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**A COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' PRACTICES IN GUIDING  
THEIR CHILDREN IN REGARD TO INDEPENDENCE, CHOICE OF  
PLAY MATERIALS, SELF ASSERTION, AND OBEDIENCE**

**By**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of the preschool years of a child's life has been one of the primary concerns of a democratic society. Recently, there has been an influx of popular and scientific literature written by prominent people in the sociology, psychology, education, guidance, medical and child development fields. These writers have been endeavoring to emphasize the importance of the emotional climate of the home as one of the salient features in aiding the young child to mature and make a healthy adjustment to his society.

In this chapter, the problem, the purpose of the problem, and the definition of terms used in this study will be stated. The writer will attempt to indicate some of the major changes in child rearing concepts from the strict authoritarian pattern of the past to the more democratic pattern of the present, and to reveal some of the basic principles behind these changes. A brief history, description and general information about the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School will be given.

#### Problem:

The primary objective of this study was to compare and contrast the practices of mothers and fathers in four areas: independence, self assertion, obedience, and choice of play materials. These four areas were selected because the investigator believed parents' participating in a cooperative nursery school program would be aware of their agreement or disagreement with the child development policies as practiced in the



nursery school in these areas. The investigator thought the schedule would have to be restricted in scope of material covered and in length to be effective. These four divisions covered many of the problems parents face in rearing their children. The secondary objective was to note whether any conscious changes occurred in mothers' and fathers' guidance as a result of participation in a cooperative nursery school.

### Definition of Terms:

The terms used in this study are defined from the standpoint of parental guidance of the two to five year old child. A question and the answers to the question from each of the four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion, and obedience are given to illustrate the working philosophy of the terms as they are defined for this study. The question selected to clarify each definition is a typical specimen of the questions in the specific area of the schedule. Any question in the area could be used as a sample, for the same reasoning has been applied to all questions organized under the area covered by the definition.

#### 1. Independence:

Encouragement given the child to grow and develop in his ability to accomplish new skills for himself and learn to meet his routine daily problems.

In question 9, in Part A (independence area) of the schedule, "Do you expect your child to undress (himself, herself) (indoor clothes)?" The parent was given a choice of these answers: "Completely", "Partially", or "To some extent". The choice of answer of the parent indicated the encouragement the parent was giving the child to grow and develop in his

ability to accomplish skills for himself and learn to meet his routine daily problems. The parent who answered "Completely" must have chosen clothing which could be easily manipulated by the preschool child, or it would be impossible for the parent to expect his child to undress himself completely. In this way, the parent consciously or not must be encouraging his child to develop independence.

## 2. Play Materials:

The insight the parents manifested in regard to the child's need to play with toys for small and large muscular development, as well as creative and constructive toys suitable to the two to five year old age level.

In question 4, Part B (choice of play materials area) of the schedule, "If your child did not have any of the following toys which one would you prefer to see (him, her) have?" The parent had the choice of these answers: "An electric train", "A mechanical train", or "A wooden push train". The parent, who selected the wooden push train as his preference for the child of preschool age, would be evidencing insight in regard to the child's need to play with a simple toy which would offer an opportunity for creative and constructive play as well as opportunity for muscular development; for of the three toys offered, the wooden push train is the most suitable toy for the preschool age child.

## 3. Self Assertion:

The understanding the parents manifested in regard to the child's need to enforce his rights as an individual.

In question 1, Part C (self assertion area) of the schedule, "If your child is playing with a toy, and another child grabs it away from (him, her), do you allow (him, her) to grab for it in return?" The parent had a choice of these answers, "Consistently", "Frequently", and





"Very Seldom". The parent who chose "Consistently" as the best answer demonstrated his understanding of a child's need to enforce his rights as an individual. If Child A grabs a toy from Child B, Child B should be allowed to express his rights as an individual by grabbing for the toy from Child A. This suggests Child B is allowed to assert himself as an individual; it does not imply that Child B should not be aided in developing more constructive methods of defending his rights.

#### 4. Obedience:

The understanding the parents manifested in regard to the child's need for self respect, and the encouragement given to the child to conform to standards of the home and culture in which he lives.

In question 2, Part D (obedience area) of the schedule, "If you offer your child a choice and (he, she) chooses one that is inconvenient to you do you accept (his, her) choice?" The parent had the choice of these answers, "Consistently", "Frequently", or "Very Seldom". The parent who chose "Consistently" as the best answer gave evidence of showing respect for his child's feelings. In this way, he was instilling his child with a feeling of trust that would help his child conform to the society in which he lives. If the child's decision could not be honored, the parent should not have offered the child a choice. From the answers to this question and other questions in this area, it was possible to determine if the parent guided his child through respect and understanding of the child's needs and age level, through forceful adult power, or through undermining the child's feeling of security.

#### Changes in Child Rearing Concepts:

Child development is concerned with human relations. This factor



makes child development an ever changing field, for to be effective it must adjust and meet the demands of a changing culture.

Our child rearing practices have been built on tradition based on moralistic and authoritarian principles. This is antithetical, for our society is a democratic society that believes in individual rights and stresses independence. It has been within the last two or three decades that we have tried to formulate principles of child guidance that would complement a democratic society. Paradoxically, present studies reveal many present day parents cling to the authoritarian type of leadership in preference to guiding their children toward the principle of self discipline. To understand this phenomena, it is necessary to review the child rearing concepts of the past.

The child of the past has been thought of as a "miniature adult" both in his physical and mental qualifications. This frame of reference was in vogue up to the twentieth century. The child's position in society was considered relatively unimportant. The interest in the child was based on his physical welfare. It stressed the general health rules necessary to keep the child physically fit.

In the eighteenth century, the interest in the child was from the standpoint of improving the educational system. The primary purpose was to mold the child into a set cultural pattern. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were a few leaders (Comenius, Rousseau, Froebel, Pestalozzi, and Herbart) who believed the child was an individual and not a miniature adult, but on the whole, growth in child development was slow until the twentieth century. This century has been referred to as



"The Century of the Child", for during this century progress has been made in studying the child as an individual.<sup>1</sup>

[ The theory of "original sin" has been prevalent in guiding our child rearing practices of the past. Josselyn<sup>2</sup> mentions this by stating in the past asocial behavior was thought to be inherent or the fault of the devils who had power to enter the soul and cause the individual to act sinful. Frank<sup>3</sup> in discussing this subject stated parents compelled their children to be good through fear and painful punishment. It made parents strict disciplinarians. This authoritarian concept was based on the tradition if parents really loved their children they must save them from evil ways and future difficulties by using authoritarian means to force them into being decent human beings.

This type of thinking appears outdated, but Escalano<sup>4</sup> writes that approximately ten years ago a facet of the authoritarian concept was still in vogue. "Bodily and mental health is based on orderly, strictly scheduled existence from early childhood onwards." This concept was inculcated by child development leaders in the early decades of the twentieth century. Parental relationships with children were impersonal. The child was cared for in a routine manner. As Escalano states "It was thought the child could be turned out as automobiles are turned out." ]

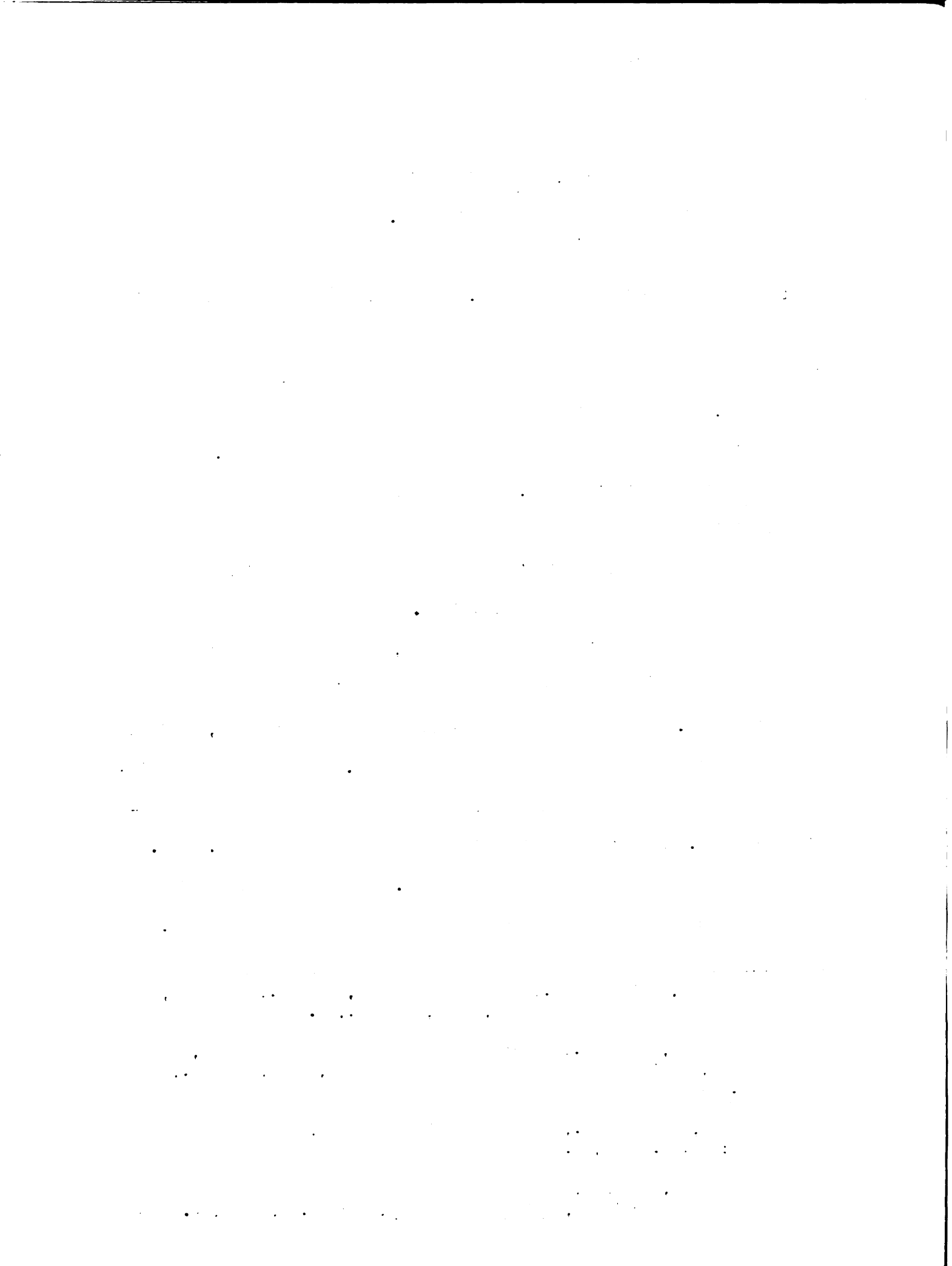
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<sup>1</sup> Hurlock, Elizabeth B., Child Development, 1st ed., New York, Prentice Hall Incorporated, 1947, 623 pp., p. 1-12

<sup>2</sup> Josselyn, Irene M., Psychosocial Development of Children, New York, Family Service Association of America, 1948, 134 pp., p. 7-8

<sup>3</sup> Frank, Lawrence K., "Discipline in Our Time", Childhood Education, 20: No. 1. 1943, p. 6-7

<sup>4</sup> Escalona, Sybille, "A Commentary upon some Recent Changes in Child Rearing Practices", Child Development, 20: No. 3, 1949, p. 156-162



The authoritarian concepts led the child to follow a certain conduct because a parent or other adult made him conform to a pattern. This was not sound teaching, for it was irrational and it did not help the child learn to govern himself. As Teagarden<sup>5</sup> expresses it "Obedience should not be to a person but rather to a principle. Obedience to the principles of health and growth and safety, obedience to the rights of other; obedience to all those rules that will ultimately develop self control and self determination."

A child must fit into his society if he is to be a happy person. In a democratic society, he must be helped to develop from a dependent stage where he depends on adult direction to the stage where he can learn to adjust to his environment through his own direction.

The emphasis in child guidance today appears more logical. It is thought that no single facet of a child's development (physical, social, mental, emotional, spiritual) can be comprehended in isolation from the others.<sup>6</sup> It is thought each day of a child's life shapes the child for future days. "As he lives richly today and acquires manifold meanings, he lives more richly tomorrow, so it began to be seen that each day must be treated as an end in itself, and the child respected as a child."<sup>7</sup>

It has been commonly accepted that parents of today follow the practices of the parents of yesterday. It appears essential that parents

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<sup>5</sup> Teagarden, Florence M., Child Psychology for the Professional Worker, Revised Edition, New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946  
613 p., p. 240-241

<sup>6</sup> Escalona, Sybille, "A Commentary upon some Recent Changes in Child Rearing Practices", Child Development, 20: No. 3, 1949, 156-162

<sup>7</sup> Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth Incorporated, For Every Child a Healthy Personality: A Digest of the Fact Finding Report to the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, 1950, 155pp., p.99



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evaluate their attitudes and practices of child guidance. The aim of parent educators today is to assist parents in developing a workable philosophy that will give them insight in guiding their children in everyday situations, so as to allow their children to grow from the helpless dependency of infancy to independent adulthood.

#### Criteria for the Study:

One of the criteria set up for this study was the participants in the study must have participated in the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School program. A second criterion was the mothers and fathers interviewed for the study must have or have had children enrolled in the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School. The following section of this chapter will be devoted to the Spartan Nursery School.

#### The Spartan Nursery School:

The Spartan Nursery School is located on the Michigan State College Campus, East Lansing, Michigan. This nursery school is unique in that it is a cooperative nursery school organized for Michigan State College students' preschool children. It has been named "Spartan" for the college teams and The Spartan Wives organization at Michigan State College.

History of the Spartan Nursery School: In 1946 and 1947, there was a vast number of married couples attending Michigan State College. In December 1946, a one-day-house-to-house canvas was made by wives of students at Michigan State College Trailer Village of 400 to determine how many young mothers wished to be active participants in a cooperative nursery school program. Ninety percent of the mothers indicated a willingness to contribute time and energy to a cooperative nursery school project.

A survey of married students living both on-campus and off-campus was made at the regular College registration of students in March 1947 to determine the need for a nursery school program for college students' children. The results of the survey showed a definite need for a good, low-cost nursery school program.

The students' wives at Michigan State College belong to an organization named, "Spartan Wives". Members of this organization have demonstrated an interest in child development and child psychology. They are active in child study groups and work on various problems connected with developing and carrying out the plans for the Spartan Nursery School.

Michigan State College, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, various American Legion Posts and Auxiliaries, American Gold Star Mothers as well as interested individuals gave financial assistance to help realize the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School. Michigan State College erected the building in which the nursery school is located. At the beginning the W. K. Kellogg Foundation assumed a large financial responsibility for developing the school. It was developed on an experimental basis. The parents were eager to assume some of the financial responsibility through paying fees and raising money by sponsoring various fund-raising projects. After the Spartan Nursery School was well established, it was decided the nursery school should be continued. This school met a need of the married students, and it contributed its services to scientific research. At this time, Michigan State College assumed the major role for contributing financial responsibility to the Spartan Nursery School.

The Spartan Nursery School Council, the Spartan Nursery School



Faculty Advisory Committee, and The Spartan Wives Club united abilities and efforts to guide the formative plans and development of the Spartan Nursery School program.

The Spartan Nursery School became active as a nursery school in April 1948. It has contributed a great service to the married students of Michigan State College.

The Physical Plant: The Spartan Cooperative Nursery School is constructed of two quonsets, each twenty by forty-eight feet, attached by central rooms, fifteen feet wide. The quonsets are painted white, and they are located on a large playground surrounded by a white picket fence. At the entrance of the nursery school is a sign, "Spartan Nursery School". The white quonsets, with their many low windows, form a very attractive nursery school.

At the entrance of the school, there is a pleasant room that contains a fine library with books for children and parents furnished by the Michigan State Library, Lansing, Michigan. This room serves as an all purpose room for staff and parent activities.

The nursery school has two large playrooms that are well equipped with child-size furniture and play equipment. The school contains two one-way vision screened observation rooms, a kitchenette, storage room, a bathroom equipped with child-size equipment, a reception room, a workshop and an office for the staff.

The playground has modern, well made equipment. The outside movable toys are stored in a storage garage that has a ramp which enables the children to get out and put away their play equipment.

The physical plant of the nursery school is convenient. The decorations are attractive and suitable for a school for young children. The equipment in the nursery school offers many opportunities for the growth and development of the young child.

The Staff: The Nursery School has a staff consisting of a director and two head teachers. These leaders are well qualified for their positions. They are enthusiastic, understanding co-workers of the parents, and friendly sympathetic teachers of the children.

The staff works in close contact with the mothers and fathers who are active participants in the nursery school program. The staff has an opportunity to visit the parents in their homes as well as work with them at the school.

The Parents: The parents who have children in The Spartan Nursery School are from diversified geographical origins in the United States. At least one parent in each family attends Michigan State College, so they would not be considered a typical group of parents.

Most of the families live in the Married Housing area located on the Campus. This housing area is divided into neighborhoods. Each neighborhood consists of three barracks or twelve apartments. A few of the parents who cooperated in this study live with their families in the Michigan State College Trailer Village, in East Lansing, or in Lansing, Michigan.

The families of these parents are comparatively small. Most of the parents have one to two children, though a few have three or more children. These parents are interested in child development, and have contributed wholeheartedly to the Spartan Nursery School Project.



The fathers and mothers have been active in the nursery school program. The fathers constructed several large pieces of equipment for the nursery school. They constructed the white picket fence which surrounds the playground. They built the covered sand boxes, the children's lockers, and many of the toys used by the children. One father served as custodian of the school, other fathers cooperated in landscaping the playground. The fathers have a workshop located in the nursery school. In this workshop, they work on children's equipment for their homes as well as for the school.

The mothers planned the color scheme for the nursery school. They have assisted in painting some of the puzzles and other toys for the children. They use the sewing machine in the reception room at the nursery school to make articles for the school.

Parent Education Program: The parents of young children attending the Spartan Nursery School are encouraged to take an active part in the school's program. The fathers and mothers participated in planning and executing their plans for the nursery school. Both parents may participate as assistant teachers. They attend work meetings, and they meet with the staff at parent meetings to discuss problems and various aspects of child growth and development.

Some of the parents with special talents (e.g. photography, speech, correction, music, etc.) have given of their time and skill to contribute to the nursery school program.

One mother and one father spoke at the Mid-Western Conference of The Association for Nursery School Education held in Detroit, Michigan April 1949.



These parents have contributed their time to sponsor fund-raising activities for the nursery school. They have been cooperative in working with students of Michigan State College on research problems.

The Spartan Nursery School serves many families. The program is well organized, and it is based on the individual needs of the children attending the school.

The staff works with six small groups of children. Each group consists of twelve to sixteen youngsters. Each group attends the nursery school for short sessions three times a week.

The nursery school programs offered to these children are comparable to the programs offered in any well planned nursery school.

The Spartan Cooperative Nursery School has opportunity to draw upon the resources of Michigan State College in psychology, education, sociology, home management and child development, and in return it can offer its unusual facilities as a laboratory for research. It serves as an inspiration to other schools and communities that feel the need of a good cooperative nursery school.

#### Summary:

The general trend in the change of child rearing concepts from the past to the present has been a gradual, slow change from the strict, authoritarian type of leadership by parents, toward a more democratic type of leadership by parents. A good nursery school follows the democratic method of guiding children to develop self control in adjusting to their homes and culture.

The purpose of this study was to contrast and compare the attitudes

and practices of fathers and mothers in guiding their children in four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion, and obedience. A further purpose of the study was to note any conscious changes occurring in fathers' and mothers' guidance as a result of participation in a cooperative nursery school.

The history of The Spartan Nursery School and general information about the school was presented to emphasize the cooperative spirit of the parents and teachers who have worked together to understand and aid the preschool age children grow and develop into healthy, well adjusted children.

The next chapter is devoted to a review of research dealing with parent education.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The necessity of discovering suitable methods of educating the young child to enable him to grow into a well adjusted, happy, mature adult, who will take his place in a complex society, has been and is an exigent problem for all those interested in children and their welfare. This problem has been approached through divergent avenues. No one has expected to find a panacea for the problem, but all fields hope to contribute to the development of healthier, happier individuals. It has been thought by many writers that parent education is a sound approach to this problem, for the development of a child's personality is much influenced by his home environment. Jersild<sup>8</sup> states, "Among features of the external environment that are likely to have a very important influence on a child's personality development are the attitudes and practices of his elders".

This study is concerned with parent education. The extensive literature written on this subject could not be surveyed in a brief review of literature, therefore the materials examined in this study are restricted to attitudes expressed on the value of the nursery school, especially of the cooperative type, in executing an influence on parent education, and to relevant experimental studies pertaining to parent attitudes and practices in guiding children.

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<sup>8</sup> Jersild, Arthur T., Child Psychology, 1st ed., New York, Prentice - Hall Incorporated, 1947, 623 pp., p. 585

### Attitude Toward Nursery Schools:

The nursery school has been given a foremost position in assisting parents in understanding the needs of the preschool child. Nursery education, itself, is comparatively recent. The cooperative nursery school is an outgrowth of the traditional nursery school; its purpose is to integrate the efforts of the parents and teachers in more constructive methods of guiding preschool children. The cooperative nursery school may be defined as a school in which parents, usually mothers, actively help plan and execute a nursery school program, either with the guidance of nursery school teachers, or under the guidance of one or more specialists in the field of child development. The cooperative nursery school is still in the experimental stage of development. Two of the earlier and successful cooperative nursery schools are The University of Chicago Cooperative Nursery School organized in 1915, and The Smith College Cooperative Nursery School organized in 1926.<sup>9</sup>

In relation to nursery schools, Teagarden<sup>10</sup> states, "Perhaps one of the chief advantages of nursery schools is the training they provide for parents. Most nursery schools accept children for enrollment only with the understanding that the parents will keep certain records, will attend conferences and consultation periods concerning their child, and perhaps attend group meetings of parents".

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<sup>9</sup> Landreth, Catherine, Education of the Young Child, New York, John Wiley and Sons, Incorporated, 1942, 279 pp., p. 8-9

<sup>10</sup> Teagarden, Florence M., Child Psychology for the Professional Worker, Revised Edition, New York, Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1946, 613 pp., p. 169

Gesell and Ilg<sup>11</sup> feel, "Educational agencies can render most service by assisting parents to acquire a working philosophy of growth which will give perspective to the everyday problems of childhood". They offer for consideration the opinion that nursery schools and kindergartens should be reconstructed to reach all people instead of a select group. They state further<sup>12</sup>, "By the device of part-time and differential attendance, by bringing parent and child jointly into the scheme of education, by converting kindergarten and nursery schools into demonstration and guidance centers, the preschool clientele can be enormously increased without undue additions to the budget". Many of these suggestions have been incorporated into The Spartan Cooperative Nursery School program.

Frank<sup>13</sup> stated, "The nursery school in close cooperative relation with the home and parents, is the primary agency for mental hygiene". He stressed the need of the nursery school, kindergarten, and grade schools to work together. He emphasized the importance of the nursery school finding methods of cooperating with the home and family in meeting the fundamental needs of the child.

Read<sup>14</sup> feels the cooperative nursery school must have excellent leadership, for she feels this type of nursery school creates many problems.

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<sup>11</sup> Gesell, Arnold, et al., The First Five Years of Life, 13th ed., New York, Harper and Brothers, 1940, 393 pp., p311

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.312

<sup>13</sup> Frank, Lawrence K., "The Fundamental Needs of the Child," Mental Hygiene, 22: No. 3, 1938 p. 379

<sup>14</sup> Read, Katherine H., "What About Cooperative Nursery Schools?", National Association of Nursery Education Bulletin, 6: No.1, 1950, p. 3-6

Her main objections to cooperative nursery schools are the emotional strains put on the parent and child. She states the mother is asked to play a double role of parent and teacher, and she questions the ability of most mothers to handle this double role. Read also questions the readiness of the preschool child to share his mother with other children. These objections must be considered in guiding parents in parent education, but they do not necessarily mean cooperative schools are not a worthy means of aiding parents in guiding their children for as Read says, "The cooperative nursery schools will make a contribution only if they examine critically what they are doing and if they evaluate their results".

One of the preponderant issues facing nursery school education is the problem of mitigating the turmoil the child goes through in meeting the conflict between home and school procedures. The cooperative nursery school offers an opportunity for parents and teachers to work this problem out together.

As Tucker<sup>15</sup> states, "Education for family life through the experience gained in the cooperative nursery school applies methods advocated by the more progressive leaders in the educational field of today. Personal growth, which has been and still is the keynote of the philosophy of the progressive education movement, when consciously sought makes the education of the parent an interesting experience both for the parent and the child".

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<sup>15</sup> Tucker, Clara, "A Study of Mothers' Practices and Childrens' Activities in a Cooperative Nursery School", Teachers College Columbia University Contribution to Education No. 810, Camden, New Jersey: Haddon Craftsmen Incorporated, 1966pp., p. 9

The following review is concerned with studies dealing with problems of determining parents' attitudes and practices in guiding their children and in evaluating methods of presenting material to parents in parent education programs.

#### Experimental Literature:

In the Parent Education Research Studies conducted by Dr. Ojemann of The University of Iowa and his associates, an effort was made to determine the needs of parents and to furnish data which may be used in the selection of content for a program in parent education.

Self-reliance is a trait admired in others. Ojemann<sup>16</sup> developed a test for measuring attitudes toward self-reliance for parents of preschool children, elementary school children, and high school adolescents. These tests were administered to 150 untrained parents. Each parent took the test designed for parents of the age child represented in his family: One hundred and nineteen of the parents took the preschool test; 89 of the parents took the elementary school test; 42 of the parents took the highschool test. All of the tests were administered to 15 highly qualified judges who had been trained in child development, or had extensive experience with children. These tests were scored on an eleven-point scale; the score of one was a highly favorable score; the score of eleven was a highly unfavorable score.

In this study, it was found the untrained parents had mean scores of 6.71, 6.68, and 6.67 for parents of preschool age, elementary school

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<sup>16</sup> Ojemann, Ralph, "The Measurement of Attitude Toward Self - Reliance", Researches in Parent Education 3, Iowa University Studies in Child Welfare, Iowa City: 10: 1935, p. 103-111

age, and adolescent age children, respectively.

In comparing the scores of untrained parents with those of highly trained individuals, it was found the untrained parents' scores fell to the unfavorable side of the self-reliant scale while the trained judges' scores fell to the favorable side of the self-reliant scale. This finding indicates the degree to which parents are inclined to be reluctant in allowing the responsibilities to pass from parent to child. The data gave some indication this tendency continues throughout life unless some special effort is made to modify it.

Ackerly<sup>17</sup> states in response to the test on self-reliance administered in her study, it appeared neither fathers or mothers of elementary age children favored self-reliance, but she added this attitude of unfavorableness was not those of individual parents.

Hedrick<sup>18</sup> worked with four groups of parents of preschool children totaling 48 in number. Three of these groups were from small communities and one group was from a rural community. Hedrick measured the effectiveness of a carefully constructed program of learning in changing the attitudes of parents towards development of self-reliance in children. The learning program contained experiences designed to develop a feeling of the importance of self-reliance and a knowledge of the development of the

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<sup>17</sup> Ackerley, Lois, Information and Attitudes Regarding Child Development Possessed by Parents of Elementary School Children, Researches in Parent Education, 3. Iowa University Studies in Child Welfare Iowa City: 10: 1935, p. 143-144

<sup>18</sup> Hedrick, Blanche E., The Effectiveness of a Program of Learning Designed to Change Parental Attitudes Toward Self-Reliance. Researches in Parent Education, 3. Iowa University Studies in Child Welfare, Iowa City: 10: 1935, p. 251-267





child. In order to determine whether an attitude had been developed which would carry over into phases of development not specifically discussed in the learning program, all references to self-reliance in the teaching were restricted to four routine phases of the child's activity.

In Hedrick's study, the parents' attitudes were measured previous to the reading program and again following it, using the Ojemann Self-Reliance Attitude Scale. The groups met once a week for a series of six meetings. The program of learning was developed by applying the known generalizations relative to the learning process, 1. Problems for discussion, 2. Reading materials with definite references, 3. Visual aids, 4. Specific illustrations for each topic.

The results of Hedrick's study showed that the parents' attitudes changed in the direction of a more favorable attitude toward self-reliance. *The change of attitudes toward self-reliance* included in the teaching program carried over into other aspects of the child's activities which were not included in the program. The parents in the study ranged from 22 years of age to 47 years of age. It was found there was nearly as much gain in change of attitudes for the older group of mothers as the younger group. It was also found the initial and final measurement concerning the knowledge of the development of the child showed a significant difference.

From the above studies cited, in general it appears untrained parents do not have a favorable attitude toward self-reliance; but with a definite training program stressing the importance of self-reliance, the attitude of the parents tends to change in the direction of a more favorable attitude toward self-reliance.



Ojemann<sup>19</sup> conducted a study in which an extensive list of generalizations relating to eleven phases of child development was built from the most refined data available, including research studies and the writings of ten authorities who worked closely with children. Judgments of the importance of the generalizations for the intelligent care and guidance of children were obtained for mothers and fathers separately. Judgments of the relative importance of generalizations for each of these groups of children were obtained: Parents of preschool children (birth to five years); parents of elementary school children (five to eleven years); parents of high school children. The judgments were made by twelve judges who were carefully selected on merits of qualification for the work.

There were 319 generalizations developed. These were distributed through the following eleven phases of child development: motor development, intellectual development, emotional development, social development, language development, physical growth, eating, sleep, elimination, play and sex education.

As measured by the methods used in this study, Ojemann found there are no differences in the importance of individual generalizations for mothers as compared with their importance for fathers. A possible exception appears in some of the generalizations relating more specifically to routines at the preschool level where the importance scores are somewhat higher for mothers than for fathers.

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<sup>19</sup> Ojemann, Ralph, *Generalizations Relating to Child Development Involved in Intelligent Parental Guidance, Researches in Parent Education* 3. Iowa University Studies in Child Welfare, Iowa City: 10: 1935, p. 31-99



Ackerly<sup>20</sup> conducted a study to ascertain some of the needs of parents of elementary school children. This study was concerned with determining what generalizations are considered important in the thinking of parents of elementary school children, and which of the important generalizations are being used by the parents. In this study, generalizations were developed on the mental, emotional, social and physical development of the child, the use of money, sex education and vocational guidance. These generalizations were rated by ten competent judges on the basis of their importance to elementary school parents. A battery of tests was constructed covering the generalizations rated by the judges as highly important for these parents. The tests were of two types, attitude tests and knowledge tests.

These tests were administered to 771 parents. One hundred and sixty-nine fathers and 221 mothers marked Battery One. The same number of fathers and mothers marked Battery Two. These parents were from widely separated parts of Iowa, from rural communities and from towns ranging in population from 271 to 142,000. They represented various occupations from unskilled to professional, and their educational status included elementary school education through college.

The results showed the response of parents to test items related to seven areas of child development indicate either a lack of knowledge which is important for the satisfactory care and guidance of elementary

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<sup>20</sup> Ackerley, Lois, Information and Attitudes Regarding Child Development Possessed by Parents of Elementary School Children, Researches in Parent Education 3, Iowa University Studies in Child Welfare, Iowa City: 10: 1935, p. 115-166

school children or an inability on the part of the parents to apply the pertinent generalizations.

In general it may be said, the ability of fathers and mothers to apply generalizations pertaining to child development is about equal, though there is slight indication that mothers are more capable of applying generalizations related to child development than are fathers.

Although the study cited above has to do with parents of elementary school children, it seemed important to include this study; for it presented information comparing fathers and mothers ability to apply generalizations. The second reason for including this study was that mothers' and fathers' answers to the test questions were compared to the opinions set up by a group of judges.

Jack<sup>21</sup> devised a schedule for scoring parents' practices and child behavior. The schedule included areas on physical conditions, eating habits, sleeping habits, habits of elimination, work and activities, imagination, fears, anger, aggressiveness, independence, sex instruction, play, cultural advantages, and discipline. Jack's work is a first attempt toward objective measurement of parent practices and child behavior in the home.

In Jack's study, the subjects were 28 mothers of children of specifies ages who were without previous parental training, but who were enrolled in parent education classes which were conducted by local women

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<sup>21</sup> Jack, Lois M., A Device for the Measurement of Parent Attitudes and Practices, Iowa University Studies in Child Welfare, Iowa City: 6: 1932, p. 137-149

who had taken a course of training at The State University of Iowa given by members of the parent education staff. The mothers were interviewed just before the beginning of the parent training course and the interviews were repeated immediately after the completion of the course.

The results of Jack's study pointed out the differences in attitude and practices of the mothers considered as a whole, brought about during a four months period of parent training, are not great enough to be considered reliable differences though there was an improvement in average scores. The sections on play and on discipline showed the nearest approach to certain improvement during the training period. It was noted those mothers who scored lower at the beginning of the training period made the greatest improvement while those mothers who were superior at the beginning of the training period made little improvement.

These studies taken from the Parent Education Series conducted by the University of Iowa manifest a constructive attempt to determine parent needs as a basis for developing a sound parent education program.

It has been interesting to note that a number of experimental studies have been conducted to determine the attitudes and practices of fathers as well as mothers in guiding their children. Radke<sup>22</sup> mentions that the discipline roles of fathers and mothers appear to be more similar than they were a generation ago possibly because fathers are assuming a more

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<sup>22</sup> Radke, Marian J., The Relation of Parental Authority to Children's Behavior and Attitudes, University of Minnesota, The Institute of Child Welfare Monograph Series No. 22., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1946, p. 1-123



realistic and responsible role in parent-child relations. Radke's study is unique because of its multiple approach to the problem of parental authority, and the child's understanding of parental authority. The subjects of this investigation were 49 children enrolled in the nursery school and kindergarten at The University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare, and their parents. Radke used the questionnaire-interview method for obtaining information from parents. The first half of the questionnaire given to the parents dealt with authority and discipline in the parents' childhood; the second half dealt with authority and discipline in the child's home life. The purpose of this arrangement of the questionnaire was to determine if the givers of discipline perceived the situation in the same light as the recipients of the discipline. The interview method, projective techniques, and experimental situations were used to obtain data from the children. The results show the recipients in two generations perceived the discipline as more severe and less reasonable than it appeared to the givers of discipline.

In Radke's study it was found parents still fail to recognize the child is entitled to respectful treatment. The child's feelings and needs are too often regarded as trivial, and a large proportion of discipline procedures depend for their effectiveness on the power of the adult, or on undermining the child's power. In regard to mothers' and fathers' responses on items of philosophy of discipline, they did not differ significantly except in explaining to the child the reason for the discipline he receives. In this respect, mothers explain more frequently than fathers. It was found differences in parental restrictions and severity of discipline between mothers and fathers are negligible. Mothers tend more

frequently than fathers to allow the child to have his own way, and fathers are less apt than mothers to deprive the child of privileges and pleasures as a form of punishment. In the findings of this study, the mothers appear in the role of chief supervisor of the child and also to be the more affectionate and yielding of the parents.

According to parents' reports certain changes in punishment techniques have taken place in the two generations. Spanking the child is less frequent, isolating the child is more frequent; shaming the child and frightening (warning) the child are less frequent than in the past generations. Some significant conclusions on Radke's investigation are: punishment does not motivate toward better behavior. Children verbalize very little about parents as personalities or affectional objects; and home environment influences school behavior as reported by preschool teachers.

Gardner<sup>23</sup> investigated the various activities and attitudes of fathers in relation to their parental duties in the home. The fathers participating in this study ranged from 20 to 79 years of age with over half of the fathers grouped between 40 and 60 years of age. These fathers worked at fairly remunerative financial occupations, were on the whole well educated, and had ample time to spend in the home situation.

Psychology students had 300 personal interviews with fathers following a detailed questionnaire containing 50 items. The questionnaire attempted to get a picture of the nature of guidance fathers gave in early childhood, later childhood and in the adolescent period. In this study,

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<sup>23</sup> Gardner, L. Pearl, "A Survey of the Attitudes and Activities of Fathers," Journal of Genetic Psychology, 63: 1943, p. 15-53

the writer of the present study is only interested in the guidance given to preschool children; only 19 percent of the families in Gardner's investigation had children in the one to five year age group. The facts obtained in this study are really a picture of what fathers think of themselves and as Gardner states it would not constitute an objective evaluation of parental duties.

The results of Gardner's study on the guidance of fathers of children in the early childhood period are listed in Table I.

Murray<sup>24</sup> conducted an investigation to develop a method of determining a town's opinion of problems of child guidance. He sought information on what actions people would take when confronted by various sorts of problems when rearing children; and to which agencies people would willingly turn for help in child rearing problems.

The investigation took place in an industrial town of 11,400 people. There were more white-collared than factory workers in the town, but the town had a high Mexican population. This particular town of Sterling had never had a child guidance clinic until this study was conducted. Dr. T. W. Richards of the Northwestern Psychology Department went to Sterling and held a clinic from Tuesday, February 14 to Friday, February 17, 1949. The child guidance clinic was announced previous to the date it was held. The clinic included interviews with children, an address by Dr. T. W. Richards to parents at a large joint P. T. A. meeting, and four seminar meetings for varied groups. Dr. Richards also served as

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<sup>24</sup> Murray, David C., "An Investigation of One Town's Opinion Relative to the Problem of Child Guidance", Child Development 20: No. 2., 1949, p. 79-100

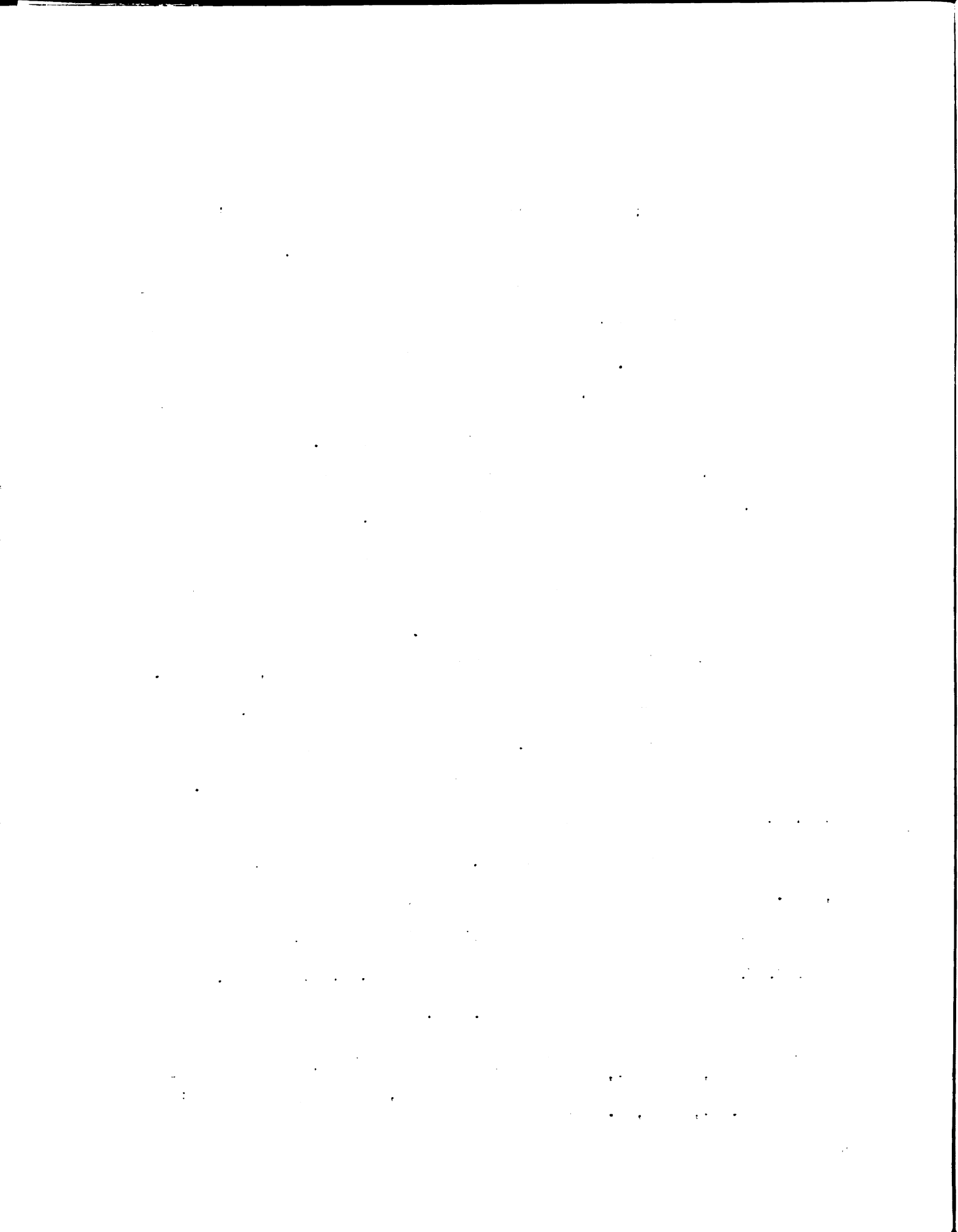


TABLE I

THE FATHERS' OPINIONS ON VARIOUS CATEGORIES RELATING TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PERIOD AS COVERED IN GARDNER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Category Covered in Questionnaire	Percent of Cases
<b>I. Characteristics of Guidance Given by Fathers to Children in Early Childhood.</b>	
Fathers dreamed of some profession for their babies (usually something different from their own).	22
Fathers gave some routine care to the young children with the largest items pertaining to feeding and amusing the young children.	60
Fathers teased their children in rather unwholesome ways two-thirds of the time.	48
Fathers gave intellectual help to young children by teaching the youngsters new words.	88
Fathers gave intellectual help to young children by answering childish questions.	77
<b>II. Fathers' Opinions as to Children Bringing Their Troubles to Their Parents.</b>	
Children brought troubles to both parents.	31
Children brought troubles to their mothers	53
Children brought troubles to their fathers	9



TABLE I (Cont.)

Category Covered in Questionnaire	Percent of Cases
III. Fathers' Opinions as to the Type of punishment Given Children by Fathers	
Fathers punished children by deprivation.	45
Fathers punished children by physical punishment.	37
Fathers punished children by verbal forms.	16
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IV. Fathers' Opinion as to Mothers on Occasion or Frequently Leaving Punishment to the Fathers.	
Mothers left punishment of the children to the fathers.	29
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V. Fathers' Opinion as to Agreement and Disagreement of Mothers and Fathers in Guiding Their Children.	
Mothers and fathers agreed in bringing up their children.	61
Mothers and fathers disagreed in bringing up their children. *	38
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* The disagreement between mothers and fathers in most cases was in regard to the pampering or leniency or the strictness, nag- ging, and scolding of mothers.	

moderator on a Parent Teen-Aged Panel.

In Murray's study in order to determine the reaction to the clinic program as well as the effect of the program on the town, the questionnaire-interview method was used. The interview followed a sampling method for selecting respondents to the questionnaire. The results showed punishment and attempts at verbal persuasion are the most frequently suggested methods of dealing with the "trouble making" child. The most popular sort of punishment appears to be physical (whipping, spanking, or licking).

It is interesting to note that in Murray's investigation it was found the church is the most popular outside agency considered for help in child guidance. Teachers and physicians also are called upon frequently for help in child guidance.

In Radke's, Gardner's and Murray's studies it is evident that both fathers as well as mothers need help in guiding and understanding their children's growth and development.

Rinehart<sup>25</sup> compared the educational value of two nursery school parent education programs. One program was a standard nursery school group. It was held from 9:00 - 11:30 o'clock five days a week. This nursery school regime was supplemented by a parent education program consisting of lectures, conferences and informal discussion groups on child care and training. In the main, however, the parental education phase of the program was minimized in importance. The second program was similar to the first, but the mothers participated in a four-week training period, after which they took turns in supervising the semi-weekly nursery groups

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<sup>25</sup> Rinehart, J. B. "Comparative Education of Two Nursery School Parent Education Programs", Journal of Educational Psychology, 36: 1945, p. 309-317



under the supervision of a trained child development person. A third nursery school group was used as a control group. All three groups were given The Revised-Stanford-Binet Scale (Form L) in the fall of 1940. The Walther Behavior Rating Scale was utilized to collect data from the parent about the child's behavior in the home, and in addition, data on twelve questionnaire items involving emotional adjustment, self help, and parental cooperation were obtained by interviewing the mother.

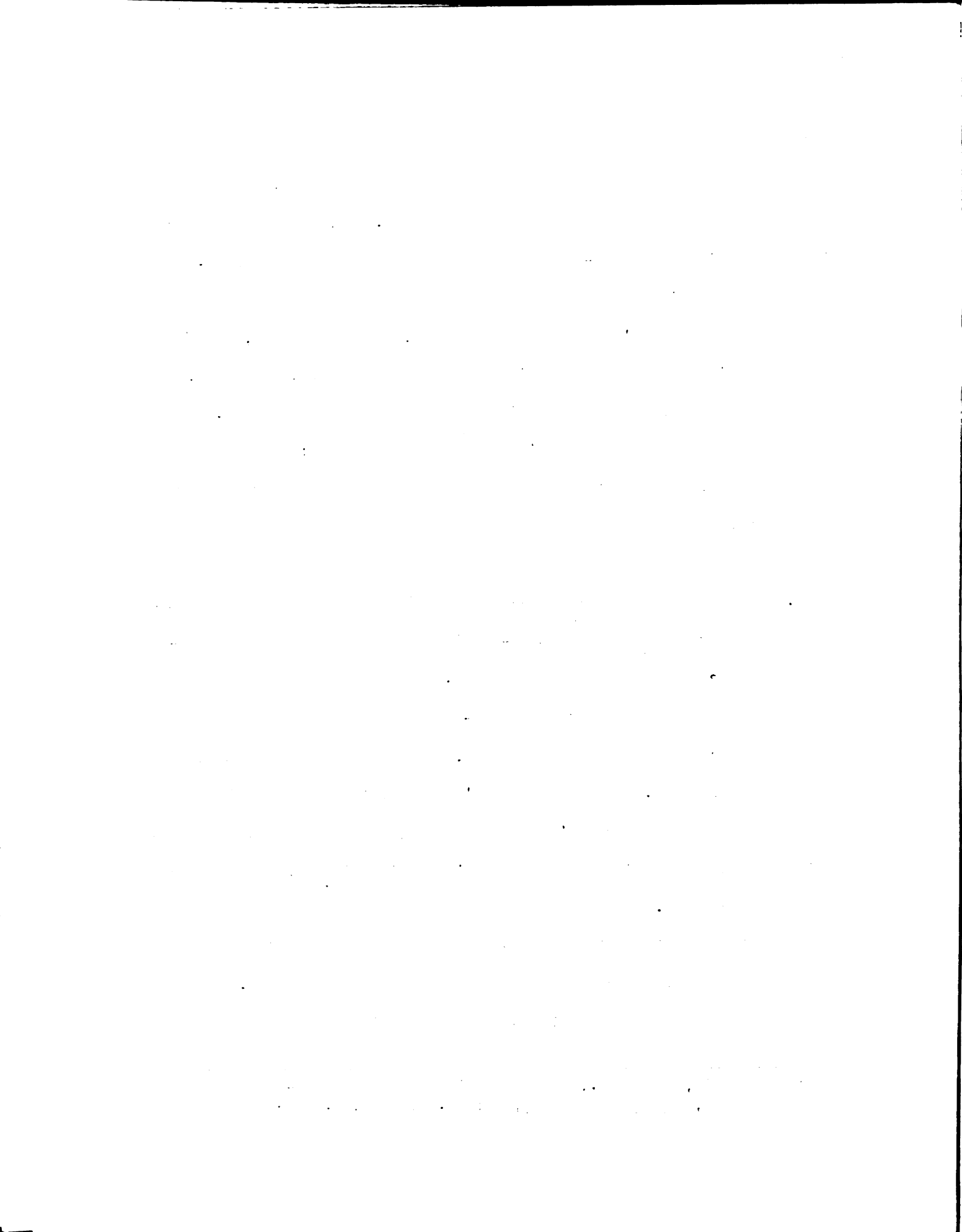
The conclusions of Rinehart's study were as follows:

The two-day per week program conducted by the mothers themselves under the supervision of an experienced staff worker favorably affected the development of the participating children on the items compared in the study. There seems to be objective evidence in this study for the soundness of the current trend of mother-participation programs and home emphasis in modern preschool training plans. The results obtained on the questionnaire items suggest that mother-supervised groups probably need greater stress to be placed on self help, especially on habits involving washing and dressing. It is the writer's opinion that this finding may be another example of parents' reluctance to help the child develop self-reliance as noted in Ojemann and Hedrick's studies cited in the earlier part of the chapter.

Baldwin<sup>26</sup> has investigated some of the consequences of "democracy in the home" upon the personality development of young children. The research was based on observation of preschool children in the experimental

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<sup>26</sup> Baldwin, Alfred L., "Socialization and the Parent-Child Relationship", Child Development, 19: No. 3, 1948, p. 127-136



nursery school conducted by The Fels Research Institute. These children were observed in the free play group at school, and also in their homes.

In this study, "democracy" is characterized by a high level of verbal contact between the parent and child, and a high value is placed on the reasoning behind family rules, also explanations are given in response to the child's curiosity. The home environment is permissive.

"Control", as used in this study, stressed the existence of restrictions upon behavior which are clearly conveyed to the child, but not necessarily arrived at by democratic methods. A second characteristic of control is the lack of friction over disciplinary decisions. This may be due to various characteristics, prohibitions on talking back, easy conformity by the child, or the resolving of the policy by mutual agreement.

It was found in this study that most democratic homes were not uncontrolled. Democracy tended to have two types of effects upon the child's behavior. In general, democracy tended to raise the activity level and produce an aggressive, fearless, planful child who was apt to be a leader in a nursery school group; but who was also more cruel than the average child of his age. There was also an increased amount of curiosity, non-conformity, and disobedience but none of these characteristics were significant for democratic homes.

Control was found to have more significant effects but they were in the opposite direction. Control tended to decrease quarrelsomeness, negativism, and disobedience but at the same time to decrease aggressiveness, planfulness, tenacity, and fearlessness.

Baldwin stated that when control and lack of democracy occurred together they produced a very marked effect in a large number of variables. The combination produced a well behaved, quiet, non-resistant child who was socially unaggressive and restricted in his curiosity, originality, and fancifulness. The opposite picture of high democracy and low control produced opposite effects, but Baldwin added very few of the variables were significant.

It was noted in this study that authoritarian control seemed to help the child obtain conformity to his culture but it restricted his personal freedom in areas such as curiosity, self assertion, decision making etc. On the other hand, democracy ran the risk of producing too little conformity to cultural demands; however, as democracy was practiced by the Fels families, it appeared to be accompanied by enough control to avoid serious consequences.

Baldwin brought out the relationship between the activity level of the home and the problem of socialization. He stated that the active home was characterized by a high level of interaction between the parent and the child. This high level of interaction between the parent and the child was required to push the child into activity. At the preschool age a high level of activity was accompanied by non-conformity and rebelliousness, for the child had not learned the difference between anti-social and social forms of activity. At present, it appears that spontaneity, even if it involves rebelliousness, is a sign of good preschool adjustment. Baldwin stated whether this belief is true, true in some cases, or untrue, must be discovered by more research.

Baldwin<sup>27</sup> in another study using children from The Fels population investigated the effect of home environment on nursery school education. It was found that democracy has a large number of important effects upon nursery school behavior. It encouraged free and active participation in nursery school activities, it made successful aggression and self assertion more likely, and it encouraged creative and constructive behavior. Baldwin added that it may not be correct to allay all of this to democracy, but intellectual stimulation and restrictiveness should be given credit along with democracy.

Summary:

It has been noted in this chapter that cooperative nursery school programs are an outgrowth of the traditional nursery school program, and that on the whole many parent educators approve of cooperative nursery schools, though it has been suggested that cooperative nursery schools must have able leaders and must evaluate their programs if they are to be successful.

Dr. Ojemann of The University of Iowa and his associates conducted a series of studies to determine the "needs of parents" in order to have a basis for planning a sound parent education program.

Radke, Gardner, and Murray worked with parents to discover parents attitudes and practices in guiding their children.

Rinehart compared two nursery school parent education programs to determine how a traditional nursery school program compared in educational value with the mother-supervised program.

Baldwin investigated the effects of democracy on the socialization

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<sup>27</sup> Baldwin, Alfred L., "The Effect of Home Environment on Nursery School Education", Child Development, 20: No. 2, 1949, p. 49-61

of the child. He also studied the effects of the home environment on nursery school behavior.

The above mentioned studies are only a small sample of the extensive research done on the subject of parent education. It is evident from the findings in the few investigation surveyed in this chapter that research in the field of parent education should be continued to help formulate a basis for guiding parents and children in our society.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODS AND MATERIALS

In this study a schedule was used as a tool to measure the parents' attitudes and practices. This chapter will deal with the formation of the four part schedule, the interviews with the parents, and the treatment of the data as a result of parents' interviews using the aforementioned schedule.

#### The Schedule:

before devising a schedule to be used in measuring mothers' and fathers' attitudes and practices, the researcher studied several interview forms compiled by others. The idea for selecting the four areas: independence, self assertion (at the beginning termed, aggressiveness), choice of play materials, and obedience was suggested by an interview form found in Jack's study, "A Device for the Measurement of Parent Attitudes and Practices".<sup>28</sup> The questions were prepared from general information found in child development and psychology books. The main sources were Landreth's "Educating the Young Child"; The Children's Bureau pamphlet, "Your Child From One to Six"; Rand, Vincent and Sweeney, "Growth and Development of the Young Child"; Spock's, "The Pocketbook of Baby and Child Care"; and Jersild's "Child Psychology". The nursery school experience of the researcher with parents and children was also utilized.

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<sup>28</sup> Jack, Lois M., "A Device for the Measurement of Parent Attitudes and Practices," Iowa University Studies in Child Welfare, Iowa City: 6: 1932, p. 137-149

The schedule was revised four times before it was considered as an instrument to be used in this study. The revisions of the schedule were mainly concerned with the organization of the questions in each area, and the elimination of questions which were equivocal in meaning, or were not relevant to the area in which they were placed. Seven qualified members of the Home Management - Child Development Department of Michigan State College cooperated in revising the schedule and in agreeing on the scored values of the answers to each question on the schedule.

Before the schedule was actually used in this study, it was tested on two fathers and two mothers of children who attended the Michigan State College Nursery School (a teacher-training school). These parents were told the purpose of the study, the areas covered in the schedule, and they were asked to give their criticisms and suggestions on the schedule. Their main suggestion was to eliminate a question in each area as they felt the schedule was too long. The final schedule contained 56 questions.

#### Scoring of the Schedule:

The schedule was set up to cover four areas. Each area contained 14 questions, and each question had three answers which were rated 1, 2, or 3. The most desirable answer was given a rating of 3, the intermediate answer 2, and the least desirable answer 1.

The following are the highest possible scores:

Each Parent on:

Individual question	3
Each area (14 x 3)	42



Entire Schedule (42 x 4)	168
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All Mothers or all Fathers:

Individual question (17 x 3)	51
Each area (17 x 42)	714
Entire schedule (17 x 168)	2,856

Selection of Parents for the Study:

Due to the criteria set up for the study,<sup>29</sup> it was impossible to choose parents by the sampling method since the number of fathers (who had participated in the nursery school program) was limited. (The director of the Spartan Nursery School furnished the investigator with the names of these fathers.) At the time of the study 17 fathers were available and were willing to be interviewed by the investigator. (The director furnished from the Spartan Nursery School files a list of mothers who had participated in the nursery school program and were willing to be a part of the study.)

There were 17 mothers and 17 fathers in the study. (It was necessary to use mothers and fathers from different families in order to have 17 fathers who had participated in the nursery school program. This also seemed advisable in that mothers and fathers from different families would represent 34 families who had or had had children in the Spartan Nursery School.)

The Arrangement of the Interviews:

The investigator contacted each mother and father by telephone . . .

<sup>29</sup> See page 5, Chapter I.



and made an interview appointment. The appointments were made at the convenience of the parents.

When the investigator telephoned for interview appointments, she explained to the mothers and the fathers the type of study she was doing, and asked their cooperation in answering the questions on the schedule. At this time it was suggested the children in the home not be present during the interview because of the nature of the questions in the schedule. The parents were very cooperative about carrying out this suggestion. Most of the interviews took place in the homes, but to insure privacy, a few of the interviews were held outside the homes.

#### The Interviews:

The investigator visited with each parent for five or ten minutes before the interview began in order to establish rapport with the parent. The usual topics were the weather, activities on campus, or the housing area. When the interview began, each father and mother was requested to comment on changes in their attitudes or practices in guiding their children due to their experience in the Spartan Nursery School. The interviewer did not suggest any changes in attitudes or practices, nor did she try to ferret out any specific changes; however, she did remind each parent several times through out the interview that she would appreciate any comments concerning their change in attitudes or practices in guiding their children due to their nursery school experience. Although the interviewer did not ask the parent to give specific knowledge he had gained at the nursery school, it was given.

The interviewer advised each parent to ask to have any question that

he did not understand clarified. She explained to each parent that in questions containing answers of consistently, frequently, and very seldom; consistently meant the regular practice of the parent, frequently meant the practice was used quite often, and very seldom meant the practice was rarely used.

The interviewer did not discuss the items with the parents, but she routinely did elaborate on the questions to clarify their meanings to the parents.

1351 The schedule was divided into topics or areas marked Part A, B, C, and D. The parents were allowed to look at the questions and answers; but they were not told the general topic covered in each area in the schedule. The interviewer read the questions to the parents and marked their choice of answer, and wrote down their comments.

The first interview took place on June 22, 1949 and the last interview took place on July 12, 1949. The 17 interviews of the mothers were accomplished in 19 hours. The average time for the interviews of the mothers was one hour and 10 minutes. The 17 interviews of the fathers were accomplished in 21 hours. The average time for the interviews was approximately one hour and 15 minutes.

The investigator felt the parents were interested in the study. She felt the parents were as objective as possible, and they answered according to their own attitudes and practices even if they were aware their choice of answer might not be the most acceptable of the three answers from the standpoint of child development.

### Treatment of the Data:

When the answers to each question on the schedule had been interpreted and given a numerical value, the scores for the mothers and fathers were separated. The answers to the questions in each area were tabulated for the mothers and for the fathers. The following scores were found for the mothers and for the fathers:

The total score for each area.

The total score for the entire schedule.

The mean score for each area.

The mean score for the entire schedule.

The Chi-square test<sup>30</sup> was used to test the differences between the scores of the mothers and fathers on the individual questions on the schedule and on the total scores for the mothers and fathers on each area and the entire schedule. The Chi-square test was also used to test the parents scores when grouped into thirds on each area and the entire schedule.

The "t" test<sup>31</sup> was used to test the difference between the mean scores of the mothers and fathers on each area and the entire schedule.

The coefficient correlation was found for each area and for the entire schedule.

The comments on changes of attitudes and practices of the mothers and fathers were recorded and analyzed. The comments of the mothers and

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix B for Chi-square formula.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix B for "t" test formula.

fathers were recorded for each question on the schedule. The results and comments of the fathers and mothers were compared and contrasted for each area and the entire schedule.

Summary:

A schedule containing 56 questions was prepared to be used in this study. There were 14 questions covering each of four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion and obedience. Each question had three answers, and each answer was given a numerical value of 1, 2, or 3. The highest number, 3 was given to the most desirable answer.

The scored schedule was approved by seven qualified members of the Home Management - Child Development Department of Michigan State College. The schedule was tested on two fathers and two mothers who had children in the Michigan State College Campus Nursery School.

The investigator had schedule-interviews with 17 fathers and 17 mothers who had participated in the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School.

The results of the interviews were tabulated for the fathers and for the mothers. The data were treated statistically. The comments of the mothers and fathers were recorded and analyzed as to their conscious changes in knowledges, attitudes and practices in rearing their children since the parents had participated in the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School. The results of the fathers and mothers were compared and contrasted for each area and the whole schedule.

## CHAPTER IV

## FINDINGS

The 17 mothers and fathers who participated in this study had all been participants in the Spartan Nursery School. This chapter will give information about the type of participation of the mothers and fathers in the nursery school program and the ages of their children who attended or had attended the Spartan Nursery School as well as the findings covering the areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion, obedience, and the total schedule. The conscious changes in mothers' and fathers' attitudes and practices as a result of their experience in the Spartan Nursery School will also be given.

Mothers' and Fathers' Participation in the Nursery School:

As shown in Table II, all of the mothers and 11 of the fathers participated as teachers in the nursery school. Each mother served as a teacher a greater number of times than each father did. Ten fathers worked on equipment or the physical plant. Two fathers worked at special activities with the children at play; the second father worked with some of the children as a speech correctionist. As a group the mothers and fathers were associated closely enough with the Spartan Nursery School to obtain information concerning child development if they were interested.

Table III gives the number of nursery school girls and boys of the mothers and fathers in this study. Table IV gives the age range and the average ages of the children.

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' PARTICIPATION IN  
THE SPARTAN NURSERY SCHOOL

Specific Activity	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)
Observation	0	2
Teaching	17	11
Working on Equipment or physical plant	5	10
Special activities with children	0	2
Office holders in study groups	3	0
Custodian	0	1



TABLE III

THE NUMBER OF NURSERY SCHOOL GIRLS AND BOYS OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS

Children	Mothers (17)	Fathers(17)	Total
Girls	5	14	19
Boys	13	6	19

TABLE IV

THE AGE RANGE AND AVERAGE AGE OF THE PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN MONTHS

Parents	Age Range (months)	Averages (months)
Mothers	32 - 57	46
Fathers	26 - 70*	45

\* Includes a few children who had attended the Spartan Nursery School, but at the time of this study were Kindergarten age.

The Schedule:

Part A, Independence Area: In Part A, the independence area, from a possible score of 714<sup>32</sup>, the mothers scored 560 and the fathers scored 577. The fathers surpassed the mothers by 17 points. As shown in Table V, in this area the fathers gave the most desirable answer 19 more times than the mothers (127 to 108). The mothers gave the intermediate answer 21 more times than the fathers (106 to 85). The mothers and fathers gave the least desirable answer approximately the same number of times.

The scores on each question were tested by the Chi-square test to see if there was a significant difference between the mothers' and fathers' scores. Only two questions showed a significant difference, both of these were in favor of the fathers (Table V).

The Chi-square test showed a significant difference in favor of the fathers between the scores on question 3, "Do you encourage your child to settle a dispute with a neighbor child (his, her) own age?" the interviewer told each mother and each father at the time of the interview that this question was to be interpreted that no element of danger was involved in the conflict. The most desirable answer was "Consistently". The fathers chose the most desirable answer nearly twice as often as the mothers did. In the few comments made by the mothers and fathers on this question, they implied they were working toward allowing the child to settle his own conflicts in situations that were not dangerous; however, the majority of mothers and fathers made no comment on this question.

The Chi-square test also showed a significant difference in favor of the fathers on the scores in question 9, "Do you expect you child to

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<sup>32</sup> See page 39, Chapter III.

TABLE V  
COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' CHOICE OF ANSWERS  
TO THE QUESTIONS IN PART A (INDEPENDENCE AREA)

Question	Mothers (17)			Fathers(17)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	1	6	10	2	7	8
2	2	12	3	2	13	2
3	0	10	7	1	3	13
4	6	5	6	9	2	6
5	2	5	10	1	7	9
6	1	5	11	0	4	13
7	0	2	15	2	2	13
8	3	10	4	4	5	8
9	5	12	0	1	12	4
10	2	8	7	2	8	7
11	1	15	1	1	12	4
12	0	2	15	0	1	16
13	0	8	9	1	5	11
14	1	6	10	0	4	13
Total	24	106	108	26	85	127

undress (himself, herself) (indoor clothes)?" the most desirable answer was "Completely", and it was chosen by four fathers. One father who chose "Completely" mentioned that the child could not be expected to unbutton buttons on the back of her dress. The same number of mothers and fathers chose the moderately desirable answer, "Partially". Four more mothers than fathers chose the least desirable answer, "To some extent".

In questions 7 and 12, both the mothers and fathers obtained high scores. In question 7, "Do you expect your child to go to the toilet alone in the daytime?" 15 mothers and 13 fathers chose the most desirable answer, "Consistently". On the whole the parents felt the child could go to the toilet alone in the daytime, but a few mothers and fathers made the following comments:

"The child needs help with adjusting his clothing."

"The child waits too long at times before he comes in to go to the toilet."

It was interesting to note that one father commented that his answer would have to be "Very seldom", and it was his fault, for he had not repaired the child's training toilet seat. His child needed help to be placed on the toilet though she decided when she had to go to the toilet. In question 12, "Do you praise your child when (he, she) has done a job well?" 16 of the fathers and 15 of the mothers chose the most desirable answer "Consistently".

There was no question in this area that brought a generally low response from both the mothers and the fathers, but in question 4, "Do you expect your child when reminded to start getting ready for bed by (himself, herself)?" over half of the fathers chose the least desirable answer, "Very seldom".

In the individual scores in the Independence area, the mothers had a range of 28-40 with three mothers scoring above 35. The fathers had a range of 28-38 with eight fathers scoring above 35. Although the Chi-square test showed there was no significant difference between the scores of the parents grouped into thirds (Table VI), there were nearly half of the fathers in the upper third in comparison to approximately one-sixth of the mothers. Table VII gives the mothers' and the fathers' mean scores. The "t" test was used to test the difference between the mean score of the mothers (2.35) and the mean score of the fathers (2.42). The difference was not significant.

The coefficient correlation was highly significant (.833) in this area. This showed a definite relationship between the thinking of these mothers and fathers in guiding their children in developing independence.

Part B, Choice of Play Materials Area: In Part B, the choice of play materials area, from a possible score of 714<sup>33</sup>, the mothers scored 590 and the fathers scored 535. The mothers surpassed the fathers by 55 points. As shown in Table VIII, in this area the mothers gave the most desirable answer 40 more times than the fathers (150 - 110). The fathers gave the intermediated answer 25 more times than the mothers (77 to 52). The fathers gave the least desirable answer 15 more times than the mothers (51 to 32).

The scores on each question were tested by the Chi-square test to see if there was a significant difference between the mothers' and fathers' scores only three questions showed a significant difference, these were in favor of the mothers (Table VIII).

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<sup>33</sup> See page 39, Chapter III.

TABLE VI  
RANGE OF SCORES ON PART A, INDEPENDENCE AREA  
FOR 17 MOTHERS AND 17 FATHERS

Range of Scores	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)
30 and below	4	4
31 - 35	10	5
36 - 40	3	8

TABLE VII

MEAN SCORES FOR MOTHERS AND FATHERS ON PART A, INDEPENDENCE AREA

Question	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)	Differences	In Favor of Mothers or Fathers
1	2.53	2.35	0.18	Mothers
2	2.06	2.00	0.06	Mothers
3	2.41	2.71	0.30	Fathers
4	2.00	1.82	0.18	Mothers
5	2.47	2.47	0.00	-----
6	2.59	2.76	0.17	Fathers
7	2.88	2.65	0.23	Mothers
8	2.06	2.24	0.18	Fathers
9	1.71	2.18	0.47	Fathers
10	2.29	2.29	0.00	-----
11	2.00	2.18	0.18	Fathers
12	2.88	2.94	0.06	Fathers
13	2.53	2.59	0.06	Fathers
14	2.53	2.76	0.23	Fathers
Area as Whole	2.35	2.42	0.07	Fathers

TABLE VIII *C<sub>4</sub>*

COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' CHOICE OF ANSWERS  
TO THE QUESTIONS IN PART B (PLAY MATERIALS)

Question	Mothers (17)			Fathers (17)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	8	8	1	5	10	2
2	2	7	8	3	9	5
3	1	2	14	2	7	8
4	8	3	6	6	6	5
5	0	2	15	1	4	12
6	0	1	16	3	6	8
7	4	5	8	10	5	2
8	3	1	13	2	5	10
9	2	5	10	7	4	6
10	0	4	13	2	0	15
11	2	3	12	3	4	10
12	0	5	12	1	4	12
13	4	6	7	6	8	3
14	2	0	15	0	5	12
Total	36	52	150	51	77	110



The Chi-square test showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers between the scores on question 3, "If you were choosing an inexpensive gift for your child, which would you choose providing your child had none of these: (1) A book of paper dolls, and a pair of blunt scissors, (2) A coloring book, and a package of large crayons, (3) A package of colored paper, a jar of paste, and a pair of blunt scissors?" The most desirable answer was answer 3, six more mothers than fathers chose this answer. The following comments were made on this question:

Four mothers recognized that answer 1 would be too advanced for preschool children, and two of these mothers added that they learned at nursery school that coloring books were not constructive for the preschool age child.

One father said, "I do not believe in blunt or sharp scissors for a young child because the child can't distinguish between blunt and sharp scissors."

One father stated that answer 3 gave more variety, and he added that he found this out when he was at the nursery school.

A father chose answer 2 because he felt coloring books gave the child a chance to blend colors.

The Chi-square test showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers between the scores on question 6, "Supposing your child asked you to bring (her, him) a box of crayons, would you buy, (1) A box of pencil crayons, (2) A box of small round crayons, (3) A box of large round crayons?" The most desirable answer was 3. Eight more mothers than fathers chose the most desirable answer. The following comments were made on this question:

Two mothers stated that the nursery school taught that large crayons were better than small crayons, but that large crayons were not available in the stores.

Two mothers stated that small crayons were too easily broken.

Two fathers stated they chose pencil crayons (the least desirable answer) because other crayons were too easily broken.

The Chi-square test showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers between the scores on question 7, "If your child requested a punching bag for a gift, would you consider it, (1) an acceptable toy, (2) A fairly acceptable toy, (3) Not an acceptable toy?" The most desirable answer was answer 1. Here six more mothers than fathers chose the most desirable answer. The same number of mothers and fathers chose the moderately desirable answer, 2, and six more fathers than mothers chose the least desirable answer, 3. The following comments were made on this question:

Three mothers stated the child could use his energy on the punching bag.

Two mothers thought it could be used for the children to get rid of aggressive feelings.

One father commented that he got his child anything she showed an interest in.

One father said, "If she wants to learn to punch, its all right with me. It might come in good stead later."

One father and one mother felt it would not be an appropriate toy for a girl.

On four questions in this area, both the mothers and fathers obtained high scores. In question 5, "If you were buying a picture puzzle for your child, would you buy, (1) A cardboard jigsaw puzzle, (2) A wooden puzzle consisting of 16 pieces or less, (3) A wooden puzzle consisting of 16 to 25 pieces?" 15 mothers and 12 fathers chose answer 2 which was the most desirable answer. In question 8, "If you were buying your child a toy, and (he, she) would be satisfied with any of the following, which one would you choose, (1) A whistle on a cord, (2) A drum, (3) A gun?"

13 mothers and 10 fathers chose the most desirable answer, answer 2.

The following comments were made on this question:

Two mothers and one father stated, "Drums are too noisy."

One father stated that the drum would keep the neighbors' awake, but he would choose it.

One father and one mother stated that the children were interested in marching to a drum, and were interested in music.

Both mothers and fathers felt that children liked guns, but the majority of the parents would not choose a gun. Several parents stated they had to buy their children guns because other children in the neighborhood had them. One mother stated that the children in her neighborhood did not play with guns.

In question 10, "If your child requested a trapeze would you consider it, (1) An acceptable toy, (2) A fairly acceptable toy, (3) Not an acceptable toy?" 13 mothers and 15 fathers chose answer 1, the most desirable answer. The following comment was made on this question:

Six fathers and three mothers said they were enthusiastic about trapeze, but they felt the trapeze had to be used in a safe way.

In this area, both the mothers and fathers scored low on question 4, "If your child did not have any of the following toys which would you prefer to see (Him, Her) have, (1) An electric train, (2) A mechanical train, (3) A wooden push train?" the interviewer told each mother and father that they should disregard the difference in cost in choosing their desired answer. Eight mothers and six father chose answer 1 which was the least desirable answer. Six fathers and three mothers chose answer 2 which was considered moderately desirable. The same number of mothers and fathers chose answer 3, the most desirable answer. The following comments were made on this question:

Six mothers stated that the children would be thrilled with the electric train. One of these mothers felt the wooden push train

would be better for the child, but that the child would prefer to push the electric train.

One mother felt the child could be taught to care for the electric train as a special toy.

One mother stated that her youngster had had a plastic electric train, but he broke it. She still chose the electric train.

Two fathers felt the electric train would stimulate interest and imagination.

Two fathers stated they felt their choice was their own preference.

Two mothers felt their children would enjoy winding the mechanical toy.

Two fathers felt the wooden push train might be the better choice, but they chose the mechanical toy.

Three fathers and one mother stated the wooden push train was the best toy for the preschool age child.

In the individual score on this area, the mothers had a range of 27 - 40 with nine mothers scoring above 35. The fathers had a range of 24 - 39 with two fathers scoring above 35. The Chi-square test on the scores in Table II showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers. Table X gives the mothers' and fathers' mean scores according to the "t" test there was a significant difference in the mothers' (2.48) and fathers' (2.25) mean scores at the five percent level.

The coefficient correlation was highly significant (.709) in this area. As in Part A, it showed a definite relationship between the thinking of these mothers and fathers in the choice of play materials for preschool children.

Part C, Self Assertion Area: In Part C, the Self Assertion area, from a possible score of 714<sup>34</sup>, the mothers scored 600 and the fathers

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<sup>34</sup> See page 39, Chapter III.

TABLE IX

RANGE OF SCORES ON PART B, CHOICE OF PLAY MATERIALS  
FOR 17 MOTHERS AND 17 FATHERS

Range of Scores	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)
30 and below	1	4
31 - 35	7	11
36 - 40	9	2

TABLE X  
MEAN SCORES FOR MOTHERS AND FATHERS ON PART B,  
CHOICE OF PLAY MATERIALS

Question	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)	Differences	In Favor of Mothers or Fathers
1	1.59	1.82	0.23	Fathers
2	2.35	2.12	0.23	Mothers
3	2.76	2.35	0.41	Mothers
4	1.88	1.94	0.06	Fathers
5	2.88	2.65	0.23	Mothers
6	2.94	2.29	0.65	Mothers
7	2.24	1.53	0.71	Mothers
8	2.59	2.47	0.12	Mothers
9	2.47	1.94	0.53	Mothers
10	2.76	2.76	0.00	-----
11	2.59	2.41	0.18	Mothers
12	2.71	2.65	0.06	Mothers
13	2.18	1.82	0.36	Mothers
14	2.76	2.71	0.05	Mothers
Area as Whole	2.48	2.25	0.23	Mothers

scored 556. The mothers surpassed the father by 44 points. As shown in Table XI, in this area the mothers gave the most desirable answer 24 more times than the fathers (156 to 132). The mothers and fathers gave the intermediate answer approximately the same number of times (54 to 50). The fathers gave the least desirable answer 20 more times than the mothers (52 to 32).

The scores on each question were tested by the Chi-square test to see if there was a significant difference between the mothers and the fathers scores. Only two questions showed a significant difference, question 12 in favor of the fathers and question 14 in favor of the mothers. Questions 1 and 2 were nearly significant (Table XI).

The Chi-square test showed a significant difference in favor of the fathers between the scores in question 12, "Do you scold your child when (she, he) cries whenever (she, he) is in a conflict situation?" the most desirable answer was "Very seldom". Six more fathers than mothers chose the most desirable answer whereas six more mothers than fathers chose the moderately desirable answer, "Frequently". None of the mothers or fathers chose "Consistently", the least desirable answer. The following comment was made on this question:

The majority of mothers and fathers stated they tried to find the reason behind the conflict, and they talked with the child and helped him face his problem.

The Chi-square test showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers between the scores in question 14, "Do you expect your child to share all of (his, her) toys with others?" six more mothers than fathers chose "Very seldom", the most desirable answer. Three more fathers than

TABLE XI

COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' CHOICE OF ANSWERS  
TO THE QUESTIONS IN PART C (SELF ASSERTION)

Question	Mothers (17)			Fathers (17)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	7	3	7	9	6	2
2	2	7	8	4	10	3
3	0	3	14	3	4	10
4	3	2	12	5	3	9
5	5	7	5	4	8	5
6	9	1	7	11	2	4
7	0	4	13	3	5	9
8	0	1	16	0	1	16
9	0	5	12	0	2	15
10	0	1	16	0	2	15
11	1	4	12	0	6	11
12	0	7	10	0	1	16
13	3	5	9	8	1	8
14	2	0	15	5	3	9
Total	32	50	156	52	54	132



mothers chose the moderately desirable answer, "Frequently" as well as the least desirable answer, "Consistently". The following comments were made on this question:

The majority of fathers and mothers who chose the most desirable answer commented that the child had a right to feel a sense of ownership, and if the child had some special toy, he should be allowed to share it or not as he chose.

One father who chose the least desirable answer felt that no toy was so precious that it could not be shared with others.

On three questions in the self assertion area, both the mothers and the fathers obtained high scores. In question 8, "In your child's presence, do you compare (his, her) aggressive behavior with that of other children (his, her) age?" 16 mothers and fathers chose the most desirable answer, "Very seldom". In question 9, "Do you encourage your child to invite other children to share (his, her) toys?" the majority of mothers and fathers selected "Consistently", the most desirable answer. In question 10, "When you have guests, do you expect your child to be seen and not heard?" the majority of mothers and fathers chose "Very seldom", the most desirable answer.

The mothers and fathers had generally low scores on question 6, "Do you stress to your child the care of other peoples' property?" 11 fathers and nine mothers chose "Constantly" which was considered the least desirable answer in that constantly implies the parents were tending to nag the children. Approximately the same number of mothers and fathers chose "Very seldom" which was considered the moderately desirable answer as one would be over emphasizing self assertion if one did not teach property rights. Three more mothers than fathers chose "Frequently" which was

considered the most desirable answer in that property rights were being stressed, but the child was allowed to assert himself to the extent that is possible without taking advantage of others. The following comments were made on this question:

A few fathers and mothers felt that children learned property rights through experience.

A few fathers and mothers stated their children did not come into contact with other peoples' property too often.

A few fathers and mothers stated that children had to be taught to respect flowers, lawns, gardens, and other peoples' property. They felt it should be stressed constantly.

In the individual scores on this area, the mothers had a range of 31 - 41 with eight mothers scoring above 35. The fathers had a range of 27 - 40 with four fathers scoring above 35. Although the Chi-square test did not reveal a significant difference between the scores of the parents grouped into thirds (Table XII), it did show a significant difference in favor of the mothers on the total scores in Table XI. Table XIII gives the mothers' (2.52) and fathers' (2.34) mean scores. According to the "t" test there was not a significant difference between the mothers' and fathers' mean scores, however, the "t" test was 2.15 if it had been 2.16 the differences would have been significant at the 5 percent level. It should be mentioned that nearly half of the mothers in comparison to approximately one-fourth of the fathers were in the upper third of Table XIII.

The coefficient correlation was highly significant (.729) in this area. As in the preceding areas, this correlation again showed a definite relationship between the thinking of these mothers and fathers this time in guiding their children in self assertion.

TABLE XII  
RANGE OF SCORES ON PART C, SELF ASSERTION  
FOR 17 MOTHERS AND 17 FATHERS

Range of Scores	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)
30 and below	0	4
31 - 35	9	9
36 - 40	8	4

TABLE XIII  
 MEAN SCORES FOR MOTHERS AND FATHERS ON PART C,  
 SELF ASSERTION

Question	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)	Differences	In Favor of Mothers or Fathers
1	2.00	1.59	0.41	Mothers
2	2.35	1.94	0.41	Mothers
3	2.82	2.41	0.41	Mothers
4	2.53	2.24	0.29	Mothers
5	2.00	2.06	0.06	Fathers
6	2.47	1.59	0.88	Mothers
7	2.76	2.35	0.41	Mothers
8	2.94	2.94	0.00	-----
9	2.71	2.88	0.17	Fathers
10	2.94	2.88	0.06	Mothers
11	2.65	2.65	0.00	-----
12	2.59	2.94	0.35	Fathers
13	2.35	2.00	0.35	Mothers
14	2.76	2.24	0.52	Mothers
Area as Whole	2.52	2.34	0.18	Mothers

Part D, the Obedience Area: In Part D, the obedience area, from a possible score of 714<sup>35</sup>, the mothers scored 637 and the fathers scored 635. As shown in Table XIV, in this area the mothers and fathers gave the most desirable answer approximately the same number of times (172 to 172). The mothers and fathers gave the intermediate score the same number of times (55 to 55). The mothers and fathers gave the least desirable answer approximately the same number of times (12 to 11).

The scores on each question were tested by the Chi-square test to see if there was a significant difference between the mothers' and the fathers' scores only one question showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers (Table XIV). In question 1, "Do you offer your child rewards for good behavior?" seven more mothers than fathers chose "Very seldom", the most desirable answer. Seven more fathers than mothers chose "Frequently", the moderately desirable answer. The same number of mothers and fathers chose "Consistently", the least desirable answer. The following comments were made on this question.

The majority of mothers and fathers who chose the most desirable answer stated they did not offer rewards as bribes. One of these mothers said that at one time she used bribes, but she found through experience that youngsters become too demanding when bribed.

One father stated that he encouraged his child to be good, so that family plans could be carried out, but he did not bribe his youngster.

Both the mothers and fathers scored high scores on six questions in the obedience area. In question 3, "Do you explain to your child why (he, she) is being punished?" 16 mothers and fathers chose the most desirable answer, "Consistently". In question 4, "Do you ever tell your child you do not love (him, her) when (he, she) is bad?" all of the mothers and

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<sup>35</sup> See page 39, Chapter III.

fathers answered "Very seldom", the most desirable answer. In fact they emphasized that they never used this practice. In question 6, "When you feel your child must be punished do you, (1) Punish immediately, (2) Wait until the (father, mother) comes, so (he, she) can punish the child, (3) Let the incident pass, and deal with it sometime later in the day?" all of the mothers and fathers chose the most desirable answer, "Punish immediately". In question 7, "Do you punish your child when (he, she) has had a toilet accident?" 17 fathers and 14 mothers chose "Very seldom", the most desirable answer. The following comments were made on this question:

The majority of mothers and fathers stated they never punished their children for toilet accidents.

Several fathers felt that the nursery school had helped them on this point.

In question 8, "To get obedience from your child, do you ask your child if (he, she) loves you?" 16 mothers and fathers chose "Very seldom", the most desirable answer.

The one question that mothers and fathers scored lower on than other questions in the area was question 10, "Do you expect your child to obey you immediately?" three more fathers than mothers chose "Very seldom", the most desirable answer. Four more mothers than fathers chose "Frequently", the moderately desirable answer. Approximately the same number of mothers and fathers chose "Consistently", the least desirable answer.

In the individual scores on the area, the mothers had a range of 33 - 41 with 14 mothers scoring over 35. The fathers had a range of 34 - 41 with 14 fathers scoring over 35. The Chi-square test did not show a significant difference when applied to the scores in Table XV. Table XVI

TABLE XIV

COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' CHOICE OF ANSWERS  
TO THE QUESTIONS IN PART D (OBEDIENCE)

Question	Mothers (17)			Fathers (17)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	2	4	11	2	11	4
2	0	5	12	1	3	13
3	0	1	16	1	0	16
4	0	0	17	0	0	17
5	2	5	10	1	10	6
6	0	0	17	0	0	17
7	2	1	14	0	0	17
8	0	1	16	0	1	16
9	0	6	11	0	5	12
10	4	9	4	5	5	7
11	0	6	11	0	4	13
12	0	0	17	0	3	14
13	1	9	7	2	10	5
14	0	8	9	0	3	14
Total	11	55	172	12	55	171

TABLE XV  
RANGE OF SCORES ON PART D, OBEDIENCE FOR  
17 MOTHERS AND 17 FATHERS

Range of Scores	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)
30 and below	0	0
31 - 35	3	3
36 - 40	14	14



TABLE XVI

MEAN SCORES FOR MOTHERS AND FATHERS ON  
PART D, OBEDIENCE AREA

Question	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)	Differences	In favor of Mothers or Fathers
1	2.53	2.12	0.41	Mothers
2	2.71	2.71	0.00	-----
3	2.94	2.88	0.06	Mothers
4	3.00	3.00	0.00	-----
5	2.47	2.29	0.18	Mothers
6	3.00	3.00	0.00	-----
7	2.71	3.00	0.29	Fathers
8	2.94	2.94	0.00	-----
9	2.65	2.71	0.06	Fathers
10	2.00	2.12	0.12	Fathers
11	2.65	2.76	0.11	Fathers
12	3.00	2.82	0.18	Mothers
13	2.35	2.18	0.17	Mothers
14	2.53	2.82	0.29	Fathers
Area as Whole	2.68	2.67	0.01	Mothers

gives the mothers' and fathers' mean scores. The "t" test was used to test the difference between the mean score of the mothers' (2.68) and the mean score of the fathers' (2.67). There was no significant difference between the mean scores.

The coefficient correlation was highly significant (.833) in this area. As in the preceding areas, the correlation showed a definite relationship between the thinking of these mothers and fathers in guiding their children in accepting obedience.

The Total Schedule: In the total schedule, from a possible score of 2856<sup>36</sup>, the mothers obtained a score of 2387, and the fathers obtained a score of 2303. The mothers surpassed the fathers by 84 points. As mentioned before, in the independence area, the mothers scored 560 and the fathers scored 577. In the choice of play materials area the mothers scored 590 and the fathers scored 535. In the self assertion area, the mothers scored 600 and the fathers scored 556. In the obedience area, the mothers scored 637 and the fathers scored 635 (See Figure 1).

The Chi-square test revealed a significant difference in favor of the mothers in the total scores in two areas: choice of play materials and self assertion. There was no significant difference in the total scores in the other two areas: independence and obedience. The Chi-square test revealed a significant difference in favor of the mothers in the total scores on the schedule given in Table XVII. In the total scores of the parents grouped into thirds for the entire schedule given in Table XVIII, the Chi-square test did not however reveal a significant difference.

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<sup>36</sup> See page 39, Chapter III.

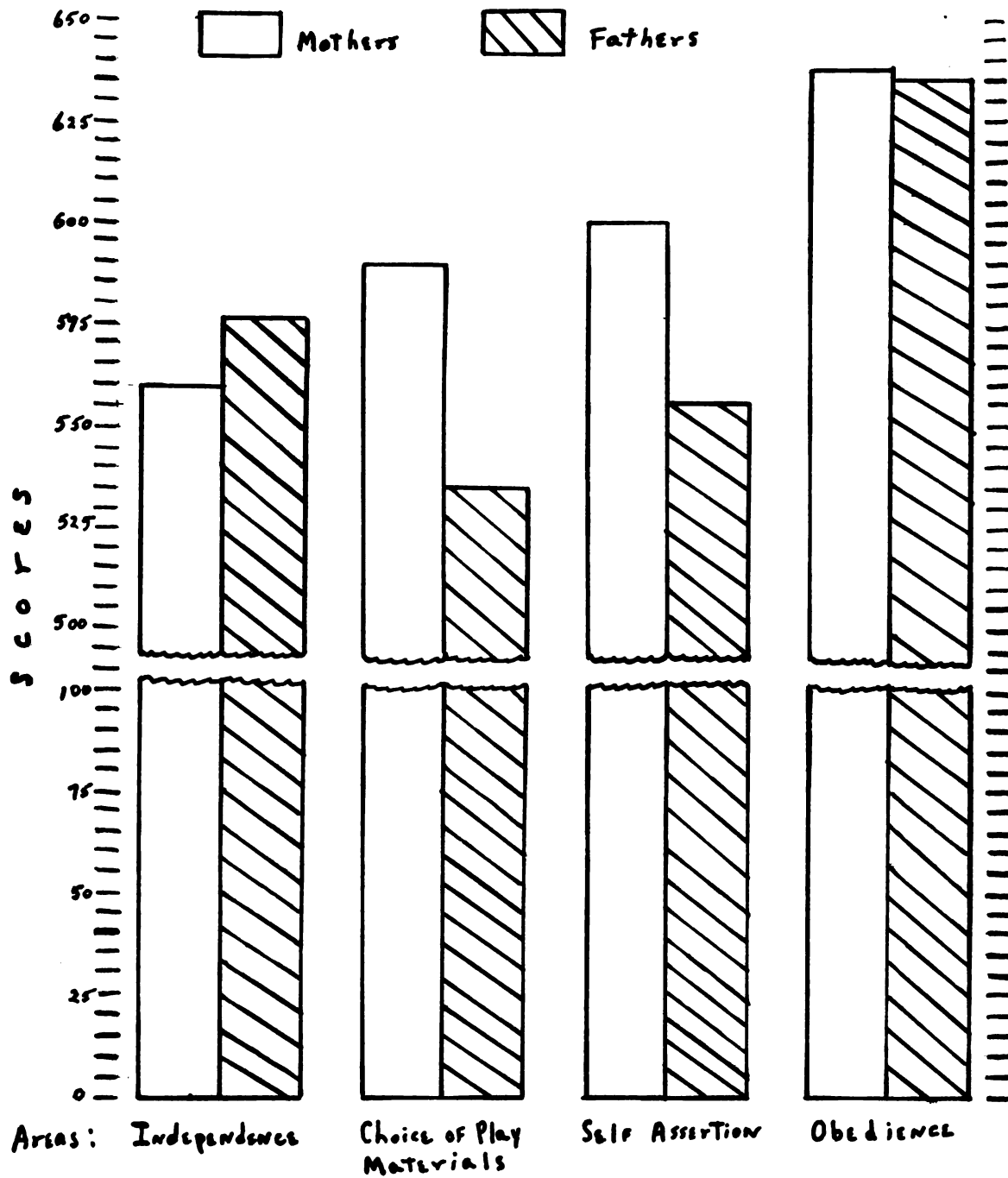


Figure 1 Mothers' and Fathers' scores on the Independence Choice of Play Materials, Self Assertion and Obedience Areas.

TABLE XVII

COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' CHOICE OF  
ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ON THE FOUR PART SCHEDULE

Area	Mothers (17)			Fathers (17)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Independence	24	106	108	26	85	127
Choice of play materials	36	52	150	51	77	110
Self Assertion	32	50	156	52	54	132
Obedience	11	55	172	12	55	171
Total	103	263	586	141	271	540

TABLE XVIII

RANGE OF SCORES ON THE FOUR PART  
SCHEDULE FOR 17 MOTHERS AND 17 FATHERS

Range of Scores	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)
124 - 132	2	7
133 - 141	6	5
142 - 150	9	5

TABLE XIX  
 MEAN SCORES FOR MOTHERS AND FATHERS  
 ON THE FOUR PART SCHEDULE

Area	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)	Differences	In Favor of Mothers or Fathers
(A) Independence	2.35	2.42	0.07	Fathers
(B) Choice of play materials	2.48	2.25	0.23	Mothers
(C) Self Assertion	2.52	2.34	0.18	Mothers
(D) Obedience	2.68	2.67	0.01	Mothers
Schedule as whole	2.51	2.42	0.09	Mothers

In the individual scores on the total schedule, the mothers' scores ranged from 125 - 150 with 9 mothers scoring above 141. The fathers' scores ranged from 124 - 150 with 5 fathers scoring above 141. Table XIX gives the mean score of the mothers (2.51) and the mean score of the fathers (2.42). The "t" test revealed a significant difference in favor of the mothers between the mothers' and fathers' mean scores at the 5 percent level.

The coefficient correlation was highly significant (.726). This correlation showed a definite relationship between the thinking of these fathers and mothers in guiding their children in the four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion, and obedience.

Conscious Changes in Mothers' and Fathers' Practices Due to Their Experience in a Cooperative Nursery School:

The effects of the nursery school experience on the attitudes and practices of both the fathers and mothers were very similar. This is interesting for this information was not ferreted out through directed questions or through any specific questions. The parents were reminded throughout the interview to comment on any change of practice or attitude in guiding their children due to their association with the nursery school.

The most frequent change in mothers' and fathers' practices was in choosing more constructive play materials for preschool children (see Table XI). The second important change in practice was closely associated with the first change in providing their children with creative materials like those available at the nursery school.

There were a few changes mentioned by one mother or one father these changes were:



### One Mother:

Accepts the child's viewpoint; takes time to reason with the child.

Accepts the child as a growing individual; refrains from calling him, "baby".

Feels more confident in handling a small group of children.

Encourages child to accept nursery school teachers suggestions.

Appreciates child's growth in language development.

Uses "take turn" method at home.

Uses the facilities at the nursery school to keep informed on new equipment and ideas in child development.

### One Father:

Copes with child's toilet training problems in a more understanding and constructive way.

Gives more thought to child's needs after having experience in the nursery school.

The parents were conscious of learning and to some extent a changing of attitudes as a result of their experience in a cooperative nursery school the following comments were made on attitudes and learnings:

Deepened understanding of the importance of discussing childrens' problems with other parents and with the nursery school teachers.

four mothers  
one father

Knowledge that a child needs to play with other children his own age.

three fathers  
one mother

Knowledge of the value of nursery school experience for the young child as leading to more constructive play with children in the neighborhood.

one father  
one mother

Knowledge that a child often responds differently in a nursery school situation than he does at home.

one father  
one mother

Knowledge that the preschool age children were aware of racial differences.

one mother



Knowledge of the importance of seeing the type of equipment at the nursery school to understand what children can do when offered the opportunity through proper facilities. one father

Knowledge that participation in a nursery school gave one a greater appreciation of the value of a nursery school. one father

All of the mothers and 15 fathers cited specific learnings, or changes in attitudes and practices or both as a result of their experience in the nursery school. One father did not comment at all on changes, and one stated that he had not changed consciously as a result of his experience in the nursery school. However, he added that his experience in the nursery school was limited.

#### Summary:

In this chapter, the findings of the study were stated. The fathers obtained the higher scores on the independence area. The mothers surpassed the fathers in the scores on the obedience, self assertion, and choice of play materials areas though the difference between the scores on the obedience area was very slight. On the total schedule, the mothers surpassed the fathers by a total of 84 points. The results on each area, and the total schedule were given when tested by the Chi-square test, the "t" test and the coefficient correlation.

When tested by the Chi-square test the total scores showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers on the choice of play materials, and self assertion areas as well as the total schedule.

The "t" test showed a significant difference between the mean scores of the mothers and fathers in the choice of play materials area and the total schedule.

The coefficient correlation was highly significant on each area and

TABLE XX

CONSCIOUS CHANGES IN MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' PRACTICES DUE TO  
THEIR EXPERIENCE IN A COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

Conscious Changes in Parents' Practices	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)	Total
<b>Ten or more:</b>			
Choose more constructive play materials for preschool children.	13	7	20
Provide preschool children with creative materials (flour and salt dough, colored paper, paste, scissors, etc.) like those available at the nursery school.	7	3	10
<b>Five to nine:</b>			
Observe teachers at work in the nursery school to learn their techniques in handling children.	5	2	7
Observe children at nursery school to learn more about own child.	5	1	6
Allow child more independence due to knowledge gained at nursery school about the preschool child's ability to do things for himself.	3	4	7
<b>Two to four:</b>			
Use methods learned at nursery school as much as possible at home.	3	1	4
Use spanking less; give more thought to the reason behind punishment.	3	1	4
Encourages child to talk about and carry out new interests found at nursery school. This creates a better father-child relationship.	---	4	4
Use supply catalogues (for educational toys) available at the nursery school.	2	1	3

TABLE XX (Continued)

Conscious Changes in Parents' Practices	Mothers (17)	Fathers (17)	Total
Use knowledge gained in nursery school for choosing suitable books for preschool children.	2	1	3
Allows child to be more assertive	1	1	2
Encourages child to carry out a routine at home as he does by himself at nursery school.	1	1	2
Refrains from talking about the child in his presence as this is emphasized at nursery school.	1	1	2
Reads child development books available at the nursery school to gain a better understanding of the young child.	1	1	2

the total schedule.

## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

"Good parent - child relationship is necessary factor in the healthy development of the child."<sup>37</sup> It is extremely important that both parents work together in guiding the growth and development of children. It has been stated by some of our modern writers that fathers are taking a more realistic role in the rearing of children. This study has compared mothers' and fathers' practices in guiding their children in regard to four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion and obedience. In this chapter, the most important findings including changes of attitudes and practices, will be emphasized and discussed. In addition, some generalizations made by the researcher on questions not heretofore mentioned will be included. The major conclusions of the study will be stated.

Before beginning the discussion on the individual areas and the entire schedule, the researcher would like to make a general statement in regard to the highly significant coefficient correlation found in each area: independence (.833), choice of play materials (.709), self assertion (.729), obedience (.833), and the entire schedule (.726). As mentioned in Chapter IV (Findings), the highly significant correlation showed a definite relationship in the thinking of these mothers and fathers in regard to guiding their children in the four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion and obedience. This finding was a particularly encouraging one, for one of the greatest factors affecting children is the emotional climate of the home. If fathers and mothers

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<sup>37</sup> Shick, Bela and William Rosenson, The Care of Your Child, New York, Dell Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1949, 288pp., p. 132

do think alike in guiding children, many of the conflicts that a child might otherwise face would be resolved. A child in such a home would be more secure in his daily living. <sup>721</sup> As encouraging as this finding may be, it is necessary to mention that the highly significant coefficient correlation could be due to several reasons, namely:

The small size of the sample of mothers and fathers.

The factor of judging mothers' and fathers' practices on a three-point scale, for if this scale had been enlarged, it might have shown more variation in the mothers' and fathers' scores.

The possibility that a definite relationship exists in the thinking of mothers and fathers in general with regard to guidance of their children in four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion and obedience.

The factor that the definite relationship in the thinking of these mothers and fathers might have been due to their participation in a cooperative nursery school.

It is the writer's opinion that the last factor mentioned might have had a strong influence on the results of this study. However, in Ackerly's study (See Chapter II) it was found that the ability of mothers and fathers to apply generalizations pertaining to child development was about equal. Her findings also showed a slight indication that mothers are more capable of applying generalizations related to child development than are fathers. ]

#### Discussion of the Independence Area:

The independence area was mainly concerned with the expectations the mother or father had for (her, his) child to use his abilities at his age level. The amount of freedom allowed the child, and the encouragement given to the child to express this freedom was emphasized in this

area. [As Kawin comments<sup>38</sup>, "The goal of the parent should be emancipation of his child from the helpless dependency of infancy into a free, self - reliant adulthood. ( . . . ) This, then, is an important goal - the ultimate emancipation of the child, his preparation for freedom through foundations laid during the preschool years."

In regard to guiding children in independence, the fathers scored 577, and the mothers scored 560. The fathers surpassed the mothers by 17 points. The total score did not show a significant difference when tested by the Chi-square test. There was, however, a significant difference in favor of the fathers on two questions when tested by the Chi-square test as emphasized below.

In this area, six of the 14 questions stressed routines that allowed the children to express their independence. The one question on routines that revealed a significant difference in favor of the fathers was question 9. This question had to do with the child undressing himself (indoor clothes). Four fathers expected their children to undress themselves "Completely" whereas none of the mothers expected this feat. Shick and Rosenson<sup>39</sup> state, "The child should begin to cultivate the habit of dressing and undressing himself in an orderly fashion as early as the age of two. His clothes should be made simple enough to make this possible. They should be buttoned or fastened in the front and arranged so that they can be put on and taken off very easily. A definite system in dressing

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<sup>38</sup> Kawin, Ethel, The Wise Choice of Toys, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1938, 154pp., p. 149

<sup>39</sup> Shick, Bela and William Rosenson, The Care of Your Child, New York Dell Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1949, 288 pp., p. 88

should be followed each time so that before long the procedure becomes entirely automatic." With this statement in mind, the four fathers who chose "Completely" were not setting too high levels for their children, since the average age of the children in this study was 45 and 46 months. Fathers do not as a rule have as close contact with the routine daily problems of the child. It might be feasible that when fathers do supervise the routine tasks of children they are inclined to allow the child to show what he can do for himself. The mothers regularly supervising the routine tasks might be apt to hasten the child by helping him.

In question 3, there was a significant difference in favor of the fathers. This question had to do with the encouragement the child received in settling disputes for himself (See Chapter IV). Jersild suggests, "Children must practice and have experience in order to work out their techniques of dealing with one another." This suggestion is a necessary one in teaching children social relations, but of course the adult must offer understanding guidance in involved conflicts. The fathers seemed more ready than the mothers to encourage the child to settle his own conflicts in situations where there was no danger.

In the mothers' and fathers' conscious changes in practices due to their nursery school experience, three mothers and four fathers stated they allowed their children more independence due to knowledge gained at nursery school concerning the child's ability to do things for himself.

As stated above the coefficient correlation was highly significant in this area (.833). This coefficient correlation showed a definite relationship in the thinking of these mothers and fathers in regard to guiding their children in independence. It seemed in practice that the fathers



tended to allow the children more opportunity to express their independence than the mothers did, but this was not proven statistically.

#### Discussion of the Choice of Play Materials:

The questions on this area attempted to find out if the parents utilized and were cognizant of the value of the equipment available in a nursery school. Kawin states<sup>40</sup>, "Toys are no longer regarded as merely things to amuse children. Play is an essential of childhood, and toys are tools of play. Modern education recognizes that wisely chosen play materials perform specific functions in a child's development."

In the findings, the mothers scored 590 and the fathers scored 535. The mothers' total scores surpassed the fathers' total scores in this area by 55 points. The differences in total scores were significant in favor of the mothers when tested by the Chi-square test. According to the "t" test, a significant difference was found between the mothers' (2.48) and the fathers' (2.25) mean scores at the 5 percent level in favor of the mothers. The mothers appeared to have a better understanding of the type of play materials suitable for the preschool age child.

It has been mentioned in Chapter IV that the mothers served as teachers in the nursery school a greater number of times than did the fathers. This factor might have given the mothers more opportunity to watch the children play with the materials available at nursery school. In this area, there was a significant difference in the scores of three questions in favor of the mothers. Two of these questions (3 and 6) were

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<sup>40</sup> Kawin, Ethel, The Wise Choice of Toys, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1938, 154pp., p. 1

based on materials used frequently in a nursery school situation. Question 7 had to do with choosing a punching bag as an acceptable toy for the preschool child. This toy is not usually used in a nursery school, but toys that serve the same type of purpose are used. Several of the mothers who chose the punching bag as an acceptable toy brought out the fact that it could be used by the child to expend his energy and to relieve his aggressive feelings. These comments manifested understanding as to why such a toy might be acceptable for a young child especially if he requested it.

Bettelheim states<sup>41</sup>, "We try to wean the child away from "canned" mechanical stimulation and try to replace it by the experience of activities that lead to human contact and the conviction that the child can do things for himself." This idea was put into practice in several of the questions asked in this area. It appears that both mothers and fathers have difficulty accepting this idea for in question 4 (Chapter IV), five fathers and six mothers chose the wooden push train whereas six fathers and three mothers chose the mechanical train and eight mothers and six fathers chose the electric train. The simple toy that enables the child to develop his motor skills and practice his imagination often does not appeal to the parents. There are several suppositions to be expressed on this point. One may be the adult chooses toys that appeal to him as an adult. Another may be the effect of social pressure in that if a child has only simple toys to play with, it may look as though his family cannot

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<sup>41</sup> Bettelheim, Bruno, Love Is Not Enough, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1950, 386 pp., p. 31

afford, or will not buy him more glamorous toys. A third supposition is that the parents may not understand the child's stage of development, especially as to his motor skills. 

This same trend of choosing the fragile and elaborate toy over the durable and simple toy was shown to some extent in question 9, "Which of the following do you think would be the most appropriate gift for your child, (1) Several small .15¢ cars, (2) A medium size wooden tractor, (3) A medium size mechanical car?" seven fathers and two mothers chose the mechanical car. In question 11, "Which of the following would you select for your child, providing (he, she) did not have any of the following, (1) A mechanical racing boat, (2) A simple wooden tug boat, (3) A large attractive sailboat that would float?" This trend toward the fragile toy was not as noticeable. It should be mentioned that one father and two mothers chose the tugboat because of their childrens' interest in a book named, "Little Toot, The Tugboat".

The majority of mothers and fathers seemed to realize that a toy such as a doll is an acceptable toy for both girls and boys. However, there was a tendency in question 14, "If you were going to buy a boy a gift, and he chose a doll would you consider it, (1) Appropriate, (2) Fairly appropriate, (3) Not appropriate?", for fathers to question the appropriateness of the doll for boys. Five fathers in comparison to two mothers did not choose answer 1 even though the doll was the child's choice of a gift.

[ In the mothers' and fathers' conscious changes in practice due to their nursery school experience, the most frequent change (Table XX) mentioned by both the mothers and fathers was choosing more constructive

play materials for the preschool child. The second important change (Table XX) was closely related to the first in that the parents provided for their children creative materials like those used at the nursery school.]

From the preceding discussion, it would seem that both mothers and fathers realize the value of suitable play materials for the young child, and the parents are trying to learn more about the type of toys that would be stimulating to the interest of the preschool child.

As mentioned before, the coefficient correlation was highly significant (.709) in this area. This correlation showed a definite relationship in the thinking of these mothers and fathers in guiding their children in the choice of play materials. However, the mothers had a better understanding of the type of play materials suitable for the young child.

#### Discussion of the Self Assertion Area:

In regard to mothers and fathers guiding their children in self assertion, the questions in this area were set up to find out the extent to which mothers and fathers encouraged assertive behavior in their preschool age children. The mothers scored 600 and the fathers scored 556. The mothers' scores surpassed the fathers' scores on this area by 44 points. This is interesting for, in the writers opinion, there is a strong link between guiding children in regard to independence and self assertion. Yet the fathers surpassed the mothers in allowing the child to be independent, while the mothers surpassed the fathers in allowing the children to be self assertive. [The terms independence and self assertion were defined as:

### Independence:

The encouragement given to the child to grow and develop in his ability to accomplish new skills for himself and learn to meet his routine daily problems.

### Self Assertion:

The understanding the parents manifested in regard to the child's need to enforce his rights as an individual.

It appeared the fathers were appreciative of the child being able to do things for himself and using his abilities to meet his routine daily problems, but they were not as appreciative of the child using his independence to enforce his rights as an individual.

There was a significant difference in the total scores in favor of the mothers when tested by the Chi-square test. The mothers' (2.52) and the fathers' (2.34) mean scores did not show a significant difference in favor of the mothers when tested by the "t" test, but the "t" test was so close to being significant that it must be considered (the "t" test was 2.15 whereas 2.16 would have been significant at the 5 percent level).

There were only two questions in this area that showed a significant difference between the scores when tested by the Chi-square test, one in favor of the mothers, and the other, in favor of the fathers. These questions are discussed below.

[ In discussing the difference in mothers' and fathers' practices in guiding children in self assertion it seems advisable to mention that of the 19 children in the mothers' families, 13 were boys. There were 14 girls in the 20 children in the fathers' families. In this study, the sex differences of the children were not considered, but it is possible that this was a factor in the fathers having a lower score on the self



assertion area. In our society, it is expected that boys be more assertive than girls. As children grow, people tolerate more aggressiveness from boys than girls. Boys must learn to look out for themselves. Rand, Vincent, and Sweeney state<sup>42</sup>, "Boys who display too much sympathetic and too little fight behavior are likely to be branded as "sissies"; girls who are too aggressive and not tender enough are likely to be called "tom-boys". This statement seems especially applicable to the response to question 12, "Do you scold your child when (she, he) cries whenever (she, he) is in a conflict situation?" the most desirable answer was "Very seldom". The significant difference on this question was in favor of the fathers. Apparently the mothers (who had more boys in their families) scolded their children for crying more than did the fathers (who had more girls in their families). The writer interpreted this as another indication that boys are encouraged to be brave and masculine while girls are encouraged to be tender and feminine.

In question 14, "Do you expect your child to share all of (his, her) toys with other?" the most desirable answer was "Very seldom". There was a significant difference in favor of the mothers on this question. The mothers seemed more willing than the fathers to allow the child the right to decide whether he chose to share a precious toy or not.

As mentioned before, the coefficient correlation was highly significant (.729) in this area. This correlation showed a definite relationship in the thinking of the mothers' and fathers' in guiding their children in self assertion. However, the mothers seemed to allow the child more opportunity to be self assertive than did the fathers.

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<sup>42</sup> Rand, Winfred, Mary E. Sweeney and Lee E. Vincent, Growth and Development of the Young Child, 4th ed. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1946, 481 pp., p. 417

### Discussion of the Obedience Area:

In the obedience area, the fathers and mothers scores were approximately the same. [Shick and Rosenson<sup>43</sup> state, "The strict discipline, with accent on obedience, has given way to the concept of co-operation, of helping the child to acquire good habits of living, playing and working with others." ] The fathers and mothers in this study appeared to be working toward gaining the child's co-operation in accepting obedience rather than in forcing obedience on the child.

The only significant difference in scores in this area was found when question 1, giving rewards for good behavior, was tested by the Chi-square test. As discussed in Chapter IV, this difference was in favor of the mothers. It appears that fathers are more apt to offer rewards for good behavior than are mothers.

(As mentions before,) the coefficient correlation was highly significant (.833) in this area. This correlation showed a definite relationship in the thinking of these mothers and fathers. The mothers total score was 637. The fathers total score was 635. The mothers surpassed the fathers by two points on this area. The slightly higher score of the mothers does not seem worthy of making a difference between their practices in guiding their children in accepting obedience.

### Discussion of the Entire Schedule:

In the entire schedule, there was a significant difference in the total scores of the mothers (2,387) and fathers (2,303) when tested by

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<sup>43</sup> Shick, Bela and William Rosenson, The Care of Your Child, New York: Dell Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1946, 481 pp., p. 136



the Chi-square test. The mothers surpassed the fathers by 84 points. There was a significant difference between the mothers' (2.51) and fathers' (2.42) mean scores when tested by the "t" test. Both of these significant differences on the entire area might be explained by the fact that the mothers surpassed the fathers by 55 points on the choice of play materials area and 44 points on the self assertion area as well as two points on the obedience area. The fathers surpassed the mothers only by 17 points in the independence area. It appears that the differences found in the choice of play materials and self assertion area were large enough to bring about a significant difference in the total score on the entire schedule.

As mentioned previously, the coefficient correlation was highly significant (.726) on the entire schedule. This correlation showed a definite relationship in the thinking of these mothers and fathers in guiding their children in the four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion and obedience. However, the mothers did appear to encourage their children to be more assertive, and they did have a better understanding of the type of play materials suitable for young children. The fathers allowed their children more independence though this difference was not proved statistically. Both mothers and fathers were about the same in guiding their children in obedience.

#### Summary:

In the discussion of the results, it has been stressed that there was a definite relationship in the thinking of these mothers and fathers in guiding their children in regard to independence, choice of play materials, self assertion and obedience, as there was a highly significant coefficient

correlation in each area: independence (.833), choice of play materials (.709), self assertion (.729), and obedience (.833), and the entire schedule (.726).

The fathers tended to allow their children more opportunity to express their independence, but this was not proven statistically.

The mothers tended to have more insight into the choice of play materials for young children. The difference between the mothers' (590) and fathers' (535) total scores in this area were significant in favor of the mothers when tested by the Chi-square test. However, there was a tendency for both mothers and fathers to prefer elaborate toys to simple toys. This was especially true in the question offering the choice of a mechanical train, a wooden push train or an electric train.

The mothers tended to allow their children more opportunity to express self assertion. The differences between the total scores of the fathers (556) and the mothers (600) were significant in favor of the mothers when tested by the Chi-square test. It was probable that this difference might have been due to the mothers having more boys in their families while the fathers had more girls in their families.

In the obedience area, the fathers (635) and mothers (637) scores were approximately the same. Both parents seemed to have insight in guiding their children in accepting obedience. However, it appeared that fathers were more apt to give rewards for good behavior than were mothers.

## CHAPTER VI

## SUMMARY

This study was carried out in connection with The Spartan Nursery School program. The Spartan Nursery School, located on the Michigan State College Campus, is a cooperative nursery school for Michigan State College students' children.

The majority of the mothers and fathers who cooperated in this study lived in the Married Housing area located on the Campus, but a few of the mothers and fathers lived in the Michigan State College Trailer Village, in East Lansing, or in Lansing, Michigan.

The primary objective of this study was to compare and contrast the practices of mothers and fathers toward their children in four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion and obedience. These four areas were selected because the investigator believed parents participating in a cooperative nursery school program would be aware of their agreement or disagreement with the child development policies as practiced in the nursery school in these areas. The fathers and mothers were also asked to give their conscious changes in attitudes and practices due to their experience in the nursery school.

One of the criteria set up for this study was that the participants in the study must have participated in the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School program. A second criterion was the mothers and fathers interviewed were from different families therefore they represented 34 families who had had contact with the Spartan Nursery School. *These mothers and fathers must have or have had children enrolled in the Spartan Nursery School.*

All of the mothers and 11 of the fathers had participated as teachers in the nursery school and ten fathers had worked on the physical plant or equipment for the nursery school.

The data for this study were collected by the schedule - interview method. One interview was held with each mother and each father during the months of June and July, 1949.

The schedule used in the study contained questions covering the guidance of children in the four areas: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion, and obedience. It was approved by seven qualified members of the Home Management - Child Development Department of Michigan State College.

The mothers in this study had 13 boys and five girls at the preschool age level with 46 months representing the average age of the mothers' children. The fathers in the study had 14 girls and five boys at the preschool age level with 45 months representing the average age of the fathers' children.

In the independence area, the fathers' total score was 577. The mothers' total score was 560. The fathers surpassed the mothers by 17 points. The difference in scores was not significant when tested by the Chi-square test. The difference in the fathers' mean score (2.42) and the mothers' mean score (2.35) was not significant when tested by the "t" test. There was, however, a significant difference in the scores of two of the questions (3, 9) when tested by the Chi-square test.

In the choice of play materials area, the mothers' score was 590. The fathers' score was 535. The mothers surpassed the fathers in score by 55 points. This difference in scores was significant when tested by

the Chi-square test. The fathers' (2.25) and mothers' (2.48) mean scores showed a significant difference at the 5 percent level when tested by the "t" test. In scores on the individual question three (3, 6, 7) showed a significant difference in favor of the mothers when tested by the Chi-square test.

In the self assertion area, the mothers scored 600. The fathers scored 556. The mothers surpassed the fathers by a score of 44 points. The scores of the parents when divided into thirds did not reveal a significant difference when tested by the Chi-square test, but the total scores of the mothers and fathers did reveal a significant difference when tested by the Chi-square test. The mothers' (2.52) and fathers' (2.34) mean scores did not reveal a significant difference when tested by the "t" test, however, the result was 2.15 whereas 2.16 would have been significant at the 5 percent level. In the differences in scores on the individual questions when tested by the Chi-square test, one question (14) was significantly different in favor of the mothers. Another (12) was significantly different in favor of the fathers.

In the obedience area, the mothers scored 637. The fathers scored 635. The mothers surpassed the fathers by only two points. The scores were not significantly different when tested by the Chi-square test. The fathers' (2.67) and the mothers' (2.68) mean scores were not significantly different when tested by the "t" test. The scores on question 1, rewarding children for good behavior, were significantly different in favor of the mothers when tested by the Chi-square test.

On the entire schedule, the mothers scored 2,387. The fathers scored 2,303. The mothers surpassed the fathers by 84 points. The difference

in total scores of the mothers and fathers showed a significant difference when tested by the Chi-square test, but the scores of the parents divided into thirds did not show a significant difference when so tested. The mothers' (2.51) and fathers' (2.42) mean scores did show a significant difference at the 5 percent level when tested by the "t" test.

The fathers tended to allow their children more opportunity to express independence than did the mothers. The mothers had more insight than the fathers in regard to the type of play materials suitable for the preschool child. The mothers allowed their children more opportunity to express self assertion than did the fathers. This may have been due to these mothers having more boys in their families while these fathers had more girls in their families. The mothers and fathers were approximately equal in their practices in guiding young children in accepting obedience. However, the fathers were more apt to offer rewards for good behavior than were the mothers.

Each area had a highly significant coefficient correlation between mothers' and fathers' scores: independence .833, choice of play materials .709, self assertion .729, obedience .833. The entire schedule had a highly significant coefficient correlation .726 between mothers' and fathers' scores. This correlation revealed a definite relation in the thinking of these mothers and fathers in regard to the guidance of children in: independence, choice of play materials, self assertion, and obedience.

The mothers and fathers expressed some conscious changes in attitudes and practices as well as knowledge gained as a result of their experience

in the nursery school. The most frequent change for both the mothers and fathers was in choosing more constructive play materials for the preschool age children. The second important change was in providing creative materials like those offered at nursery school for their preschool children. The mothers and fathers expressed similiar changes in both their attitudes and practices as well as knowledge gained through their experience in the nursery school.

**APPENDIX A**

**Schedule and Scoring of the Schedule used in the study.**

**Letter and Scoring Sheet used in the development of The Schedule.**



Schedule

THE SCORED SCHEDULE.

Date of Interview - - - - -

Father's Name - - - - - .

Mother's Name - - - - - .

Child's Name - - - - - .

Child's Sex - - - - - .

Child's Birthdate - - - - - .

Date of Child's Entrance in the Nursery School - - - - - .

Have You Worked With the Children? - - - - - .

Describe the Capacity of Your Work in the Nursery School?

(All items in the schedule are based on the preschool age level.)

General Comments:

## II

## Part A. (Independence)

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices:

1. Do you allow your child to go alone to  
the next door neighbors?

1. Consistently	---	3	---
2. Frequently	---	2	---
3. Very seldom	---	1	---

2. Do you expect your child to wash and  
dry his hands

1. By (himself, herself) without re- minder	---	3	---
2. By (himself, herself) with reminder	---	2	---
3. With help	---	1	---

3. Do you encourage your child to settle  
a dispute with a neighbor child  
(his, her) own age?

1. Consistently	---	3	---
2. Frequently	---	2	---
3. Very seldom	---	1	---

4. Do you expect your child when re-  
minded to start getting ready  
for bed by (himself, herself)?

1. Consistently	---	3	---
2. Frequently	---	2	---
3. Very seldom	---	1	---

5. Do you allow your child to help set  
the table?

1. Consistently	---	3	---
2. Frequently	---	2	---
3. Very seldom	---	1	---

6. Do you encourage your child to help  
other family members with small  
tasks (he, she) is able to do?

1. Consistently	---	3	---
2. Frequently	---	2	---
3. Very seldom	---	1	---



## III

## Part A (Continued)

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices:

7. Do you expect your child to go to the toilet alone in the daytime?
- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 3 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 1 - - - |
8. Do you expect your child to assist in dressing (himself, herself) (indoor clothes)?
- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 3 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 1 - - - |
9. Do you expect your child to undress (himself, herself) (indoor clothes)?
- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. Completely     | - - 3 - - - |
| 2. Partially      | - - 2 - - - |
| 3. To some extent | - - 1 - - - |
10. Do you have special shelves or cupboards for your child to use for storing (his, her) playthings?
- |                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| 1. Sufficient        | - - 3 - - - |
| 2. Nearly sufficient | - - 2 - - - |
| 3. Insufficient      | - - 1 - - - |
11. Who puts the child's toys away?
- |                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Child alone         | - - 3 - - - |
| 2. Child with help     | - - 2 - - - |
| 3. Child does not help | 1 - - -     |
12. Do you praise your child when (he, she) has done a job well?
- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 3 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 1 - - - |
13. When your child is having difficulty with a task that you think (he, she) can finish, do you help (him, her) immediately?
- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 1 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 3 - - - |

## Part A (Continued)

IV

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices.

14. When there is an opportunity for your child to have a choice, do you allow (him, her) to make the choice?

1. Consistently	--	<u>3</u>	--
2. Frequently	--	<u>2</u>	--
3. Very seldom	--	<u>1</u>	--

## Part B. (Choice of Play Materials)

1. Do you make toys for your child?

1. Many	--	<u>3</u>	--
2. A few	--	<u>2</u>	--
3. Practically none	--	<u>1</u>	--

2. If your child did not have any of the following, which one would you prefer to see (him, her) have?

1. An erector set	--	<u>1</u>	--
2. Building blocks	--	<u>3</u>	--
3. Tinker toy set	--	<u>2</u>	--

3. If you were choosing an inexpensive gift for your child, which would you choose providing your child had none of these?

1. A book of paper dolls, and a pair of blunt scissors	--	<u>1</u>	--
2. A coloring book, and a package of large crayons	--	<u>2</u>	--
3. A package of colored paper, a jar of paste, and a pair of blunt scissors	--	<u>3</u>	--

4. If your child did not have any of the following toys which would you prefer to see (him, her) have?

1. An electric train	--	<u>1</u>	--
2. A mechanical train	--	<u>2</u>	--
3. A wooden push train	--	<u>3</u>	--

5. If you were buying a picture puzzle for your child, would you buy?

1. A cardboard jigsaw puzzle	--	<u>1</u>	--
2. A wooden puzzle con- sisting of 16 pieces or less	--	<u>3</u>	--
3. A wooden puzzle con- sisting of 16 to 25 pieces	--	<u>2</u>	--



## Part B. (Continued)

V

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices.

6. Supposing your child asked you to bring (her, him) a box of crayons, would you buy?

1. A box of pencil crayons	-- 1 --
2. A box of small round crayons	-- 2 --
3. A box of large round crayons	-- 3 --

7. If your child requested a punching bag for a gift, would you consider it?

1. An acceptable toy	-- 3 --
2. A fairly acceptable toy	-- 2 --
3. Not an acceptable toy	-- 1 --

8. If you were buying your child a toy, and (he, she) would be satisfied with any of the following, which one would you choose?

1. A whistle on a cord	-- 2 --
2. A drum	-- 3 --
3. A gun	-- 1 --

9. Which of the following do you think would be the most appropriate gift for your child?

1. Several small .15¢ cars	-- 2 --
2. A medium size wooden tractor	-- 3 --
3. A medium size mechanical car	-- 1 --

10. If your child requested a trapeze, would you consider it?

1. An acceptable toy	-- 3 --
2. A fairly acceptable toy	-- 2 --
3. Not an acceptable toy	-- 1 --

## Part B. (Continued)

VI

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices.

11. Which of the following would you select for your child, providing (he, she) did not have any of the following?

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. A mechanical racing boat                     | - - 1 - - |
| 2. A simple wooden tug boat that would float    | - - 3 - - |
| 3. A large attractive sailboat that would float | - - 2 - - |

12. Do you give your child empty cereal boxes, cocoa cans and other discarded boxes that (he, she) finds interesting?

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 3 - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 1 - - |

13. Do you look through magazines that advertise children's toys to see the new type of educational toys that are available?

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 3 - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 1 - - |

14. If you were going to buy a boy a gift, and he chose a doll would you consider it?

- |                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1. Appropriate        | - - 3 - - |
| 2. Fairly appropriate | - - 2 - - |
| 3. Not appropriate    | - - 1 - - |

## Part C. (Self Assertion)

1. If your child is playing with a toy, and another child grabs it away from (him, her), do you allow (him, her) to grab for it in return?

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 3 - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 1 - - |

2. Do you expect your child to give in to a younger child?

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - - 1 - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - - 2 - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - - 3 - - |



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## Part C. (Continued)

## VII

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices.

3. Do you shame your child if (he, she)  
slaps another child?

- |                 |    |               |    |
|-----------------|----|---------------|----|
| 1. Consistently | -- | $\frac{1}{2}$ | -- |
| 2. Frequently   | -- | $\frac{2}{2}$ | -- |
| 3. Very seldom  | -- | $\frac{3}{2}$ | -- |

4. Do you tell your child that (he, she)  
must respect other peoples' rights  
or they will not like (him, her)?

- |                 |    |               |    |
|-----------------|----|---------------|----|
| 1. Consistently | -- | $\frac{1}{2}$ | -- |
| 2. Frequently   | -- | $\frac{2}{2}$ | -- |
| 3. Very seldom  | -- | $\frac{3}{2}$ | -- |

5. Do you punish your child if (she, he)  
talks back to an adult?

- |                 |    |               |    |
|-----------------|----|---------------|----|
| 1. Consistently | -- | $\frac{1}{2}$ | -- |
| 2. Frequently   | -- | $\frac{2}{2}$ | -- |
| 3. Very seldom  | -- | $\frac{3}{2}$ | -- |

6. Do you stress to your child the care of  
other peoples' property?

- |                |    |               |    |
|----------------|----|---------------|----|
| 1. Constantly  | -- | $\frac{1}{3}$ | -- |
| 2. Frequently  | -- | $\frac{2}{3}$ | -- |
| 3. Very seldom | -- | $\frac{3}{3}$ | -- |

7. Do you allow your child to play with  
others when obviously (he, she) is  
bossing them?

- |                 |    |               |    |
|-----------------|----|---------------|----|
| 1. Consistently | -- | $\frac{3}{3}$ | -- |
| 2. Frequently   | -- | $\frac{2}{3}$ | -- |
| 3. Very seldom  | -- | $\frac{1}{3}$ | -- |

8. In your child's presence, do you compare  
(his, her) aggressive behavior with  
that of other children (his, her) age?

- |                 |    |               |    |
|-----------------|----|---------------|----|
| 1. Consistently | -- | $\frac{1}{3}$ | -- |
| 2. Frequently   | -- | $\frac{2}{3}$ | -- |
| 3. Very seldom  | -- | $\frac{3}{3}$ | -- |

9. Do you encourage your child to invite  
other children to share (his, her)  
toys?

- |                 |    |               |    |
|-----------------|----|---------------|----|
| 1. Consistently | -- | $\frac{3}{3}$ | -- |
| 2. Frequently   | -- | $\frac{2}{3}$ | -- |
| 3. Very seldom  | -- | $\frac{1}{3}$ | -- |

## Part C. (Continued)

VIII

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices.

10. When you have guests, do you expect your child to be seen and not heard?
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - 1 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - 3 - - - |
11. Do you punish your child for mistreating (his, her) toys?
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - 1 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - 3 - - - |
12. Do you scold your child when (she, he) cries whenever (she, he) is in a conflict situation?
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - 1 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - 3 - - - |
13. Do you demand that your child says thank you to people who have been of service to (him, her)?
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - 1 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - 3 - - - |
14. Do you expect your child to share all of (his, her) toys with others?
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - 1 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - 3 - - - |

## Part D. (Obedience)

1. Do you offer your child rewards for good behavior?
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - 1 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - 3 - - - |
2. If you offer your child a choice, and (he, she) chooses one that is inconvenient to you do you accept (his, her) choice?
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Consistently | - 3 - - - |
| 2. Frequently   | - 2 - - - |
| 3. Very seldom  | - 1 - - - |

## Part D. (Continued)

IX

Comments, including change  
of parents' practices.

3. Do you explain to your child why  
(he, she) is being punished?
1. Consistently - 3 - -
  2. Frequently - 2 - -
  3. Very seldom - 1 - -
4. Do you ever tell your child you do not  
love (him, her) when (he, she) is bad?
1. Consistently - 1 - -
  2. Frequently - 2 - -
  3. Very seldom - 3 - -
5. Do you use spanking as a form of  
punishment?
1. Consistently - 1 - -
  2. Frequently - 2 - -
  3. Very seldom - 3 - -
6. When you feel your child must be  
punished, do you?
1. Punish the child  
immediately - 3 - -
  2. Wait until the (father, mother)  
comes, so (he, she) can  
punish the child - 1 - -
  3. Let the incident pass, and deal  
with it sometime later in  
the day - 2 - -
7. Do you punish your child when (he, she)  
has a toilet accident?
1. Consistently - 1 - -
  2. Frequently - 2 - -
  3. Very seldom - 3 - -
8. To get obedience from your child, do  
you ask your child if (she, he)  
loves you?
1. Consistently - 1 - -
  2. Frequently - 2 - -
  3. Very seldom - 3 - -
9. Do you get your child's attention before  
you make a request of (him, her)?
1. Consistently - 3 - -
  2. Frequently - 2 - -
  3. Very seldom - 1 - -

10. Do you expect your child to obey you immediately?

1. Consistently	-- 1 --
2. Frequently	-- 2 --
3. Very seldom	-- 3 --

11. Do you and your (husband, wife) agree on acceptable methods of correcting your child?

1. Consistently	-- 3 --
2. Frequently	-- 2 --
3. Very seldom	-- 1 --

12. Do you explain to your child why you forbid (him, her) to play with a certain article?

1. Consistently	-- 3 --
2. Frequently	-- 2 --
3. Very seldom	-- 1 --

13. Do you threaten your child in any way to get (him, her) to obey?

1. Consistently	-- 1 --
2. Frequently	-- 2 --
3. Very seldom	-- 3 --

14. Do you try other methods of guiding your child before you use punishment?

1. Consistently	-- 3 --
2. Frequently	-- 2 --
3. Very seldom	-- 1 --

May 31, 1949  
Home Management House #4  
Michigan State College  
East Lansing, Michigan

Dear Miss:

Would you be willing to give some suggestions and criticisms on this schedule that I am preparing to use as a guide in the interviews that I plan to have this summer with some of the parents who have participated in the Spartan Nursery School?

I am asking the staff members of the Campus Nursery School and the Spartan Nursery School for their help. I am interested in knowing:

1. If you think the questions on the schedule are appropriate, if not will you designate the questions you think should be discarded?
2. Do you think of any other questions that should be added?
3. Do you think the answers are scored in a satisfactory manner?  
I have enclosed a sheet explaining the system I have used to assign the numerical values to the answers.
4. Do you think any of the questions should be reworded?
5. Any other suggestions or criticisms you may give will be appreciated.

Each section of the schedule has the same number of questions. Each question has three parts to the answer. The schedule is planned this way so that statistical methods can be worked out later.

Before you look over the schedule you probably would like to know the problem. Although the problem has not been approved as yet, the schedule was planned with the following problem in mind.

" To compare mothers' and fathers' practices in guiding their children in regard to Independence, Aggressiveness\*, Obedience, and Choice of Play Materials."

\*The term Aggressiveness was changed to Self Assertive Area.

I realize that everyone is very busy, and I certainly will appreciate it if you feel you have time to offer your suggestions.

Sincerely yours,

## Method of Scoring

1. Each question is stated so that the answer given by the parent will be given a numerical value.

3 points will be given as high score.  
 2 points will be given as medium score.  
 1 point will be given as low score.

2. Each question is formed so that in my opinion the answers are in degrees. I would like you to look over the scores I have given to the answers and tell me where you agree with me and where you disagree with me.
3. In the area of Independence the high score of 3 goes to the answer that allows the child the greatest amount of independence.

For Example:

Do you expect your child to dress himself (indoor clothes)?

1. Consistently	<u>3</u>
2. Frequently	<u>2</u>
3. Very seldom	<u>1</u>

The first answer stresses independence (of course the parent may be expecting too much), but here we are looking for the parents' practices in guiding his child in the development of independence.

All the other questions in the Independence area are scored with this same thought in mind.

4. In the area of Choice of Play Materials, the score of 3 is given to the answer that in my opinion is the best answer. The score of one is given to the answer that I feel is the weakest as far as play materials go.

I am particularly interested to see whether we as a group agree on the placement of the score value. If there is a major divergence of opinion on the scoring of any question, the question will be discarded.

5. In the area of Aggressiveness\*, the score three goes to the answer that would allow the child the opportunity to be aggressive, or in other words encourage aggressive\* behavior. The score of one would go to the answer that curbed the child's aggressive\* tendency.
6. In the area of Obedience, the score was given with the idea of the

---

\* Terms changed to Self Assertion of Self Assertive.



parent guiding the child toward a willingness to obey. This section takes into consideration the techniques used in obtaining obedience. The high score was not given to immediate obedience brought about by fear or physical punishment, but to the answer that guided the child to accepting obedience.

Perhaps these scores should be reversed, but since the parent's have all participated in a nursery school, and since we do not feel children should be brow beaten into obedience, this seems to me to be the way to measure the parent's practices in guiding their children in obedience.

What Are Your Opinions?

## APPENDIX B

Formulas for the Chi-square test and the "t" test.

Formula for the Chi-square test:<sup>44</sup>

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (o - e)^2}{e}$$

Formula for the "t" test:<sup>45</sup>

$$t = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sigma_{md}}$$

---

<sup>44</sup> Edwards, Allen L., Statistical Analysis, New York: Rinehart and Company, Incorporated. 1946, 360 pp., p. 240

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 182

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