range of scores with most of the parents and children both expressing little or no concern. Any slight tendency for such concern was in the direction of divorced rather than widowed families.

For question 70, concerning the child seeing himself as a pawn, most of the scores were clustered,

indicating little or no concern for either children or parents. The only scores which deviated from this pattern were a few scores for divorced families.

Responses to question 71 about adjusting to re-marriage yielded an evenly spread distribution for parents and children as well as for divorced and widowed alike, which indicates a wide range of feelings on this subject.

#### Matching Scores for Parent-Child Pairs

Again the scores of the parent and child pairs were graphically demonstrated numerically so relationships could be observed (see Table 4.13).

The scores for both groups of children and of widowed parents were spread fairly evenly along the range of scores from 28-5. In addition to this more general distribution, there was one child of divorce whose score was several points lower than the others which indicated more concern than most of the other children and more than his parent seemed aware of for him. There was a heavier distribution of the divorced parents who had lower scores. This indicated that the parent was troubled about his child's reactions to the crisis of divorce.

To show better the relationship of each parent's and child's scores with each other, more graphic representation is useful. Figure 2 shows a good deal of discrepancy between the scores of many parent and child pairs. Only three pairs were close in answering the

Table 4.13

Distribution of Scores for Custodial Parents and Their Children on  
Scale B: Child's Urgency of Concern Scale

Groups	Scores																								N
	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	
<u>CP</u>																									
DF	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	14
WF	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total	1	0	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	20
<u>PP</u>																									
DF	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	14
WF	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	3	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	20

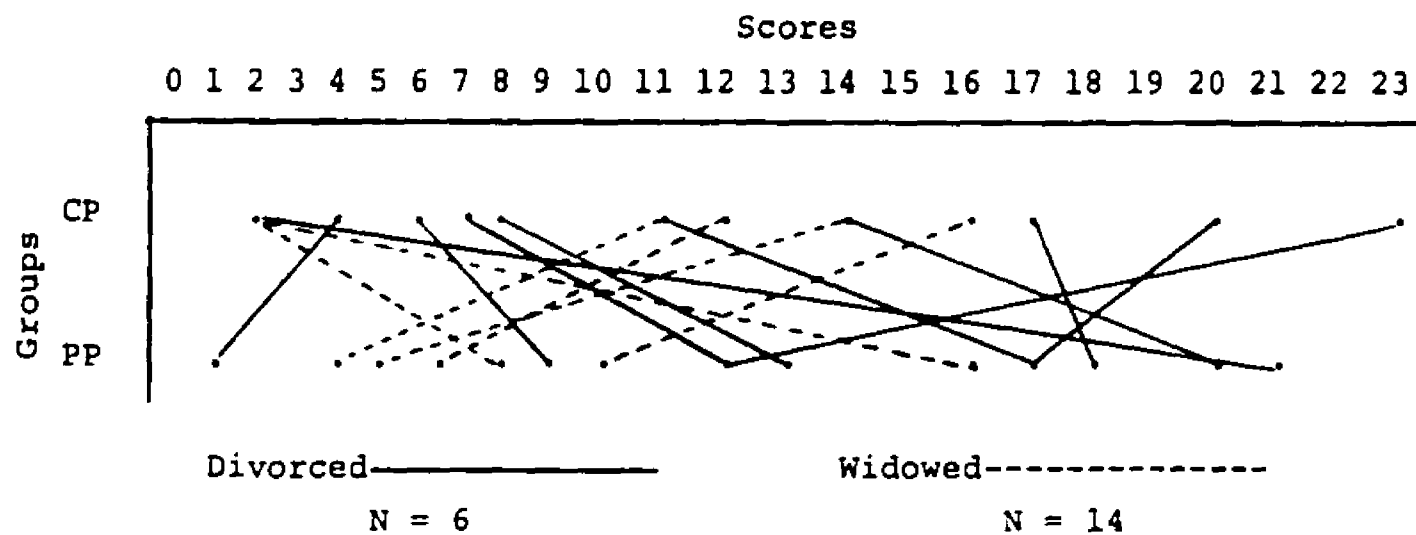


Figure 4.2

Comparison of the Distribution of Parent-Child Scores of  
Scale B: Child's Urgency of Concern

questions similarly. Twelve of the pairs, or 60 percent, ranged from three points to seven points discrepancy. One pair scored nine points differently, two pairs were eleven points different in their answers, one pair scored fourteen points apart and one pair were separated by nineteen points on their scores.

Seven of the parents, four of them widowed, felt that their child was less concerned than the child expressed. Six of the seven were seven points or higher in their feeling of less concern than were their children. On the other hand, eight of the parents were more concerned about their child's Urgency of Concern than their child expressed. The discrepancy of nineteen points occurred in one family of this group who had just experienced a divorce. The child was belligerent and negative to his mother and denied much concern about any of these issues. His mother's score indicated much more concern than the son's did. It would seem to follow that the child had repressed and would like to ignore much of the situation he was rebelling against. Concern of the other mothers might be due to a conservative attempt to be sensitive to their children's needs.

Another interesting way to compare the parent and child interrelationship was to look at the number of questions on which they gave the same answer (see Table 4.14). There was a range from one parent-child pair



having no identical answers to one pair having perfect matching of responses. Nine of the parent-child pairs matched on two of the questions and four were able to answer similarly on four. The range of scores was distributed so that twelve pairs, or 60 percent, were able to answer identically only two or less of the questions and eight parent-child combinations could answer three or more questions alike. Six of the eight matched on three or four questions.

Table 4.14

Number of Questions on Which Parent and Child  
Gave Identical Answers on Scale B:  
Urgency of Concern

Parent-Child Agreement	Number of Questions								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
DF	1	1	8	1	2	0	0	1	14
WF	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	6
Total	1	2	9	2	4	1	0	1	20

Of the only pair who matched perfectly, both registered no concerns for the child. This case was one in which the parents had married and divorced twice so this situation of marital confusion had been a way of life for a number of years and concerns listed may all have been worked through. On the other hand, repression could be operating in both the mother and child if the situation were difficult to face.

At the other extreme, the parent-child pair who matched on no answers was the recently divorced family where the father's harrassment must have had an effect on perspective of both mother and child. In addition, there had been little time or opportunity to work things through, or even to know what needed to be worked through. Very likely both were preoccupied with their own feelings and problems and were not in close communication. The same mother did match with another child on the questions as did 45 percent of the sample. The child with whom the mother matched had more in common with the mother.

Children of widowed parents were evenly distributed across the range of scores from agreeing on one question to matching on five of the questions.

Table 4.15, the recently divorced mother of two children in the sample was nineteen points away from agreement with one child but only seven points from the other child. Forty-five percent of the parent-child pairs of the sample clustered around a six to seven-point differential. The range of scores spread from no differences to nineteen points apart.

Four of the six widow-child pairs were at the six to seven-point differential with the other two being fourteen points apart on their scores.

Table 4.15

Discrepancy of Points Between Parent and Child Pairs on Answers  
to Questions on Scale B: Urgency of Concern

Groups	Scores																				
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	N
DF	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14
WF	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total	1	0	0	1	0	0	5	4	1	1	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	20

Examining Correlations with Scale B:  
Child's Urgency of Concern for  
Relationship Patterns

Child's Adjustment correlated with the Urgency of Concern at the .01 level. If the child was well adjusted he had less urgency of concern and the child with more urgency of concern tended to range in the lower half of scores of the child's adjustment.

The Custodial Parent's Adjustment (according to scores from divorced families) correlated .02 with the Child's Urgency of Concern. There seemed to be less urgency associated with a high score of custodial parent's adjustment. Three of the children's scores clustered at the high end of the Urgency of Concern range at a mid point or better of the custodial parent's range of scores.

At the .02 level, the child's Self Concept from the parent's perspective correlated with the Urgency of Concern from the child's perspective. Formation of the self-concept is a life-time process. Trauma may shake it, but a strong self-concept withstood pressure and was durable. Recency of the crisis did not seem to be a primary factor in this study. Since recency varied and was so interconnected with so many other factors, causes and effects, it was not analyzed more closely. Children of longer and shorter periods of recovery from the crisis were at various stages of adjustment. Many of the children had begun adjusting to the crisis long before the actual

date of the crisis. The children of the study who had adjusted to the crisis nine to eleven years ago all seem to have strong healthy self-concepts which would indicate they have had strong emotional support to help them in their adjustment.

Correlations of Urgency of Concern with the Emotional Support Relationships were discussed in Hypothesis 2. There seemed to be less Urgency of Concern from the parent's perspective correlated with the higher Number of Significant Others for the child. The middle group of Number of Significant Other emotional support scores ranged over the field of Urgency of Concern scores so even with support children seemed to have varying degrees of concern.

Two of the children had scores indicating most Urgency of Concern and these were in the lower range of the Number of Significant Others Scale.

There was less Urgency of Concern from the parent's perspective correlated with good Quantity and Quality of support. More urgent concern varies from much to little with the kind of support and the kind of needs of the individual children. There was a variety of support for the middle group of children on the Scale of Urgency of Concern so the children seemed to be at various stages in their feelings of Urgency even though they all had emotional support of some kind.

The relationship with the counselor was significant at the .01 and .02 level of confidence but in the negative direction. Three children, all in need of attention, related to the counselor but not to the teachers. Their scores were located at the top of the scale of Urgency of Concern. Other scores ranged around the mid-point of the Teacher Relationship and the Counselor Relationship Scales, but they varied evenly on the Urgency of Concern. There were three boys who would not relate to the counselor or to the teachers. Boys were on the extremes of having good or poor relationships with the teachers, more than girls. The girls' scores clustered in the middle group of the range of scores on the Teacher Relation Scale.

Counselors differ from teachers in that they can talk and pay attention to children in a less structured atmosphere and also provide nurturing elements to the relationship. While the teacher's relationship can often be nurturing it has more managerial aspects than does the counselor's. Much of the relationship (if there is one) with the counselor is voluntary and the teacher deals with more children, volunteer or not, so they vary in their amount of concern. Counselors would probably tend to have more contact with those children who felt needs to talk and seek attention.

## EVIDENCE APPLIED TO HYPOTHESIS 3

Hypothesis 3 states:

Hypothesis 3:

The child's adjustment, as perceived by the school counselor will be good or positive when the child receives strong emotional support.

- a. The child's adjustment will be positive when the child has a strong relationship with his custodial parent.
- b. The child's adjustment will be positive when the child has a strong relationship with his absent parent.
- c. The child's adjustment will be positive when the child has a strong relationship with some significant others.

Hypothesis 3, that the quality and quantity of the child's relationships are correlated with the child's adjustment, is supported minimally and negatively at the .05 level for the widowed group.

There was no significant correlation for either the divorced group or the total group. This suggests that while the widowed families tend to feel more support it might not be support for good adjustment. Death, as divorce, is difficult for many people to deal with and the child may be encouraged to "be brave," "put up a good front," etc., but the result being not working grief through so there could be a lot of interference with good adjustment.

The child's adjustment with the custodial parent from the parent's perspective was supported at the .01

level. From the child's perspective of the Custodial Parent Relationship, there was no significant correlation. The parent may be assuming a better relationship than the child experiences. The parent may be so caught up in trying to keep a household going that clues of the parent-child relationship are missed or postponed and perhaps forgotten.

The absent parent relationship was not supported. Although the absent parent is a potential source of emotional support for children of divorce, there must be so much conflict and uncertainty that in many cases it is no longer a major factor for the child to depend upon.

The child's adjustment was correlated with the significant other relationship. This sub-hypothesis was supported at the .05 level. The child's adjustment tends to be better when he has some people who care about him and whom he can depend upon.

Table 4.16 shows the child's Adjustment Scores correlated significantly above the .05 level with the Total Sum of the Child's Emotional Support Scores of the sample as a whole. The Child's Adjustment correlations with the Sum of the Emotional Support from the child's perspective was nonsignificant. In contrast, the Child's Adjustment correlations with the Sum of the Emotional Support from the parent's perspective was significant at the .02 level.



Table 4.16

Correlations of Scale C: Child's Adjustment with the  
Child's Emotional Support  
(N = 20)

Group	Emotional Support from Child's Perception				Emotional Support from Parent's Perception				Sum of Emotional Support		
	E	F	G	G <sup>2</sup>	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	CP	PP	Total
Child's Adjustment	.422	.181	.253	-.115	.658 <sup>a</sup>	-.066	.498 <sup>c</sup>	.248	.149	.544 <sup>b</sup>	.462 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Significant at .01 = .561

<sup>b</sup>Significant at .02 = .516

<sup>c</sup>Significant at .05 = .444

In looking at the Emotional Support Scales individually, from the child's perception, none of the scores for the total group of children were significant. The child's perception of his relationship with his custodial parent correlated with his adjustment was significant at the .10 level.

Again, the Absent Parent Relationship did not correlate significantly. Also, unexpectedly, both the Emotional Support Scales Number of Significant Others ( $G^1$ ) and Quantity and Quality of Relationships ( $G^2$ ) from the child's perception produced nonsignificant correlations with the Child's Adjustment scores.

Although the children's scores were not significant when correlated with the Child's Adjustment Score, the parents' scores and the Child's Adjustment Score relate. The Custodial Parent Relationship was significant at the .01 level and the Number of Significant Other Relationships was significant at the .05 level.

The scores of the Absent Parent Relations from the child's perception showed no correlation with the Child's Adjustment, so the Absent Parent Relationship from the custodial parent's perspective did not correlate with the Child's Adjustment either.

Finding no more significant correlations associated with emotional support was unexpected. In an attempt to

get a clearer picture, the data were divided into subgroups; divorced families and widowed families.

The scores (see Table 4.17) from the divorced families correlated with the Total Sums of the Child's Emotional Support at a level of .01 while the scores of the widowed families, though not correlated at a significant level were negative. Child's Adjustment correlations with the Sum of the Emotional Support from the child's perception, both divorced and widowed, were non-significant. The Child's Adjustment correlation with the Sum of the Emotional Support from the parent's perspective was significant. The divorced parent's correlation was significant at the .01 level and the widowed parent's correlation was negative but significant only at the .10 level.

None of the individual Emotional Support Scales from the perspective of either the divorced or widowed children were correlated significantly with the Child's Adjustment.

From the custodial parent's perspective, there is a significant relationship at the .01 level between the Custodial Parent Relationship and the Child's Adjustment. The widowed parent's Custodial Parent Relationship scores did not correlate significantly.

There was, of course, no correlation for the Absent Parent Relationship for the widowed families.

Table 4.17

Correlations of Scale C: Child's Adjustment with Emotional Support,  
Divorced Families and Widowed Families  
(N = 20)

Group	Emotional Support Child's Perception				Emotional Support Parent's Perception				Sum of Emotional Support		
	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	E	F	G <sup>1</sup>	G <sup>2</sup>	CP	PP	Total
DF	.375	.080	.395	-.027	.720	.237	.551 <sup>b</sup>	.447	.347	.712 <sup>a</sup>	.708 <sup>a</sup>
WF	.529	--	.045	-.317	.414	--	-.159	-.847 <sup>b</sup>	.062	-.772	-.101

<sup>a</sup>Significant at .01 = .661, divorced; widowed .01 = .917

<sup>b</sup>Significant at .05 = .532, divorced; widowed .05 = .811

The Number of Significant Other Relationships and the Child's Adjustment does correlate significantly at .05 with the scores of the divorced parents, but the correlation with the widowed parents was nonsignificant and negative.

The correlation of the widowed parents' perceptions of the Quality and Quantity of Relationships correlated negatively with the Child's Adjustment Score at .05 level. The divorced parent's correlation was not significant.

Custodial parent relationship from the parent's perspective correlated with Child Adjustment at the .01 level. There is a ceiling on the range of spread from the questions. Scores are mostly clustered at the top indicating good custodial parent relations. (The Custodial Parent relationship from the child's perspective correlated with the Child's Adjustment was not significant. There was a ceiling on this range too.) There is a discrepancy because of three children who seem to be resistant to their custodial parent. They use withdrawal behavior mechanisms. Children scored 12, 13, and 14 while their custodial parents scored 22 for each of them on the Custodial Parent Relationship Scale. Two other resistant children scored themselves 24, top of the Custodial Parent Relationship Scale, but their parents scored 17-19 points respectively for them. (There should

be more items for better spread of scores--discriminating factors operating on "truth" of situation.)

Analysis of Distribution of Scores  
for Scale C: Child's Adjustment

Correlations were figured on counselor's ratings only. The ratings were the content of Scale C. The three other questions were related to the child's adjustment, but were not comparable factors so they were not included in the scales for correlation. Although these questions were not used numerically in the correlations (scoring discussed on page 82), the information was used for better understanding of the sample.

See Tables 4.18 and 4.19 for a tally of answers to questions related to the child's adjustment in addition to the child's adjustment scale composed of the counselor's ratings for each child.

Question 48 was a very subjective one. Is there anyone who makes problems for you? The answers ranged from "no," to many "brothers and/or sisters," and several other relatives were also mentioned. "Self" was mentioned by two daughters and mothers. One neighbor boy was mentioned, a bully at school, a classmate in gym and shop. Several children said "many," and one child said that fifteen boys picked on her last year.

When the children responded to the question, "Do you have one or more close friends?" (#56), only one child

Table 4.18

Distribution of Questions on Scale C:  
Child's Adjustment

72' Counselor's Evaluation: Child's School Adjustment					
	Poor				Good
	1	2	3	4	5
D	2	3	5	3	1
W	0	1	2	1	2
Total	2	4	7	4	3

73' Counselor's Evaluation: Child's General Adjustment					
D	3	1	6	2	2
W	0	2	1	1	2
Total	3	3	7	3	4

Table 4.19

Analysis of Distribution of Scores and Additional  
Questions Related to Child's Adjustment

Respondents	Child's Perception			Parent's Perception		
56. Do you have one or more close friends?						
Points	2	1	0	2	1	0
Total Sample	19	1	0	16	0	4
58. Can you see some goals you can work toward in the near future?						
Points	2	1	0	2	1	0 dk
Total Sample	19	0	1	16	0	3 1
48. Is there anyone who makes problems for you?						
Points	2	1	0	2	1	0
Total Sample**	1	2	10	2	0	0

\*\*Free-flowing response, many names given rather than specific categories or answer to question. Tabulation is not complete for N = 20 for total sample.

said he did not. He gave the answer Jesus Christ. Four parents thought that their child did not have a close friend--the child who did not and his parent, were in agreement about his not having a close friend.

The children were asked if they could see some goals to work toward in the near future. All but one answered that they did. One's goal was to make animals happy--she seemed to feel closer to cats than to human friends. Three parents didn't think their child had any special goals and one didn't know. One of these boys did have a goal--to own an "orange super beetle." Some of the goals of these children were immediate and personal, such as "be better in school," "be better with Mom," "improve self," some were more future oriented like "master calculus so I can work on road construction," "be a jockey," "be a veterinarian," "go to medical school in Scotland," "be a lawyer," "go out for track and football," and "work on building a train."

As shown on Table 4.20, the distribution of scores on Scale C ranges from two points which indicates poor adjustment to ten points which symbolizes good adjustment. The scores of eleven, or 55 percent, of the children are four, five and six points, at the middle and a little below on the scale. Only two children rated at the bottom of the range and seven, or 35 percent, grouped at the top of the scale.



Children from widowed homes ranged from the middle group to those at the top of the scale. Most of the children from divorced homes grouped at the mid-section of the scale. The two at the bottom of the scale of adjustment were children from divorced homes.

Table 4.20  
Distribution of Scores on Scale C:  
Child's Adjustment

		Counselor's Evaluation									
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N
D		2	0	1	4	3	0	2	1	1	14
W		0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	6
Total		2	0	2	5	4	0	3	1	3	20
Poor Adjustment		Good Adjustment									

### Matching

Since the scores used for Scale C: Child's Adjustment, were the counselor's ratings there were no matching scores used in the scale.

### Examining Correlations with Scale C: Child's Adjustment for Relation- ship Patterns

Recency--children who are having trouble adjusting tend to be children who have had crisis in the past one and one-half years. Of the most recent divorce, one of the children is having much difficulty and a sister has

been working through the break with the absent parent for a long time. The divorce was a relief for her and she has a high score of adjustment. A child whose father died after a long illness also was well prepared for the crisis along the way and has adjusted well. For one of the children having problems with adjustment, the divorce was three years ago but the mother said she thought the child hadn't known what was going on at the time and there was much confusion, anger, and hostility at this point in time.

Otherwise, the distribution of scores was as expected with more recent children having more difficulty with adjustment and the children who experienced the trauma between 3-6 years ago ranging in the mid-section of scores on adjustment for the sample. Those children who faced the trauma 8-11 years ago were well adjusted now in the counselor's opinion.

The child's adjustment correlated with the Emotional Support Relationship Scales at the .01 and .05 levels as mentioned. The only other score approaching significance was with the peer relationships for widowed children at the .05 level. It would seem that as the child of a widowed family began to make friends with his peers and become involved in activities with them, the child's adjustment would improve.

There also is a correlation of the child's adjustment for the child of divorce with the Custodial Parent's

Adjustment which is approaching significance at the .10. This would really be expected to be significant at a higher level of confidence since the way the child lives day by day is to a great deal dependent on the coping ability of his custodial parent. A more accurate scale could yield more meaningful data.

#### ANALYSIS OF SCALE E: CUSTODIAL PARENT RELATIONSHIP

In looking at question 19a (see Table 4.21), "Does the child receive satisfaction from the custodial parent relationship?", we see in Table 4.21 that eighteen of the children expressed satisfaction in their relation with their custodial parent and seventeen of the parents expected them to. The divorced families answered in the same direction as did the widowed families.

Question 33 asks, "Who do you think cares most about you?" Eighteen of the children and twenty of the parents agreed that the custodial parent was the answer. While each of the parents thought their child would say that parent cared most about him, one of the children did not mention the custodial parent and the other child, not agreeing with the majority of the group, said other people cared most.

"Where would you want to live if your mother or dad remarried?" asks question 34. There was fairly close

Table 4.21

Distribution of Scores on Specific Questions Which  
Make Up Scale E: Custodial Parent Relationship

Group	Child's Perception			Parent's Perception			N			
<hr/>										
19a. Does the child receive satisfaction from custodial parent relationship?										
	Much (5)	Little (3)	None (1)	Much (5)	Little (3)	None (1)				
DF	13	1	0	11	2	1	14			
WF	5	1	0	6	0	0	6			
Total	18	2	0	17	2	1	20			
33. Who do you think cares most about you?										
Custodial parent mentioned:										
	1st (5)	2nd (3)	3rd (1)	no mention (0)	1st (5)	2nd (3)	3rd (1)	no mention (0)		
DF	13	0	0	1	14	0	0	0	14	
WF	5	0	1	0	6	0	0	0	6	
Total	18	0	1	1	20	0	0	0	20	
34. Where do you want to live if your mother or dad remarried?										
Custodial parent mentioned:										
	1st (2)	2nd (1)	none (0)	?	1st (2)	2nd (1)	none (0)			
DF	8	1	3	2	11	2	1		14	
WF	6	0	0	0	5	0	1		6	
Total	14	1	3	2	16	2	2		20	
36. Is it easier to talk to another adult other than Mom?										
	no (5)	(3)	(1)	(0)	yes	no (5)	(3)	(1)	(0)	yes
DF	9	0	0	5		9	0	1	4	14
WF	3	2	1	0		5	1	0	0	6
Total	12	2	1	5		14	1	1	4	20
54. Do you feel comfortable with parent you live with?										
	yes (5)	(3)	(1)	(0)	no	yes (5)	(3)	(1)	(0)	no
DF	12	0	1	1		12	0	1	1	14
WF	6	0	0	0		6	0	0	0	6
Total	18	0	1	1		18	0	1	1	20

agreement with fourteen children and sixteen parents answering that it would be with the mother.

There was more of a range of answers for question 36, "Is it easier to talk to another adult than it is your mother?", twelve of the children and fourteen of the parents answered that it was not, six of the children and five of the parents felt that there were problems in this area of communication.

When asked, "Do you feel comfortable with the parent you live with?", there was perfect agreement between the parent and children with eighteen agreeing that the child did feel comfortable with the custodial parent.

The last question, in regard to the parent's custodial relationship deals with the child's support of the parent's role. There was complete agreement of parent and child that the child was supportive of his custodial parent.

The Scale had a ceiling which indicated the scores did not spread at the top.

The widowed families were distributed on their scores in proportion to the distribution of the total sample.

#### Distribution of Scores

There tended to be a ceiling on this scale (see Table 4.22). Seventy-five percent of the sample, both parents and children, ranged at the top three scores

(scoring discussed on page 82). The children whose scores did not hit the top of the scores were distributed fairly evenly at the bottom while the parent's scores which were not at the top tended to be more in the middle of the range.

Table 4.22

Distribution of Scores for Custodial Parents and Their Children on Scale E: Custodial Parent Relationship

Groups	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	N
DCP	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	7	14
WCP	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	6
Total	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	10	20
DPP	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	3	1	5	14
WPP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	6
Total	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	4	1	10	20

It seems that if the child weren't happy in the relationship with the custodial parent, the child rated the relationship as less value than the parent thought for the child.

The children in widowed families all tended to be at the top of the distribution, as did their parents.

On the six questions of the Scale E, nine parent-child pairs matched on five questions and five matched on four of the six questions. The discrepancy between parent-child scores ranged from no difference for the nine pairs matching exactly to one pair differing ten points.

Seventy-five percent of the pairs varied five points or less in their scores.

#### Matching Scores for Parent-Child Pairs

In looking at the matching of the parent-child scores on the E Scale, Figure 4.3, there was a striking agreement between the pairs in fourteen cases, or 70 percent of the pairs. In the six cases where agreement was not close, the discrepancy was great. In three cases, there was a discrepancy with the parent expressing a higher degree of good relationship with the child than the child expressed. In one of these cases, the child is a social handicap and it seemed possible that an element of wishful thinking was operating in the parent, while the child was left unsatisfied with the existing arrangement. The child was very hurt by his loss and he was confused as to how to adjust. The other two children were also in a confused

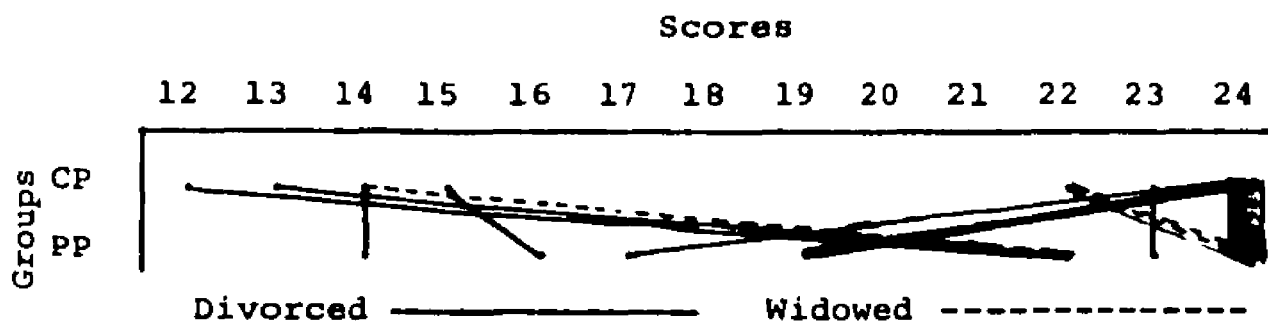


Figure 4.3

Comparison of the Distribution of Parent-Child  
Scores on Scale E: Custodial  
Parent Relationship

state concerning their relationships with both parents and have been withdrawn from both these relationships. In one case the child has tended to idealize her absent parent. Both children have tended to be punishing with the custodial parent.

There also were three cases where the children expressed a good relationship with the custodial parent and in each of these cases the parent very cautiously estimated that the child would score toward the middle of the scale with regard to this relationship. This was perhaps in an effort not to fall short of the child's score. In each of the latter cases, the parent had made much effort to be open and honest with the child, to be sensitive to the child's feelings, and to help him meet his needs.

As Table 4.23 shows, all of the parent-child pairs were able to answer four, five or six of the questions alike on the Custodial Parent Scale. This was the scale which had the ceiling without enough spread to make much discrimination. The questions which were included on the scale, however, did indicate close communication in the direction of these items.

The same trend was demonstrated on the discrepancy of points as shown in Table 4.24. Nine families had no discrepancy and four more of the families varied only one or two points between the parent and the child in



answering these questions. The remaining seven families ranged from four to ten points between the parent and child answers. Only one of these seven was a child from a widowed family, most of the widowed families were very close on their answers.

Table 4.23

Number of Questions of Scale E: Custodial  
Parent Relationship on Which Custodial  
Parent and Child Gave  
Identical Answers

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	N
DF	0	0	0	4	4	6	14
WF	0	0	0	0	3	3	6
Total	0	0	0	4	7	9	20

Table 4.24

Discrepancy of Points Between Parent and Child  
Pairs on Answers to Questions on Scale F

Group	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N
DF	6	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	14
WF	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6
Total	9	1	3	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	20

ANALYSIS OF SCALE F: ABSENT  
PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Distribution of Scores for Each  
Question on the F Scale

Of course, there were no absent parents with whom to relate to in the widowed families, so only scores for divorced families were considered.

There seemed to be a tendency (see Table 4.25) for custodial parents to under-guess the child's answer on questions concerning the absent parent relationship. Questions 33, 34, 55, and 63 seemed to fit this category of comparison with the parent's scores being lower than the child's. Children answered question 19, about the satisfaction received from his absent parent relationship, with nine claiming much satisfaction, four others reported little and one said no satisfaction. Only four mothers thought the child would receive much satisfaction, six thought little, and four thought none from the absent parent relationship.

In considering question 36, "Is it easier to talk to someone else than it is to your absent parent," five children said it was as easy or easier to talk to their dad, three gave qualified answers such as sometimes, six felt it was easier to talk to other adults than it was to their absent parent.

Only two mothers felt their child would find it easier to talk to his father than to other adults and

Table 4.25

Distribution of Scores on Specific Questions Which  
Make Up Scale F: Absent Parent Relationship  
(D = 14)

Group	Child's Perception				Parent's Perception				
19b. Does the child receive satisfaction from the relationship?									
	Much	Little		None	Much	Little		None	
D	9	1	3	1	4	1	5	4	
33. Who do you think cares most about you and what happens to you?									
Father			Among	Not at				Not	
Mentioned	1st	2nd	Others	All	1st	2nd	Others	at	
	(5)	(3)	(1)	(0)	(5)	(3)	(1)	all	
D	2	7	0	5	0	8	1	(0)	
34. Where would you want to live if your mother or your father remarried someone else?									
Father	1st	2nd	Not at all		1st	2nd	Not at all		
Mentioned	(2)	(1)	(0)		(2)	(1)	(0)		
D	3	4	7		3	1	10		
36. Is it easier to talk to someone else than it is your father?									
	no	(5)	(3)	(1)	yes	no	(5)	(3)	
						no	(5)	(3)	
D	5	3	6			2	2	9	
55. Do you feel comfortable with your absent parent?									
	yes	(5)	(4)	(3)	(1)	no	yes	(5)	
							yes	(5)	
D	9	1	0	4			8	0	
63. Do you feel supportive of your father's new role?									
	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	yes	(2)	(1)	
						yes	(2)	(1)	
D	11	1	2			10	1	3	
102. How do you think your child feels toward his absent parent?									
	More	Same		Less	Don't think about				
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
D	2	3	4	2	3				

three gave qualified answers, with nine feeling it would be easier for his child to talk to other adults than the absent parent. It would be very understandable that emotional input or only partial information from the child about the absent parent relationship would color this situation and get it out of perspective.

Only the custodial parents answered question 102 so this data was excluded from the comparison of scores with the children.

Distribution of Scores of Custodial  
Parents and Their Children on  
Scale F: Absent Parent  
Relationship

Scale F distribution was fairly even along the range of the scale. The parent-child scores match (scoring was described on page 82) closely (see Table 4.26).

Table 4.26

Distribution of Scores for Custodial Parents and  
Their Children on Scale F: Absent  
Parent Relationship

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
DCP	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	1
DPP	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total	0	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	0	2	1	1	1	1

### Matching Scores for Parent-Child Pairs

Scale F, Absent Parent Relations Comparisons of Custodial Parent and Child Answers to Questions is in Figure 4.4. There was only one custodial parent-child pair who

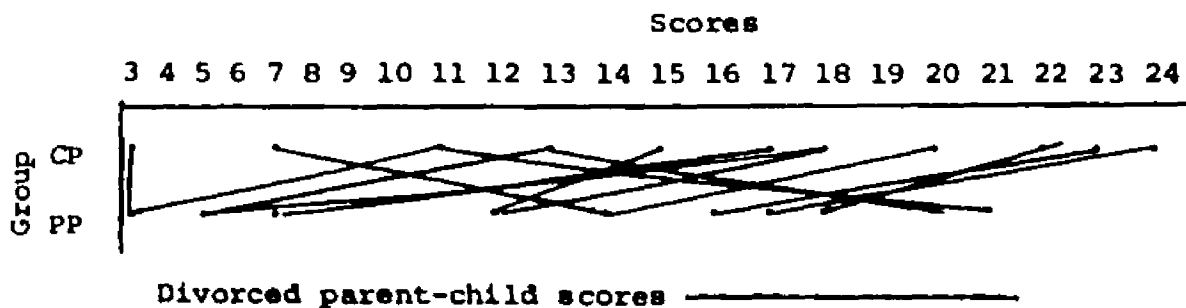


Figure 4.4

Comparison of the Distribution of Parent-Child Scores on  
Scale F: Absent Parent Relationship

were in exact agreement on the child's answers concerning her absent parent. In this case the child has refused to see the father and the mother and daughter seemed to have had a close relationship. In all other cases, even those combinations where communication seemed good between the parent and child, answers were quite distant from each other on this scale. Ten of the custodial parents felt the relationship between the absent parent and the child was less rewarding to the child than the child indicated by his answers. The child's scores tended to be four to thirteen points higher than those of the custodial parent on the F Scale. Eight pairs of the fourteen families of

divorce tended to cluster around the numbers six to eight points of discrepancy in the scores of their answers (see Table 4.27).

Table 4.27

Discrepancy of Scores Between Parent and Child  
Pairs on Answers to Questions on Scale F

Group	Points														
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
DF	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	2

Several factors could have affected these results. The child, even though he might usually communicate well with his custodial parent might have held back things concerned in the absent parent relationship to protect the custodial parent from feeling hurt and left out. Even if the custodial parent had an accurate picture of the child's relationship with the absent parent it might have been difficult to give an unbiased answer, either positive or negative because of past and present emotional investment.

Of the six questions on this scale asked of both parent and child only one pair matched on each of the answers. Five pairs did answer four of the questions the same and three pairs answered three alike. There were

four pairs who answered the same on only two questions and one pair matched on only one question (see Table 4.28).

Table 4.28

Number of Questions of Scale F: Absent Parent Relationship on Which Custodial Parent/Child Gave Identical Answer

Group	Number of Questions					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
DF	2	3	3	5	0	1

There was much less matching between parent and child on the F Scale than on the E Scale indicating that the custodial parent does not know accurately what is going on with the child in the absent parent-child relationship. Many factors could be operating in this; certainly communication with the child, the child's sensitivity to the parents' feelings, the parents' caution not to "pump" the child, the parents' past and perhaps present emotional input could be important factors.

#### ANALYSIS OF SCALE $G^1$ : SIGNIFICANT OTHERS RELATIONSHIP

##### Distribution of Scores for Questions on the $G^1$ Scale

The custodial parent's and the child's scores on each answer tended to be similar in distribution for

questions 32, 33 and 57 (summarized in Table 4.29). On the more general questions of having someone to talk to (32 and 57) more parents tended to think the child had someone he or she could confide in and fewer of the children felt that he wanted to, if there was someone available.

On questions 18 and 19, about more specific questions of support, the children seemed to feel there were more persons they could count on if necessary than their parents estimated. This discrepancy may merely be a distinction between "confide" and "count on" which can be quite different. Several youngsters said they usually talked to their peers rather than an adult, even though there was someone they could talk to if they wished.

Distribution of Scores of Custodial  
Parents and Their Children on  
Scale G<sup>1</sup>: Number of Significant  
Other Relationships

Scores (scoring is described on page 82) are fairly evenly distributed on the range of scores in divorced and widowed families, both for the children and the parents (see Table 4.30). Widowed parents' scores clustered more than any other group at scores of eleven and twelve, a mid-point in the range from three to sixteen.



Table 4.29

Distribution of Scores on Specific Questions Which  
Make Up Scale G: Significant Other Relationships

Group	Child's Perception					Parent's Perception					N	
<hr/>												
32. Is there anyone you can talk to?												
	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	14	
DF	11		0	3		13		0	1		14	
WF	4		0	2		5		0	1		6	
Total	15		0	5		18		0	2		20	
33. Who cares most about you? (number of persons)												
	2 or more		one	no one		2 or more		one	no one			
DF	11		2	1		11		3	0		14	
WF	6		0	0		6		0	0		6	
Total	17		2	1		17		3	0		20	
57. Is there an adult in whom you can confide if you want to?												
	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	yes	(2)	(1)	(0)	no	(?)	
DF	9		0	5		13		0	0		1 14	
WF	6		0	0		5		0	1		0 6	
Total	15		0	5		18		0	1		1 20	
18. From whom does your child receive emotional support?												
	(Number listed)					None						
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
DF	1	5	1	3	3	1	1	2	1	5	5	14
WF	0	2	3	0	0	1	0	2	3	1	0	6
Total	1	7	4	3	3	2	1	4	4	6	5	20
19. Does the child receive satisfaction from the relationship with significant others?												
	Much					None	Much					None
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
DF	4	3	5	1	1	0	1	2	3	3	3	2 14
WF	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	2	4	0	0	0 6
Total	4	5	7	2	2	0	1	4	7	3	3	2 20

Table 4.30

Distribution of Scores for Custodial Parents and  
Their Children on Scale G<sup>1</sup>: Significant  
Other Relationships

Groups	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	N
DCP	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	2	3	2	0	1	1	14
WCP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	6
Total	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	3	4	2	2	1	1	20
DPP	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	4	2	1	0	1	0	1	14
WPP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	6
Total	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	4	3	6	0	1	0	1	20

Matching Scores for  
Parent/Child Pairs

Only one mother was able to match her child exactly on each answer to each question (see Table 4.31). Four divorced parents each matched two, three or four of the questions on Scale G<sup>1</sup>. The widowed parents scored four matches on four questions with one matching three and one matching two of the questions on Scale G<sup>1</sup>. There was only one parent (divorced) who answered the question as the child did. This was balanced distribution for the divorced parents; the widowed had a much larger proportion of their number scoring four questions similarly.

As shown in Table 4.32, the discrepancy of points between the parent's and child's scores of Scale G<sup>1</sup> varied between none and eleven. Eight of the parents were accurate to two points from their child's answer, three

Table 4.31

Questions of Scale G<sup>1</sup>: Number of Significant  
Other Relationships on Which Parents and  
Their Children Gave Identical Answers

Groups	Number of Questions					N
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
DF	1	4	4	4	1	14
WF	0	1	1	4	0	6
Total	1	5	5	8	1	20

Table 4.32

Discrepancy of Points Between Parent and Child  
Pairs on Answer to Question on Scale G<sup>1</sup>

Groups	Scores										N
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	11	
DF	1	1	5	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	14
WF	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
Total	1	3	8	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	20

parents to one point of difference and one parent matched answers exactly. The remaining parents' points of difference ranged fairly evenly from three to eleven. Sixty percent of the parents were quite accurate, five of the widowed parents were among these. The other 40 percent of the total sample were less correct in knowing how the child felt in relation to significant others.

Figure 4.5 shows in a graphic way that most of the parent and child scores were close. All of the widowed families were close in agreement except one where the child felt that there was little emotional support from family and friends even though the parent felt there was a fair degree of support. Two of the divorced parents thought the child felt little support from significant others but those children indicated a feeling of support. One recently divorced child felt much less support than the mother thought.

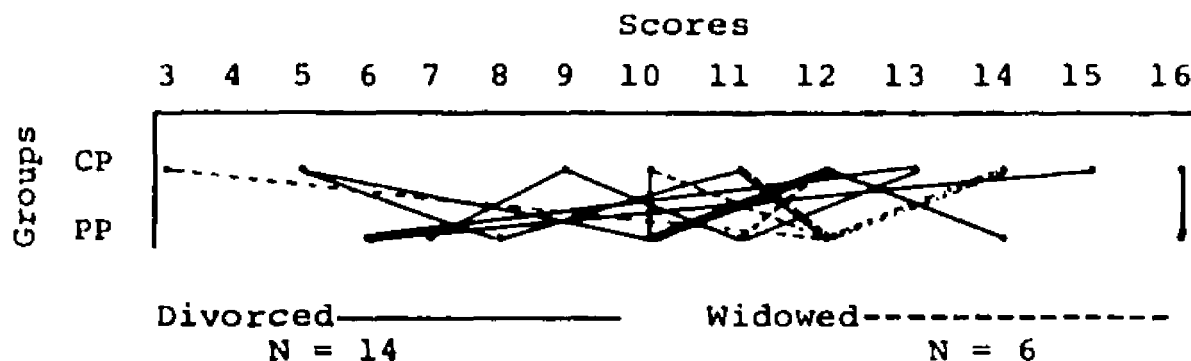


Figure 4.5

Comparison of the Distribution of Parent and Child Scores of Scale G<sup>1</sup>: Significant Others

ANALYSIS OF SCALE G<sup>2</sup>: QUANTITY AND  
QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

Distribution of Scores  
for Each Question

Question 18 is concerned with from whom the child receives emotional support. The distribution of answers of parent-child pairs are fairly similar, as shown on Table 4.33. The relationships with the custodial parent's family was much satisfaction to more children than the parents expected, but much satisfaction from the absent parent's family was expected by more parents than children seemed to feel. Much emotional support was received from relationships with significant others as expressed by 60 percent of both the parents and children.

The children tended to express, on question 19, more satisfaction from the relationships of significant others, the families of both parents and interested friends, than their parents expected. Fifty percent of the divorced parents expected their child to receive no satisfaction from the absent parent's family of origin, while of the children, only 7 percent did express no satisfaction.

More parents and children (question 20) tended to feel that the amount of time spent with the families was about the same as before the crisis. Some parents and children did feel there was less contact with the absent parent's family of origin than before the crisis. Time

Table 4.33

Distribution of Points on Specific Questions Which Make  
Up Scale G<sup>2</sup>: Quantity and Quality of Relationships

Group	Child's Perception				Parent's Perception				N	
	Much (3)	Little (2)	None (1)	Not Men- tioned (0)	Much (3)	Little (2)	None (1)	Not Men- tioned (0)		
18. From whom does the child receive emotional support?										
C*	DF	7	3	3	1	5	4	2	3	14
	WF	5	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	6
	Total	12	3	4	1	9	5	3	3	20
D**	DF	4	7	2	1	5	2	7	0	14
	WF	3	0	3	0	4	0	1	1	6
	Total	7	7	5	1	9	2	8	1	20
E***	DF	8	3	1	2	7	2	1	4	14
	WF	4	0	0	2	5	0	0	1	6
	Total	12	3	1	4	12	2	1	5	20
19. Does the child receive satisfaction from the relationship?										
C*	DF	11	2	0	1	4	5	2	3	14
	WF	5	1	0	0	5	0	1	0	6
	Total	16	3	0	1	9	5	3	3	20
D**	DF	10	2	1	1	5	2	7	0	14
	WF	3	1	2	0	4	0	0	2	6
	Total	13	3	3	1	9	2	7	2	20
E***	DF	11	1	0	2	7	3	0	4	14
	WF	3	0	3	0	5	0	0	1	6
	Total	14	1	3	2	12	3	0	5	20

\*Families of Custodial Parents.

\*\*Families of Absent Parents.

\*\*\*Significant Others.

Table 4.33 (continued)

		Child's Perception				Parent's Perception					
Group		More	Same	Less	Not Men- tioned	More	Same	Less	Not Men- tioned	N	
		(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)		
20. Is there more, less or about the same contact with the child since the separation?											
C*	DF	2	10	1	1	1	9	1	3	14	
	WF	2	4	0	0	2	3	1	0	6	
	Total	4	14	1	1	3	12	2	3	20	
D**	DF	3	6	5	0	1	7	5	1	14	
	WF	1	4	1	0	2	2	2	0	6	
	Total	4	10	6	0	3	9	7	1	20	
E***	DF	6	5	1	2	7	3	0	4	14	
	WF	1	2	0	3	4	1	0	1	6	
	Total	7	7	1	5	11	4	0	5	20	
		Yes (5)	(3)	(1)	No	Yes (5)	(3)	(1)	No	0	N
57. Is there an adult in whom you can confide? Do you talk intimately with him?											
DF	8	0	6		12	0	1	1	14		
WF	5	0	1		5	0	1	0	6		
Total	13	0	7		17	0	2	1	20		

\*Families of Custodial Parents.

\*\*Families of Absent Parents.

\*\*\*Significant Others.

spent with other significant friends was more or the same for most of the parents and children.

According to responses to question 57, 65 percent of the children felt they had someone in whom they could confide and they did. Thirty-five percent of the children did not feel they had anyone to confide in. Only 15 percent of the parents thought this was true and 85 percent thought their children did have someone to talk to.

#### Distribution of Scores for Scale G2

The scores (see page 82 for scoring) of the parents are widely distributed across the range of scores on Table 4.34. Those scores of the widowed parents were toward the higher end of the scale, which indicated that they felt more support for their children from significant others than divorced parents felt. In contrast the children as a whole tended to feel that their relationships with significant others were many and meaningful; their scores tended to cluster toward the top of the scale. However, of the children, the widowed children's scores were more widely distributed along the range of the scale, whereas the scores of the divorced children were more toward the top of the scale.



Table 4.34

Distribution of Scores for Custodial Parent and Their Children on  
Scale G<sup>2</sup>: Quantity and Quality of Relationship

Groups	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	N
DCP	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	14
WCP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	6
Total	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	3	1	1	2	2	0	1	1	20
DPP	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	14
WCP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	6
Total	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	20

### Matching Scores for Parent-Child Pairs

The ten questions which make up scale  $G^2$  provide ten possible matches. As shown on Table 4.35, the scores were distributed evenly from none to eight similar answers from parent and child. Scores of the widowed families ranged from two answers alike to eight answers which matched.

Table 4.35

Number of Questions on Which Parent and Child  
Gave Identical Answers on Scale  $G^2$ :  
Quantity and Quality of  
Relationships

Parent and Child Agreement	Number of Questions											N
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
DF	1	2	2	3	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	14
WF	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	6
Total	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	0	0	20

Table 4.36 shows discrepancy between parent and child scores ranged from two points to twenty-four points. The distribution was even across the range of scores for the divorced, and although there was a spread of scores for the widowed family's differences, they tended toward low discrepancy.

Figure 4.6 clarifies the relationship between the scores of each parent and child pair. There were two

Table 4.36

Discrepancy of Points Between Parent and Child Pairs  
on Answers to Questions on G<sup>2</sup> Scale:  
Quantity and Quality

Groups	Points																										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	N
DF	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	14
WF	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total	0	3	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	20

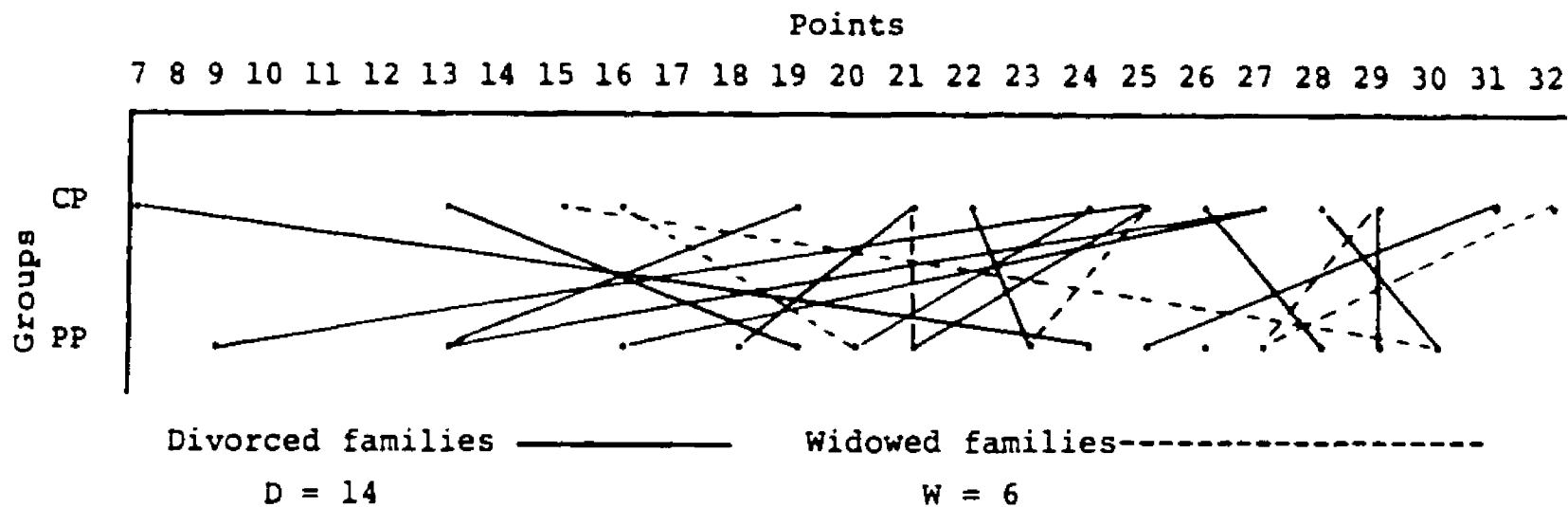


Figure 4.6

Comparison of the Distribution of Parent-Child  
Scores on Scale  $G^2$  of Quantity  
and Quality of Relationships

children, one in a widowed family and one in a divorced family who had much less feeling of emotional support from significant others than either parent thought. There also were three divorced parents who thought that their child felt much less emotional support from significant others than the child said he felt. The other parent-child pairs were fairly close together on their answers.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The remarried mother who had volunteered to be interviewed had waited three years after her husband's death and with her four children had moved back to her family. She married a man she considered good and kind, who had been divorced before his children reached teenage, so he was not used to relating to teenagers. With her four youngsters in this age range, the family was putting a great deal of strain on her relationship with her new husband.

She felt they all were trying hard to make a go of it. She knew it was difficult for her with her own children at times to relate constructively, and she felt it was especially hard for her husband to be accepting and understanding of her children going through this trying age. She and her husband cared a lot about each other and he really tried to be a good father to her children, but

she wasn't sure, if she had it to do again, that she would have remarried with the children at this stage of development.

Data from Analysis  
of Variance

Analysis of variance procedure was used to test significance and post hoc comparisons were used to determine what elements were contributing to the difference.

There was one significant difference of .005 between the custodial parent's adjustment whether the parent was widowed or divorced. The divorced person was doing significantly better at coping with life as it is at present than the person who has lost a mate by death.

The widowed person goes along as the wife of the person who is no longer there and maintains the memory and the relationship for a much longer time. The divorced person, however, has to establish herself as her own entity. She may have to prove herself or she may be competing, but she is beginning to make a new life for herself.

The widowed parent can gather herself together (without undue pressure) whereas the divorced parent has to deal with the children in relation to the absent parent. Change is the byword for both parent and child.

There was a significant difference of .002 between the Teacher Relationship Scale from the child's perspective

and the factor of divorce or death as the cause of the child's crisis of single-parenthood. Teachers Relationship from the parent's perspective has shown up as also significant, at the .019 level. For children, losing a parent through death or divorce doesn't make much difference, as far as they are concerned they have lost a parent. Yet the widowed children will get high support from their significant other adults and the children of divorce will get significantly less support.

Teachers are much more sympathetic or empathetic or aware of children whose parent has died than those who have divorced. Outside, significant others are likely to be far more attuned to widowed families than to divorced families.

The teacher is quite likely to be looked upon by the children as a major significant other adult in their lives, if they are close to the teacher. If the teacher has a normal relationship with pupils, it would be anticipated that the child under stress would look to that adult as another support. From this data, it would seem that teachers are rather unable to give support in a way that is needed. At least this evidence supports that they give highly differential support in two situations which are very similar as far as the child is concerned.

The counselor relationship does not show a significant difference, but the counselor still gives more

attention to the widowed child than to the divorced child. The person trained in counseling will view both death and divorce as traumatic for children, whereas teachers apparently view death as traumatic and divorce as not so much.

There was a significant difference of .018 between the Peer Relationship Scale from the parent's perspective and the factor of divorce or death. The children of divorce increase their peer relationships or call on peers for interaction more than do children whose parents have died.

The Urgency of Concern Scale from the parent's perspective show a significant difference with the Child's Adjustment Scale at the .024 level. The children with low adjustment tend to experience more urgency of concern over the crisis of becoming a single-parent family than the children with higher adjustment. A circular effect would take place with the children who were more able to cope with the situation because of better adjustment having less stress and strain, whereas the children who were less able to cope would meet more frustrating and confusing experiences and compound the trauma of more urgency of concern.

The Number of Significant Other Relationships, Scale G<sup>1</sup>, had a significant difference with the Child's Adjustment Scale at the .054 level. The high, or better



adjusted, child also has some relationships with significant others. There are people who are meaningful to him upon whom he can count; while the more poorly adjusted child does not always have someone with whom he can relate warmly and caringly. The knowledge that there is someone (or several) who cares gives comfort and self-confidence, which aids in the child's adjustment. The feeling of well being and confidence foster more meaningful relationships.

School Relationships caused a significant difference between the better adjusted students and the more poorly adjusted students. The significant difference was at the .039 level. The better adjusted children had better success in school. The teachers value good adjustment, encourage it, and reward it because it is more likely than poor adjustment to meet the teacher's expectations. Conversely the poorer adjustment of the low scoring children will cause problems for the teacher and therefore the child, which will make a more difficult situation for which the child needs to adjust.

The School Relationships from the child's perspective at the .014 level, and the Child's School Success at the .039 level caused significant differences between the better adjusted child and the more poorly adjusted child. The same kind of rewarding systems would be

operating with these two factors as with the above Total School Relationships.

Comparing the totaled Emotional Support Relationships from the parent's perspective caused significant differences between the factors of better and poorer adjustment of the child, at the .038 level. Children with better adjustment had more emotional support than the less adjusted children who had less emotional support.

#### SUMMARY

The first part of the Chapter IV dealt with the people who became participants in the study of single-parent families. The background and history of the homes in which the children had been and were being raised were described. The parents' education, professional experience and job involvement; marriage data such as engagement, time known by spouse, length of marriage, the recency of the crisis, and time of separation from the other parent were surveyed. Family support in the number of siblings at home, the stability of family residence, and the financial situation were also examined.

Child care was not much of an issue for these parents because the children were able to care for themselves to a large extent. Contact between the child and parents was difficult to estimate because of the great variation of amount and intensity of each situation. How

the child felt about his contact with all of the significant people for him was important to his feelings about his relationships; whether or not there was satisfaction, deprivation, or resentment. The visitation effects of the absent parent sometimes seemed to make handling the child a little harder for some of the mothers at first.

In considering the effects of the crisis on the child and family, many custodial parents felt that they were doing better than they had expected, a few felt that the absence of conflict was a much better atmosphere now, and a few felt that they and their families were missing opportunities including the input from the absent parent which would have been beneficial.

Many of the adults felt self-actualized from their experiences of coping with their problems successfully. Many were interested in marriage again, but several, although they wanted some meaningful relationships did not want the tie of marriage, both because of their own needs and those of their children.

Some general support was found for all of the hypotheses, when the self-concept, the child's urgency of concern, and the child's adjustment were correlated with the child's emotional support. The emotional support included the custodial parent relationship, the absent parent relationship, the relationship of significant others who are important to the child, and the quantity

and quality of emotional support from these relationships for the child. Some general findings are to be found in the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SUMMARY

Out of the data reported in Chapter IV, two broad areas of need for children and their parents were identified. They were (1) Support and (2) Tools for coping.

#### Family of Needs Determined

The areas of need can be categorized under two broad "families" as follows:

##### Support

- A parent who cares about the child
- A parent who thinks well of the child
- Friends who care about the child
- Patient understanding as the child adjusts to the trauma causing single parenthood (death or divorce)
- A sense of belonging
- Time and support in working things through
- Someone in whom to confide
- Security

##### Tools for coping

- A state of well-being for the individual
- A sense of self-respect
- Confidence in one's self
- Coping ability to do what one can in the situation
- Ability to take risks
- Better ways of relating with others

In relation to these needs of fundamental support, the child's coping ability develops with and from this strength behind him or her. The skills of listening, awareness of feelings of self and others, communication, problem solving and conflict resolution, are all skills which can be taught to improve the coping ability of the individual.

#### Needs of Individuals In General

These needs are the needs of every human being. Children in two-parent families also have these needs. The difference lies in the difficulty the single-parent families have in finding solutions to their needs. The distinction between single-parent families and other families lies more in the complexity of the solutions than in the kinds of needs.

Children who have been well-adjusted are likely to have been well-adjusted all along. Those who are having problems are likely to have always had problems; they have them now and probably will continue to have problems.

As the child goes through the trauma of adjusting to the death or divorce, the problems are often more intense. The child who has been able to cope well will be able to deal effectively with the situation, and one

who is less secure and less able to handle himself and his world will have more difficulties in making the necessary adjustments.

People to whom the child responded initially and who met his needs may have changed. As relationships the child has depended upon change, his behavior patterns have to be modified and adjusted to the new situation. Whereas in the past it might have been easy for other members of the family to meet needs of one another, now it may not be easy. Conflicting demands may have developed. At least this seemed true of the sample population.

#### Limiting Characteristics of the Sample

The study was limited to people who volunteered to participate. Fourteen of the volunteer families were caucasian, one was 50 percent Spanish and one was black. There may be something dynamic in the volunteering behavior which separated this group from the rest of the population of single-parent families. These people have more risk-taking characteristics than the rest. This would affect in many ways the data collected. This is a study in which the needs of a voluntary group of parents and children have been explored. The security of some members of the group may account for some of the data in

this study. Others of the group who wanted help were a different kind of influence.

#### Findings Related to the Hypotheses

The data supported, at the minimal level, the first hypothesis that a high self-concept was related to good quantity and quality of relationships. There was stronger evidence that the self-concept related with the custodial parent's relationship and the significant others who had meaningful relationships with the child. There was a negative correlation with the child's self-concept and a relationship with the school counselor.

There was not a significant correlation between the self-concept and the individual emotional support scales. There also was no significant correlation from the child's perception. None of the widowed parent or child's correlations were significant. Many of the correlations of the widowed families were negative.

In the second hypothesis, concern was strongly related to the significant other, quantity and quality of relationships and the custodial parent's relationship, all from the parent's perspective. The less support from these relationships, the more concern the child seemed to experience. Parents of children who had strong emotional support, on the other hand, thought the children



usually tended to think well of themselves, their abilities and capacities.

In support of the third hypothesis, the child's adjustment was related to the custodial parent relationship from the parent's perspective. There also was positive relationship between the child's adjustment and the total sum of emotional support relationships. The support of significant others is also positively related to the child's adjustment.

Again, there was no significant correlation between the child's perspective and the child's adjustment. None of the absent parent relationships, from any perspective, indicated a significant correlation.

#### Other Findings

By using analysis of variance to examine the data, several probabilities were identified (see Appendix D).

Custodial Parent Adjustment. The divorced custodial parents seemed to adjust better than the widowed parents. This probably has something to do with the need for the divorced parent to begin coping with her environment in a much more aggressive way than is necessary for a widowed parent. Death tends to bring more sympathy and support from friends whereas in divorce the parent has to make a new identity for herself and deal with the absent

parent, who might not be supportive, thus requiring more ability to handle problems immediately.

Teacher Relationship. Since the teacher is likely to be looked upon by the child as a major significant person in his life, it is important that the teacher be prepared to help. Most teacher education curricula has not generally included efforts to prepare pre-service teachers to deal with the traumas of divorce especially, but death also.

Peer Relationships. Data indicate that children of divorce increase their peer relationships or call on their peers more often for peer interaction than children who lose a parent through death. Two boys of the small sample of six children whose parent was deceased tended to be isolates for reasons other than the death. This inclination toward less sociable behavior might have affected the results on this analysis.

Child's Adjustment. The evidence indicated that the child experiencing a great deal of urgency of concern from the parent's perspective was likely to have difficulty adjusting to their situations. Conversely, well-adjusted children tended to have less trauma because of the crisis they were experiencing.

Significalant Other Relationship. The well-adjusted child has at least one (often more) important person who is significant to him, whom he can count on if he needs to.

Custodial Parent Relationship. The well-adjusted child tended to have a good relationship with his custodial parent. This was minimally significant at the .076 level. (See Appendix D for analysis of variance scores.)

Quantity and Quality of Relationships. If the child is well-adjusted, he has many friends who can provide much emotional support. Also if a person has a number of good friends, he is more likely to be well-adjusted.

### CONCLUSIONS

There tended to be more negatively significant correlations connected with the school relationships of teacher and counselor than with emotional support relationships and the child's state of well being. It may be important to improve training of these professionals so that they can better be prepared to deal with children adjusting to traumatic situations. Because of the importance of this person to a child going through crisis, it would also be well to consider the sex role problems that the child will need help with. Since it is the

father who often is gone, it might be of help to place single parent children with male teachers and counselors as much as possible. This could aid in sex role identification and problems of authority figures.

Better school situations need to be worked out. There are many phases of the school program where interaction with a parent is encouraged, but if that parent is a woman there may be a disadvantage to the child. For example, father-son, father-daughter activities exclude many sensitive children and encourage their feelings of inadequacy. One mother felt that sports for boys were very discriminating against women, and therefore against their children. She had a son who was very athletically inclined. Support from a father was masculine, sportsmanlike, etc. but if a mother showed interest in her son's baseball practice or track meet, the coaches tended to feel that she was there to protect her son, that he is a "mama's baby," not that she was there to give him family support.

Several of the parent-child pairs matched well on answering the same questions the same way. Most of the parents were not so aware of their children's thinking. There may be a tendency to cover real feelings, perhaps in an effort to protect each other, perhaps because each is so involved with trying to exist or to work things through individually that real feelings of the

other are too difficult to identify and pick up on for constructive action.

More of the widowed children seemed to feel less concerned than their parents expected them to and more of the divorced children seemed to feel more concerned than was expected by their parents.

Negative correlations with emotional support relationships and school relationships could indicate either rejection of significant others or a smothering, protective relationship where the individuals are comforted but not encouraged to develop their own strengths and abilities.

Death is final and once adjustment is made, life can go on. On the other hand, for children of divorce, there is a continual pulling force which requires frequently recurring adjustments. Change is the environment for these children. There seems to be more mobility of both parents in divorce situations than is involved in death situations.

#### PROPOSED PROGRAMS

With these issues in mind and with the ideas and suggestions of the interviewed children and parents, the following programs are suggested to meet some of the needs which appeared as this study progressed. Many local community agencies and organizations including the school,

the church and social organizations are able and willing to help provide facilities and plan and implement activities which will benefit single-parent families. How the organization participates depends more on the personnel involved than on the agency.

Parent education programs, such as Parent Effectiveness Training,<sup>1</sup> should be offered for parents to aid in their individual development in coping more effectively with their children. Raising children alone is difficult at best. Such a group, using communication and counseling skills provides possibilities of creating a more constructive atmosphere. It encourages a better relationship between parent and child and pays attention to the needs of both. A side benefit of participating in the class would be the rapport established between parents sharing similar problems, and the strengthening of friendships.

Recreational programs, such as those provided through American Youth Hostels and other groups, can help provide opportunities for parents and children to build family rapport and also provide opportunities for individual recreation and interesting activities for the

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Gordon's Parent Effectiveness Training program is a franchised course for which instructors receive special training and in which they are committed to teach the prescribed content. It is a model for humanizing families and schools. (Training before trouble; prevention not treatment; education not therapy.)

family to enjoy with each other and with other people. These will help develop self-confidence as individuals as well as a family group.

Counseling programs in which students and school counselors would deal with individuals and with groups to help the child with his individual development and adjustment.

Weekend and holiday festivities, for parents and children, with two-parent as well as single-parent families, provide extended family support and friendships with peers as well as with parents, other adults and children. Holiday time can be especially lonely and much different from "normal." Special parties with family and friends can provide something to look forward to and an outlet of active participation (to replace withdrawal, longing for the past) in a case of divorce when children may be visiting the other parent, leaving an emptiness for the lone parent.

Women's development programs. A mother who finds herself suddenly cast as a single-parent in the position of maintaining a home for her children, possibly with being the breadwinner and emotional support for her children, must learn many new and more effective coping skills than she needed before. This is especially important since the majority of single-parent families

are headed by women. A support group of other women who are experiencing the same problems can be therapeutic. Many skills could be involved and explored, such as survival skills, job skills, values, problem solving, human relations, and home maintenance skills.

Retreat programs for students with their school counselors and college students who wish to work with youth. This activity should take place after the children know and enjoy some of the other children in the group. It would be designed for self-awareness and assistance with adjustment, to build more rapport with peers and with counselors.

Retreat programs for parents, on the same weekend, to deal with concerns, to give insights to self, relations with others and problems. The design should be planned to obtain data to help both parents and their children. Younger children could be cared for in close proximity to parents if necessary.

One-day or weekend workshop programs for parents and children to experience family growth exercises to build family rapport. Extended family friendships could be further reward side effects for such experiences.



Family camping programs, family trips with other families to other parts of the country are also possibilities (including hosteling).

#### Difficulties Encountered

Since this was an exploratory study, several problems became apparent as the research progressed. The ideas gleaned from discussions with family life specialists were incorporated into a questionnaire. Items from the questionnaire later evolved into the scales concerning the child's state of well-being, emotional support, and school relationships. The questions were written or chosen because of their relation to important factors suggested by the related literature.

Classification became difficult to deal with because any data which might be useful were solicited; the outcomes were unknown beforehand. As the research proceeded the scales for measurement became clear but better development at an earlier phase would have yielded more meaningful statistical results. The direction of the investigation was necessarily unclear until it emerged from the information collected.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Better scale development needs to be worked out in order to implement a more statistically sound investigation into the child adjustment to single-parent family

living. This is needed to help identify problems so solutions can be developed for this seemingly ever-increasing problem of single parenthood of our society. More volunteers could be encouraged to participate by contacting known single-parent families in the communities. As some activities begin, word of mouth is an effective method of encouraging involvement. Often contacts can be made through the schools and through churches and social agencies. There usually is more need for help than help is available so referrals come once the service is known. A more typical representation of single-parent families could be sought by these methods of contact than might result from volunteers.

Study of different ethnic groups and other types of communities could be explored to try to work out programs to meet the expressed needs of these groups. They would probably have different ramifications because of the different circumstances with which they would have to deal.

Research would be helpful to determine whether indeed the needs of children in single-parent families are different from children in two-parent families. In our society, where many fathers are not present to the children for a great deal of the time, because of night shifts of work, because of extensive traveling, and other job demands, where our "nuclear" families are far removed

from their family backgrounds with little "extended" family support, there may be fewer differences than expected, except for the initial adjustment to the trauma of death and divorce.

Another important area of concern is the traumatic period for children of divorce, before the break actually takes place. This is a very destructive time for children because they are so helpless to understand what is going on between their parents, with only bits and pieces of information, and with little control over the situation. At this time the parents are very likely to be so pre-occupied with their own problems and with trying to make important decisions, with the hurt and fear of the repercussions, that they are unable to be very helpful to their children.

#### IN CONCLUSION

In our society there is an increasing number of children and parents who are becoming members of single-parent families. The life-style of many individuals necessarily must change in adjustment to this situation.

Since we all have somewhat similar needs, many of our problems in solving these needs are somewhat similar. As often occurs in single-parent families, however, there is an introduction of decreased resources;

often physical and emotional as well as material, with the addition of tensions, pressures and loneliness. Also there is the need to take more responsibility alone, which can be frightening and threatening. Under these circumstances the meeting of individual and family needs becomes much more complex.

There is a very fertile area for study and more research is needed to help discover better ways of coping with such problems.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER AND RESPONSE FORM**

APPENDIX A  
LETTER AND RESPONSE FORM

C. E. MacDonald Middle School.....John A. Hannah Middle School

East Lansing, Michigan

May 26, 1972

Dear Parents:

Although some attention has been given to programs for adults in single parent families, little or nothing has been done for the children who find themselves in this situation. There is an amazingly high percentage of children who fall into this category and the number is increasing.

Problems of adjustment for children in this period of single parenthood have many long and short range repercussions for the child. Some research indicates that this period affects the manner in which the child will adjust to his home if and when his parent remarries; it may also affect his adjustment to his own marriage relationship, as well as other personal problems throughout life.

One of the most unsettling conditions for the child to cope with in a traumatic shift of the parental marriage relationship is the probable--at least temporarily--loss of stability in the family structure. Even familiar people will be likely to treat the child differently and he is likely to have many new situations in which to interact, as he takes on his new roles in family, school and community. In order for the child to adjust well as a child in a single parent family, he must develop flexible skills of adaptation.

As the divorced mother of six children, I am interested in working with the YMCA and Middle School staff to set up some kind of a program for our Middle School aged children which will be planned to meet their specific needs. We hope to start such a program in the fall of 1972.

In order to determine the real needs of these children, I would like to obtain your permission and cooperation to interview you and your child in relation to gathering this pertinent information. All information will be regarded as confidential and will be used as the basis for planning the type of program that seems to be needed.

May 26, 1972

Page 2

I would appreciate knowing about any child whom you think might benefit from such a program as this. Would you please return the form to the school or call the counselors, Mrs. Lois Frears, Miss Sandi Vaughn or Mr. Wally Juall, so that we can contact you to make further arrangements.

Sincerely yours,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carolyn L. Farquhar

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra Vaughn

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lois Frears

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wally Juall

CLF:as

Enclosure  
-----

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILD:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sex

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No.

Living with \_\_\_\_\_

Mother

Father

Other

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Age at time of parent separation \_\_\_\_\_

Parents separated by \_\_\_\_\_

Death

Divorce

Other

Child's brothers and sisters  
with their ages

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Age

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**

**QUESTIONNAIRE GIVEN TO THE CHILD  
AND THE PARENT**

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE GIVEN TO THE CHILD  
AND THE PARENT

Middle School Children in Single-Parent Families  
Questionnaire

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. mother father other 3. divorce death other  
child's name living with Reason for parent's absence
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. list brothers & sisters/age/  
child's date of birth age--time of separation where living

name	age	where living	name	age	where living

7. How long have you lived in the East Lansing area? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

8. How long have you lived at this address? \_\_\_\_\_ (years/months)

What attitudes toward the child does his teacher have as a result of child being from a single-parent family? Does any teacher:

9. Seem to pay sympathetic attention to needs --  
10. To have warm and personal concern --  
11. Attempt to help compensate for being a child of a single-parent family --

much	little	none

It is difficult to estimate the amount of time spent with each parent because so many things change, but try to tell me what you think would be usual during this school year:

Arrangement for contact with:	daily	weekly	weekends	monthly	summers	holidays	no visits	other
12. present parent								
13. absent parent								
14. family of present parent								
15. family of absent parent								
16. significant others who? (important people to child, close friends)*								

17. In general, are these arrangements agreeable to all parties? yes no  
If no, check: to wife \_\_\_\_\_ to husband \_\_\_\_\_ to children \_\_\_\_\_

18. From whom does the child now receive emotional support?

	much	little	none
a present parent			
b absent parent			
c family - present parent			
d family - absent parent			
e significant others			
	much	little	none
a present parent			
b absent parent			
c family - present parent			
d family - absent parent			
e significant others			
	more	same	less
a present parent			
b absent parent			
c family - present parent			
d family - absent parent			
e significant others			

19. Does the child now receive satisfaction from the relationship?

20. Is there more, less, or about the same contact with the child since the separation?

\*All notes in brackets indicate additional explanatory information given to each person who was interviewed.

21. Do you play on a playground a lot?    yes    no  
a. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you play with other children in the neighborhood?    yes    no  
a. Who? [first names] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. Do you belong to any kind of program that has camping trips?  
yes    no  
a. Go often?    yes    no
24. Do you belong to any church program?    yes    no
25. Do you belong to any organized social group?    yes    no  
a. What? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Scouts, YMCA, 4-H)
26. Do you belong to any service group?    yes    no  
a. What? \_\_\_\_\_  
(volunteers, etc.)
27. Is there any group of kids you rap with?    yes    no  
a. Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
28. Do you enjoy talking [rapping] to kids in this way?    yes    no
29. Do you rap with other kids often?    yes    no  
a. How often? \_\_\_\_\_  
b. When? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
30. Do you ever talk to your school counselor?    yes    no  
a. How often? \_\_\_\_\_
31. Can you tell your counselor anything you want to?    yes    no
32. Is there anyone (else) you can talk to when you feel you want to?    yes    no  
a. Who? \_\_\_\_\_



33. Who do you think cares most about you and what happens to you?

a. Anyone else? \_\_\_\_\_

34. Where would you want to live if your mother and/or you dad remarried someone else?

35. Is there any place you go where you can talk with your parent and with other kids and their parents? [together] \_\_\_\_\_

36. Is it easier to talk to other parents (or adults) than your father? yes no

a. Is it easier to talk to other parents (or adults) than your mother? yes no

37. Do you have to be careful what you say to your own parent? yes no

a. to not hurt parent? yes no (mother)  
[in order to protect your parent] yes no (father)

b. to not hurt self? yes no (mother)  
yes no (father)

38. Is there any place where you can do things with other kids after school? yes no

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
sports/games - where?

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
activities/arts-crafts - where?

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
interest groups/hobbies - where?

39. Do you prefer organized activities that you can participate in? yes no

a. What? \_\_\_\_\_

40. Do you prefer to do things with other kids spontaneously, on the spur of the moment, without planning ahead? yes no

a. What? \_\_\_\_\_

41. Have you ever gone camping with your father?    yes    no  
     a. With your mother?    yes    no
42. To an organized camp with father?    yes    no  
     a. To organized camp with mother?    yes    no
43. What kind of things do [did--in case of deceased parent] you like best to do with your father? \_\_\_\_\_  
     a. With your mother? \_\_\_\_\_ (one-to-one)
44. What do you like best to do with your brothers and sisters and with your mother? \_\_\_\_\_ (as a group)
45. What do you like best to do with your brothers and sisters and with your father? \_\_\_\_\_ (as a group)
46. Do you feel that you are much worse off since the divorce/death?  
     yes    no  
     a. How? \_\_\_\_\_
47. Is your school work up-to-par, usually?    yes    no
48. Is there anyone who makes problems for you especially?    yes    no  
     a. Many people?    yes    no
49. Do you feel that you are accepted by your school mates?    yes    no  
     a. Did divorce/death make a difference in relation to your school mates?    yes    no
50. Do you feel that there are people who are important to you (the child) who care about you?    yes    no
51. Do you have plenty to do that interests you, that you want to do?    yes    no  
     a. What? \_\_\_\_\_
52. Can you talk with your teachers about anything you want to?  
     yes    no  
     a. Do you?    yes    no
53. Do you feel at peace (comfortable, easy) with other people?  
     yes    no

54. Do you feel comfortable when you are with the parent with whom you live?    yes    no
55. Do you feel comfortable with your other parent?    yes    no
56. Do you have one or more close friend(s)?    yes    no  
       a. Who? \_\_\_\_\_ b. Age \_\_\_\_\_
57. Is there an adult in whom you can confide?    yes    no  
       a. Do you talk intimately with him (tell something important to him that you may not want others to know; very closely about personal things)    yes    no
58. Can you see some goals you want to work toward in the near future?    yes    no
59. Do you think that you can [are able] to do what you want to do?    yes    no
60. Do you think that you can [are able] to do what you have to do?    yes    no
61. Do you feel any special concern [competent to handle] about your future?    yes    no  
       a. About what? \_\_\_\_\_
62. Do you feel control of yourself as a person?    yes    no  
       (emotionally, that you are not an object to others)
63. Do you feel supportive of your father's new role? (get education, remarry, etc.)    yes    no  
       a. Of your mother's new role?    yes    no

Please rank the following concerns as to their importance to you (child) [how much you feel concerned about them as you remember your feelings at the time of death/divorce or shortly after]:

1 = extremely important; 2 = important; 3 = some concern; 4 = not much; 5 = very little concern.

	1	2	3	4	5
64 Confusion because of divorce/death					
65 Resentment because of divorce/death					
66 Loneliness because of divorce/death					
67 Redefining relations with parents (working out new ways to relate to them)					
68 Self-guilt because of divorce/death					
69 New adjustment with peers (same age group friends)					
70 Seeing self as pawn because of divorce/death					
71 Adjusting to remarriage after divorce/death					
72' Rating of child's school adjustment by counselor					
73' Rating of child's general adjustment by counselor					
74' Rating of custodial parent's general adjustment by counselor					

72. Do you have a job at the present?    yes      full time  
   part time          no

73. What kind of work are you doing (or what do you usually do)?

74. During your marriage did you have a job?    yes   no
- a. Amount of time: all the time   once in a while   seldom
- b. Proportion of time: full time   part time
75. At the time of final separation/death did you have a job?
- yes   full time                  no  
part time
76. What was the last grade you completed in school? \_\_\_\_\_
77. What was the last grade your spouse completed in school? \_\_\_\_\_
78. What is/was his usual occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
79. Was he/she a steady worker?         \_\_\_\_\_
- always works(ed)      steady except un-  
                                 steady/hard                  avoidable layoffs
- \_\_\_\_\_ frequent layoffs                  never worked long periods
80. What was your age when you were married? \_\_\_\_\_
- a. Spouse's age? \_\_\_\_\_ (when married)
81. How long did you know your former spouse before marriage? \_\_\_\_\_
82. How long was the engagement? \_\_\_\_\_
83. How many years were you married? \_\_\_\_\_
84. How long between separation and divorce? \_\_\_\_\_ years/months
85. Date of divorce/death \_\_\_\_\_
86. How long since divorce/death \_\_\_\_\_
87. Has child support been adequate?    Yes   no
88. Regular?    yes   no



97. How would you rate the care?

	excellent	good	average	poor
relatives				
spouse's relatives				
neighbors				
friends				
nursery school				
public school				
other				

98. When you have dates, who cares for the children? relatives  
neighbors friends other

99. When we are taking full responsibility for raising a family we know, realistically, that no matter how much we love the children and want to do well for them, there are times that are very difficult. What activities do you feel are handicapped by having the children with you?  
trips job possibilities dates club meetings  
giving parties education remarriage other

100. Would you like to have your former spouse see the child/ren  
more less same

101. Is/are the child/ren harder to handle after these visits?  
harder easier same

102. Do you think the child/ren feel/s the same toward the absent parent now as when you were still married? yes no  
loves absent loves absent never thinks about feels the  
parent more parent less absent parent same

103. Would you say, in general, that the child/ren was/were harder to handle at the time of  
a. realization b. resolution c. grief  
d. initial adjustment e. public phase f. rebuilding  
never difficult

104. Do you think your former spouse considers the payments to be:  
too much a little too much too little about right

105. Do you feel that he resents these payments? yes no

106. Now that the divorce/bereavement is all over, would you try to tell me in your own words how you felt about the divorce/bereavement and the children? What went through your mind when you thought of the possible effects of the divorce/death on him/her/them?

107. Did these things happen as you believed they would? yes no  
If no, how different?
108. Did you ever make a decision never to remarry? yes no
109. Do you still feel this way? yes no
110. Now that the divorce/bereavement is all over, is there anything  
you have been able to accomplish by yourself that you have  
always wanted to do, but never managed to before?  
  
yes no What?
111. One final question. Try to tell me in your own words just how  
you would like things to be if you could have your own way  
about the following:  
  
a. How about work: How should that be?  
  
b. How about the children?  
  
c. And finances?  
  
d. How about love and marriage?  
  
e. How about other things?
112. Interviewer's rating of custodial parent's coping ability to  
deal with his child constructively and help him in his  
general living situation.

## APPENDIX C

### CODING AND SCALES



## APPENDIX C

### CODING AND SCALES

An explanation of the category follows the title.

<u>Code</u>	<u>Categories</u>
A	Child's Self-Concept: How the child feels and thinks about himself.
B	Child's Crisis Adjustment (Urgency of Concern): The intensity of the child's concern about certain areas of adjustment in reaction to death/divorce.
C	Child's Later Adjustment (more stable): How the child acts, how he is coping in general living.
D=G <sup>1</sup>	Emotional Support: How much the child can count on people close to him if and when he needs to. A general category, feeling of support from any number of specific persons--varies for individuals--usually specific for each interview.
E	Custodial Parent Relationships: Pertains to the quality and quantity of parent/child relationship with the parent whom child lives.
F	Other Parent Relationships: Pertinent to the quality and quantity of the absent parent's relationship with the child.
G <sup>2</sup>	Significant Other Persons (other adults, usually): Concerned friends who give emotional support to the child (other than the immediate family). This is a general category indicating any number of specific persons, different for each child, giving that child support.
H	Teacher Relationships: Stated more specifically than G (category) to determine the school support, influence and impact.
I	Counselor Relationships:
J	Peer Relationships: Close and meaningful friendships with other youngsters.
K	Custodial Parent's Adjustment: How the custodial parent is coping with her/his situation.
L*	Mother's Working: Time spent at work, away from child and home (Meaning repercussions--to parent and child).

\*Though these were originally coded, they turned out to not be meaningful for various reasons and so were not used.

- M\* Financial Situation: Pressures/strain/comfort resulting from financial situation.
- N\* School Success: Child's adjustment (academic and comfort) in school.
- O\* Activities (free time): How child spends unscheduled time.
- P\* Activities (organized): Organized activities the child participates in.

\*Though these were originally coded, they turned out to not be meaningful for various reasons and so were not used.

Scale A

## Child's State of Well Being

## A: Self-Concept Scale (Child's)

Item:	Scoring:			Judges:			
	For Answers			Ratings			
46. Do you feel that you are much worse off since the divorce/death?	no	yes		#1	#2	#3	#4
	5	3	1	A	A	A	D
53. Do you feel at peace (comfortable, easy with other people?	2	1	0	A	C	A	A
59. Do you think that you can do what you <u>want</u> to do? (You are <u>able</u> to do what you would really like to do. If you make up your mind you can do what you <u>have</u> to do?)	2	1	0	A	AC	A	AE
60. Do you think that you can do what you <u>have</u> to do? (You are <u>able</u> to do what you <u>have</u> to do.)	2	1	0	A	AC	A	A
61. Do you feel any special concern about your future? (Confident to handle things.)	5	3	1	A	AC	A	A
62. Do you feel control of yourself as a person? (Emotionally, not as an object to others)	5	3	1	A	A	A	A

Scale B

Child's State of Well Being

B: Child's Urgency of Concern (initial adjustment to crisis)  
Scale

Item:	Scoring:					Judges:				
<hr/>										
Please rank the following concerns as to their importance to you (child) 1=extremely important, 2=important, 3=some concern, 4=not much, 5=very little concern.										
64.	Confusion because of divorce/death.	Important				Little Concern	#1	#2	#3	#4
		4	3	2	1	0	B	B	B	
65.	Resentment because of divorce/death.	4	3	2	1	0	B	B	B	B
66.	Loneliness because of divorce/death.	4	3	2	1	0	B	B	B	B
67.	Redefining relations with parents (working out new ways to relate to them.)	4	3	2	1	0	B	B	B	B
68.	Self-guilt because of divorce/death	4	3	2	1	0	B	B	B	B
70.	Seeing self as pawn because of divorce/death	4	3	2	1	0	B	B	B	B
71.	Adjusting to remarriage after divorce/death	4	3	2	1	0	B	B	B	B



Scale E

## Emotional Support

E: Custodial Parent Relationship Scale

Item	Scoring				Judges			
19a. Does the child receive satisfaction from the relationship? (a. custodial parent).	Much 5	Little 3	None 1		#1 E	#2 E	#3 E	#4 E
33. Who do you think cares most about you and what happens to you? Anyone else? (scored in terms of custodial parent.)	If custodial parent mentioned: 1st 5	2nd 3	3rd 2	not 0	E*	E	E	DAE
34. Where would you want to live if your mother and/or your dad remarried someone else? (Scored in terms of custodial parent.)	Custodial Parent 2		Other 0		E*	E*	E*	E*
36. Is it easier to talk to other parents (or adults) than your father/mother? (Scored in terms of custodial parent.)	Custodial Parent: No 5		Yes 1		E*	E*	E*	EHI
54. Do you feel comfortable when you are with the parent with whom you live? (Scored in terms of custodial parent.)	Yes 5		No 1		E	E	E	E
63a. Do you feel supportive of your custodial parent's role? (Scored in terms of custodial parent.)	Custodial Parent: Yes 2		No 0		E*	E*	E*	E*

\* In as much as most custodial parents are mothers and most absent parents are fathers, judges failed to make distinctions between the designator "custodial" versus the designator "mother." Therefore, in treating items such as: 63a. Do you feel supportive of your mother's/father's role? yes no the response E and F was given by all four judges--meaning that they failed to make the observation that this item related only to the custodial parent in the item itself. Thus a confusion enters because the E response is not possible because the F scale is the absent parent's relationship. Data from item 63a. are analyzed in terms of either the absent parent or the custodial parent, therefore all E and F ambiguities are arbitrarily reduced to account for this confusion, before screening on the criterion for inclusion.

Scale F

## Emotional Support

## F: Absent Parent's Relationship Scale

Item	Scoring:				Judges:			
19. Does the child receive satisfaction from the relationship? (b. absent parent?)	5	3	0		#1 F	#2 F	#3 F	#4 F
33. Who do you think cares most about you and what happens to you? Anyone else? Scoring in terms of absent parent.)	If absent parent mentioned: 1st 2nd 3rd not 5 3 1 0				F	F	F	DAF
34. Where would you want to live if your mother and/or your dad remarried someone else?	Absent Parent 2 Other Parent 0				F	F	F	F
36. Is it easier to talk to other parents (or adults) than your father/mother? (Scored in terms of absent parent.)	Absent Parent No 5 3 yes 0				F	F	F	FHI
55. Do you feel comfortable with your other parent? (absent parent).	yes 5 3 no 1				F	F	F	F
63. Do you feel supportive of your father's (absent parent) new role? (Scored in terms of absent par.)	yes 2 1 no 0				F	F	F	F
102. Do you think the children feel the same toward the absent parent now as when you were still married?	More 5	Same 3	Less 1	Don't Think 0	F	F	F	F

Scale G<sup>1</sup>G<sup>1</sup>: Emotional Support Scale--Number of Significant Others

Item	Scoring	Judges:			
18. From whom does the child receive emotional support? (Scored in terms of number of caring people)	(Total columns checked "much" a - e 5 4 3 2 1 0)	#1 GEF*	#2 GEF*	#3 GEF*	#4 EFD*
19. Does the child receive satisfaction from the relationship? (Scored in terms of number of caring people)	(Total columns checked "much" a - e 5 4 3 2 1 0)	EFG*	GEF*	GEF*	DEF*
32. Is there anyone you can talk to when you feel you want to?	yes 2      1      no 0	G	G	G	EFG*
33. Who do you think cares most about you and what happens to you? Any-one else? (Scored in terms of number of caring persons)	(number listed) 2 or more    one    none 2      1      0	EFG*	G	GEF*	EFG*
57. Is there an adult in whom you can confide?	yes 2      1      no 0	G	G	G	DHIFG

\* Inasmuch as most custodial parents are mothers and most absent parents are fathers, judges failed to make distinctions between the designator "custodial" versus the designator "mother." Therefore, in treating items such as: 63a. Do you feel supportive of your mother's/father's role? yes no; the response E & F was given by all four judges--meaning that they failed to make the observation that this item related only to the custodial parent in the item itself. Thus a confusion enters because the E response is not possible because the F scale is the absent parent's relationship. Data from item 63a. are analyzed in terms of either the absent or the custodial parent, therefore all E and F ambiguities are arbitrarily reduced to account for this confusion, before screening on the criterion for inclusion.



Scale G<sup>2</sup>

G<sup>2</sup>: Emotional Support Scale--Quantity and Quality of Relationships  
(was G)

Item	Scoring:				Judges			
	Much	Little	None	Not mentioned	1	2	3	4
18. From whom does the child receive emotional support?								
c. family--custodial parent	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
d. family--absent parent	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
e. significant others	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
19. Does the child receive satisfaction from the relationship?								
c. family--custodial parent	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
d. family--absent parent	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
e. significant others	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
20. Is there more, less or about the same contact now (as before the crisis?)								
c. family--custodial parent	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
d. family--absent parent	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
e. significant others	3	2	1	0	G	G	G	
57a. Do you talk intimately with him? (an adult in whom you can confide--tell something important to him that you may not want others to know)	yes 5	3	no 1		G	G	G	HIF

Scale H

## School Relationships

## H: Teacher Relationship Scale

Item	Scoring:			Judges:			
9. Teacher seems to pay attention to needs.	Much 2	Little 1	None 0	#1 H	#2 H	#3 H	#4 H
10. Teacher has warm and personal concern.	2	1	0	H	H	H	H
11. Teacher attempts to help compensate for child being of a single-parent family.	2	1	0	H	H	H	H
52. Can you talk with your teachers about anything you want to?	yes 5	3	no 1	H	H	H	H
52a. Do you?	yes 2	1	no 0	H	H	H	H
57. Is there an adult in whom you can confide? (Scored only in terms of teacher relationship)	yes 5	3	no 1	GK	G	G	GDHIF
57a. Do you talk intimately with him? Tell him something important that you may not want others to know; very closely about personal things. (Scored only in terms of teacher)	yes 2	1	no 0	EF	G	G	HIF

Scale I

School Relationships  
I: Counselor Relation Scale

Item	Scoring:	Judges:
30. Do you ever talk to your school counselor?	yes      no 5    3    1	#1 #2 #3 #4 I   I   I   I
30a. How often?	2    1    0	I   I   I   I
31. Can you tell your counselor anything you want to?	5    3    1	I   I   I   I
57. Is there an adult in whom you can confide? (Scored only in terms of counselor)	(scored if a counselor is specified) 2    1    0	G   G   G DHIF
57a. Do you talk intimately with him? Tell him something important that you may not want others to know; very closely about personal things. (Scored only in terms of counselor)	(scored if a counselor is specified)	EF   G   G HIF

Scale JSchool Relationship  
J: Peer Relationship Scale

Item	Scoring:			Judges:			
22. Do you play with other children in the neighborhood?	yes 2	1	no 0	#1 J	#2 J	#3 J	#4
27. Is there any group of kids you rap with?	2	1	0	J	JO	J	J
28. Do you enjoy talking to kids in this way? (rap)	2	1	0	J	JO	J	JO
29. Do you rap with other kids often?	Much 5	Some 3	None 1	J	J	J	O
32. Is there anyone (else) you can talk to when you feel you want to? Who? (Scored in terms of peer relationship)	yes 2 (scored if a peer specified)	1	no 0	G	GJ	G	EFG
39. Do you feel that you are accepted by your schoolmates?	yes 5	3	no 0	J	NJ	J	AJ
49a. Did divorce/death make a difference in relation to your schoolmates?	yes no 2	1	yes 0	J	J	E	AJ

Scale K

## K: Custodial Parent's Adjustment Scale

Item:	Scoring:	Judges:
74 <sup>1</sup> . Rating of custodial parent's general adjustment by counselor impression.	good            low 5 4 3 2 1	#1 #2 #3 #4 K K K
110. Now that the divorce/bereavement is all over, is there anything that you have been able to accomplish by yourself that you have always wanted to do, but never managed to before? What? (Scored in terms of custodial parent's achievement, coping ability)	good            poor 5 4 3 2 1 (scored in terms of custodial parent's achievement and coping ability)	K K K K
112. Interviewer's rating of custodial parent's coping ability to deal with his child constructively and help him in his general living situation.	good            poor 5 4 3 2 1	K K K

New K Scale

74<sup>1</sup> was deleted because the majority of the custodial parents had a 3 rating for this score. Some of the parents were not known to the counselor and were assigned a score of 3. An assumption was made that the counselor would tend to know them and rate them accordingly if either they or their child were outstandingly well or poorly adjusted.

New K Scale consists of scores to questions 110 and 112, which were a part of the original K Scale as seen above.

APPENDIX D

TABLES OF CORRELATIONS AND  
ANALYSES OF VARIANCE

Table A1

Table of Correlations

	Re- cency	Child's Well-Being						K Custodial Parent Adjustment		School Relationships						ABC Total Child Adjustment			HIJ Total School Adjustment																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																											
		Scale A		Scale B		Scale C	Adjust- ment	Orig- inal	Re- vised	H Teacher Relationship		I Counselor Relationship		J Peer Relationship	Total	CP	PP	Total	CP	PP																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										
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TABLE A2  
Tests of Analyses of Variance Performed on all the  
Items with Reference to Divorced Families  
and Widowed Families

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Statistic	Approx. Significance Probability of F Statistic
Teacher Relationship (cp)				
Between groups	1	83.26	12.52	.002
Within groups	18	6.65		
Total	19			
Divorced group mean = 4.21 Widowed group mean = 8.66				
Teacher Relationship (pp)				
Between groups	1	81.49	6.66	.019
Within groups	18	12.24		
Total	19			
Divorced group mean = 4.93 Widowed group mean = 9.33				
Peer Relationship (cp)				
Between groups	1	39.21	6.80	.018
Within groups	18	5.73		
Total	19			
Divorced group mean = 16.21 Widowed group mean = 13.17				
Custodial Parent Adjustment new (X)				
Between groups	1	22.87	8.70	.009
Within groups	18	2.63		
Total	19			
Divorced group mean = 7.00 Widowed group mean = 4.67				
Custodial Parent Adjustment K (original)				
Between groups	1	16.80	4.20	.055
Within groups	18	4.00		
Total	19			
Divorced group mean = 7.00 Widowed group mean = 4.67				
Custodial Parent Relationship (pp)				
Between groups	1	29.87	3.51	.077
Within groups	18	8.52		
Total	19			
Divorced group mean = 21.00 Widowed group mean = 23.00				



Table A3

Tests of Analyses of Variance Performed on all the  
Items with Reference to Good and Poor  
Adjustment of the Child\*

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Statistic	Approx. Significance Probability of F Statistic
Urgency of Concern (pp)				
Between groups	1	181.82	6.04	.024
Within groups	18	30.12		
Total	19			
Poorer-adjusted child's group mean = 13.66				
Better-adjusted child's group mean = 19.73				
Significant Other Relationships (pp)				
Between groups	1	24.67	4.26	.054
Within groups	18	5.79		
Total	19			
Poorer-adjusted child's group mean = 9.22				
Better-adjusted child's group mean = 11.45				
Sum of School Relationships				
Between groups	1	81.199	4.66	.045
Within groups	18	17.413		
Total	19			
Poorer-adjusted child's group mean = 20.55				
Better-adjusted child's group mean = 24.60				
Sum of Child's State of Well-Being (pp)				
Between groups	1	18.51	8.14	.011
Within groups	18	2.28		
Total	19			
Poorer-adjusted child's group mean = 6.89				
Better-adjusted child's group mean = 8.82				
Sum of Child's Emotional Support (pp) [Total]				
Between groups	1	25.19	5.03	.038
Within groups	18	5.01		
Total	19			
Poorer-adjusted child's group mean = 14.53				
Better-adjusted child's group mean = 16.78				
Sum of School Relationships (cp) [Total]				
Between groups	1	26.04	7.43	.014
Within groups	18	3.50		
Total	19			
Poorer-adjusted child's group mean = 12.42				
Better-adjusted child's group mean = 14.72				
Custodial Parent Relationship (pp)				
Between groups	1	30.07	3.53	.076
Within groups	18	8.51		
Total	19			
Poorer-adjusted child's group mean = 20.44				
Better-adjusted child's group mean = 22.91				

\*Scores of 6-10 are better-adjusted children; 2-5 are poorer-adjusted children.