AN ASSESSMENT OF MATERNAL ATTITUDES TOWARD CHILD-REARING

By

Kay Judeen Humpal

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Researcher: Kay Judeen Hummel

Advisor: Dr. Bernice D. Borgman, Professor in Child Development, Michigan State University

Title: Assessment of Maternal Attitudes Toward Child-Rearing

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes toward child-rearing expressed by mothers having preschool children who were living in Michigan State University married students' housing. The attitudes of three groups of mothers were compared to learn if mothers participating in a cooperative nursery school expressed attitudes that were more socially desirable, according to the expressed attitudes of a group of specialists in child development, than mothers not participating in a cooperative nursery school.

Subjects: The subjects drawn at random included: 20 mothers who had a child enrolled in Spartan Cooperative Nursery School and had participated in the program for at least three terms; 17 mothers who had not participated in a cooperative nursery school but had made application to enroll their child in the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School and were on the waiting list; 20 mothers who had not participated in a cooperative nursery school and had not made application to have their children enrolled in a cooperative nursery school. The groups were similar in extent of education, age and number of children per family.

Procedure: The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) was used to measure the mothers' attitudes toward child-rearing. The PARI contained 23 attitude scales with five items in each scale. The analysis of variance technique was used to determine whether differences in attitude mean scale scores existed among the groups. For the attitude scales which showed a difference at the 5% significance level, Duncan's multiple range test was applied to learn between which groups the difference existed.

Results: Significant differences were found between the mean scale scores of the specialists and those of one or more of the parent groups on eight of the 23 attitude scales. These scales were: Breaking the Will, Strictness, Excluding Outside Influences, Deification, Approval of Activity, Ascendancy of the Mother, Intrusiveness, and Lack of Comradeship and Sharing. In all of the attitude scales found to be significantly different, except the scale for Lack of Comradeship and Sharing, the specialists had the lowest average attitude scale score. Low scores indicated the more socially desirable attitudes. These attitudes suggested the areas inwhich parents may need help in developing healthy attitudes toward child-rearing.

In general, the mean scale scores of the three parent groups were not significantly different on the 23 attitude scales. However a trend did appear which seemed to show the effectiveness of the parent education program in the cooperative nursery school: The mothers having children in the cooperative nursery school and participating in the program for at least three terms expressed attitudes that were most similar to the expressed attitudes of the specialists. The mothers interested in participating in the cooperative nursery school and having their children on the waiting list were next in similarity to the specialists. The mothers who had not made application to have their preschool child enrolled in the cooperative nursery school and had no connection with a cooperative nursery school were farthest away from the attitudes of the specialists.

AN ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARD CHILD-REARING

A Study of the Effectiveness of Parent Education in Cooperative Nursery Schools

By

Mary Jackson Shepard

A THESIS

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of Michigan State University of Agriculture
and Applied Science in partial fulfillment
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many research findings in child development seem to support the theory that parental attitudes toward childrearing influence the personality development of children. For example: Radke[1] found a relationship between the unfavorable conduct of preschool children, as rated by their teachers, and parental attitudes favoring autocratic, restrictive, and severe discipline. Shoben[2] in a study of parental attitudes and the adjustment of older children, administered an inventory of attitudes toward child-rearing to 50 mothers of children in mental hygiene clinics and juvenile courts and 50 mothers of normal children. He found significant positive correlations between the parent attitude scales of dominance, possessiveness, and ignoring children and the children's satisfactory adjustment to society. Anderson[3] reported a study completed by Miles in which it was found that parents' attitudes were related to the leadership status and social acceptance of the child by the school group.

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[1]Marian J. Radke, "Relation of Parental Authority to Children's Behavior and Attitudes," University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare Monograph, No. 22 (1946).

[2]E. J. Shoben, Jr., "The Assessment of Parental Attitudes in Relation to Child Adjustment," Genetic Psychology Monograph, XXXIX (1949) 101-148.

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Many research findings in child development seem to support the theory that parental attitudes toward childrearing influence the personality development of children. For example: Radke[1] found a relationship between the unfavorable conduct of preschool children, as rated by their teachers, and parental attitudes favoring autocratic, restrictive, and severe discipline. Shoben[2] in a study of parental attitudes and the adjustment of older children, administered an inventory of attitudes toward child-rearing to 50 mothers of children in mental hygiene clinics and juvenile courts and 50 mothers of normal children. He found significant positive correlations between the parent attitude scales of dominance, possessiveness, and ignoring children and the children's satisfactory adjustment to society. Anderson[3] reported a study completed by Miles in which it was found that parents' attitudes were related to the leadership status and social acceptance of the child by the school group.

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He reported that subscales measuring overprotection, dominance by the parent, and encouragement of social development were related to the child's social adjustment.

These studies are illustrative of many others in the field which indicate a relationship between parental attitudes and the personality development of children. Hence, it is important that the child-rearing attitudes held by parents be those believed to foster healthy personalities in children. When parents do not possess such attitudes it presents a challenge to parent educators to try to modify or change those attitudes that may be harmful to children into attitudes that tend to foster children's healthy personality development.

Modification of Attitudes Fostered by Cooperative Nursery Schools

It is the belief of many individuals in the field of parent education, that the cooperative nursery school provides a unique method of helping parents to gain insights and understanding concerning their children and thus aids them in developing healthy attitudes toward child-rearing. The method of parent education in a cooperative which differs from other nursery schools is that most of the parents in a cooperative are actively participating in the teaching and guidance of their own child and other children under the leadership of a trained teacher. For success in this aspect of the program, it is essential that a complete program of parent education be carried on. Thus there are numerous opportunities for modification of attitudes concerning child-rearing.

An attitude has been defined as "a relatively enduring, but modifiable, tendency or readiness on the part of a person

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An attitude has been defined as "a relatively enduring, but modifiable, tendency or readiness on the part of a person

to behave in particular ways toward some object, person or issue."[4] Tyler states four different ways in which attitudes commonly develop in people. The cooperative nursery school appears to offer experiences in three of these four ways.

The first method described by Tyler, "is through assimilation from the environment. The things that are taken for granted by the people around about us, the points of view that are commonly held by our friends and acquaintances are illustrations of environmental attitudes which are frequently assimilated without our having been conscious of them."[5] The cooperative nursery school provides to a great extent the possibility for environmental assimilation of attitudes because of the high interdependence of the mothers and teachers in their teaching and administrative roles.

A second method of acquiring attitudes arises from the "emotional effects of certain kinds of experiences. In general, if one has had satisfying experiences in a particular connection, he develops an attitude favorable to some content or aspect of that experience, while if he has had an unsatisfying effect from the experience, his attitude may become antagonistic."[6] The positive satisfactions derived by the parent in successful teaching of his own and other children, under guidance and direction, is another method provided by the cooperative nursery school for likely acquisition of desirable attitudes.

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[4]Raymond G. Kuhlen, The Psychology of Adolescent Development (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952) p. 40.

[5]Ralph W. Tyler, Basic Principals of Curriculum and Instruction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950) p. 49.

[6]Ibid.

to [illegible] issues." Types of the form criticisms are in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] opposed to other [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

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A third method of developing attitudes "is through direct intellectual processes. In some cases when we see the implications of a particular object or process, we are led to develop an attitude favorable or unfavorable to it from the knowledge which we gain from this intellectual analysis."[7] The cooperative nursery school provides many opportunities for attitude change through direct intellectual processes. Such opportunities are inherent in observing a trained teacher working with children, in parent conferences, and in workshops and group meetings.

The fourth method of developing attitudes mentioned by Tyler, "is through traumatic experiences, that is, experiences which have had a deep emotional effect."[8] Experiences of this type are usually not found in the cooperative nursery school.

Purpose of the Study

Because attitudes are considered to be modifiable, it was the concern of this study to learn if the experience of mothers participating in a cooperative nursery school had a beneficial effect upon their developing socially desirable attitudes toward child-rearing.

Problem

The problem was to assess the expressed attitudes toward child-rearing of three groups of mothers having preschool children in order to compare the expressed attitudes of mothers

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[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*

who have had experience in a parent cooperative nursery school with those of mothers who had not such experience but had indicated an interest in it and those of mothers who had had neither the experience nor had indicated interest in it.

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis guided the study: mothers participating in and having children in a parent cooperative nursery school will not report attitudes that are more socially desirable than mothers who have not participated in a cooperative nursery school but have expressed an interest in it, nor of mothers who have not participated in a cooperative nursery school and have not expressed an interest in it.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the comparison of attitudes of mothers who had participated in a parent cooperative nursery school with those who had not would be one means of assessing the effectiveness of the parent education program of the cooperative nursery school in helping mothers to develop healthy attitudes toward child-rearing. Also, the assessment of attitudes expressed by mothers who had not participated in a cooperative nursery program might suggest areas in which parents need help in developing healthy attitudes toward child-rearing and could lead to the development of a parent education program which would be more effective in achieving this goal.

Description of the Spartan Nursery School

The Spartan Nursery School, a parent cooperative nursery

school, offered a program of parent education that was considered to have potential for fostering healthy parental attitudes toward child-rearing. Mothers participating in this cooperative nursery school were one group of subjects included in this study.

The Spartan Nursery School is located on the campus of Michigan State University. It is a parent cooperative nursery school administered jointly by teachers who are members of the staff of the College of Home Economics of Michigan State University and by parents who are students attending Michigan State University, the majority of whom are living in university housing for married students.

Spartan Nursery School differs from many cooperatives in that it is supported by the university and renders services in training student teachers in child development from the College of Home Economics. Students in child psychology and child development also have the privilege of observing and testing the children attending the school.

The entire staff is professionally trained. It consists of a director-teacher and three additional teachers, each with a wide range of experience which qualifies her not only for guiding the activities of children but in working cooperatively with parents. The director and two of the teachers have master's degrees in child development. The other teacher is a graduate assistant who is a candidate for that degree.

At the time of this study there were 105 children enrolled in the school, ranging in age from approximately two years and six months to five years. The children were divided

into seven groups of 15 children. These groups met for half-day sessions two or three days a week. Each group was under the direction of a staff teacher, assisted by two parents and sometimes a student teacher who was majoring in child development.

Description of Parent Education at Spartan Nursery School

The parent education program of Spartan Nursery School is similar to the parent education programs of many cooperative nursery schools. However, no two programs of parent education are exactly alike because of the different directors and teachers administrating the programs. Since the methods used in a parent education program are important in determining the program's effectiveness, the methods used in the Spartan Nursery School will be described.

Parent Participation in Teaching

Perhaps the most important means of parent education in the cooperative nursery school is a parent participating under the supervision of a trained teacher in the guidance of children and observing his own child in relation to other children. This enables a parent to learn through personal experience and observation individual differences in children, as well as effectual ways of relating to children and guiding them.

Each family in Spartan Nursery School is required to teach a specified number of days per term,* usually three to

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*The school year at Michigan State University is divided into calendar quarters or "Terms" of ten or twelve weeks.

five days. This responsibility may be fulfilled by either the mother or the father, depending upon the convenience and choice of the family. However, only a few fathers participate as teachers.

Orientation

There is no formal training in the orientation which a parent must go through before enrolling his child in Spartan Nursery School. Each parent must have an initial conference with the teacher of the group his child is entering and before beginning his teaching days, he is required to observe the group for one day under the guidance of a trained teacher. At this time the participating parent learns what the responsibilities of "teaching mothers" are, as well as what to look for in children's behavior and why a teacher handles particular situations as she does. Each family is given a booklet that describes the routine of Spartan Nursery School and contains helpful hints to mothers for guiding the children in music, stories, and creative art activities while they are teaching.[9] The parents are also given a booklet concerning the organization of the nursery school, explaining such things as group meetings, general meetings, and the organization and function of the Parent Council.

Informal Conferences

At the close of each teaching session the teacher and

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[9]Elizabeth Page, and Betty Garlick, Guides for Teaching in a Cooperative Nursery School, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1953).

five days. This responsibility may be fulfilled by either the mother or the father, or a close friend or relative who is of the family. Usually, only a few fathers participate in the Nursery.

Orientation

There is no formal training in the cooperative which a parent must go through before enrolling his child in Cooperative Nursery School. Each parent must have an initial interview with the teacher of the nursery his child is entering and before beginning his teaching duty, he is required to observe the group for a day under the guidance of a teacher trainer. At this time the practical nurse points out the varying abilities of the children present, as well as what to look for in children's behavior and how to handle problems arising in children's behavior and how to handle problems arising in situations on the spot. Each family is given a booklet that describes the purpose of Cooperative Nursery School and contains helpful hints to mothers for guiding the children in music, stories, and cooperative activities while the mothers teach. The parents also are given a booklet concerning the organization of the nursery school, its aims, such things as group meetings, general work days, and the organization and function of the Parent Council.

Informal Conferences

At the close of each teaching session the teacher and

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[9] Elizabeth Page, and Betty Garlick, Guides for Teaching in a Cooperative Nursery School, (East Lansing, Michigan Michigan State University, 1953).

the parents who are assisting for that day have a short informal conference to discuss important or interesting happenings of the day and any questions that the parents or teachers may have. This is a valuable sharing experience for the parents and teachers where learning, as well as understanding, is reinforced.

General and Group Meetings

A general meeting for all the parents of the nursery school and the teachers is held each term. The Parents' Council has charge of planning and conducting these meetings. The programs are varied, and are planned to be of interest to all of the parents.

Group meetings for the parents and teachers in each individual group are also held once a term. At these smaller meetings topics of interest and concern to the specific group are discussed.

Parents' Council

Each group of parents elects its own officers and sends a representative to the Parents' Council. The Council consists of a council chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, a treasurer, a social coordinator, a "work-party"* coordinator, a library coordinator for the children's library, and three delegates to the Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries.

The Parents' Council usually meets twice a term or more

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*A "work-party" is a meeting for either mothers or fathers when they refurbish old equipment, plan and make new equipment, and do other jobs which improve the physical set-up of the nursery school.

often if special needs arise. It is responsible for setting up the calendar for the term, including "work party" dates, social events and events of special interest to parents. The Council also plans necessary money-raising projects and acts as a governing board within the scope of the power allowed by the University. A representative of the Parent Council helps to organize "work parties" for fathers and for mothers.

Library

Spartan Nursery School also provides a library containing materials, pamphlets and books of child development, child study and child guidance which parents may check out for an unspecified time, according to their need.

Other Methods

Additional methods of parent education are used in Spartan Nursery School which are similar to other nursery schools. These include the informal conversations between the teachers and parents, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and bulletin boards.

Informal conversations between the parent and teacher during the teaching day and as the parent brings his child to nursery school and picks him up is a valuable way for the teacher and parent to obtain a better understanding of each other and the parent's child.

The teachers are also available for conferences with parents if the parents or teachers wish to talk in more detail and privacy concerning the child.

Home visits are made occasionally by the teachers, if

a teacher feels a home visit is desirable in helping her understand a particular child and his background.

The bulletin board at Spartan Nursery School is kept up to date with new and interesting materials concerning child development and child-rearing.

CHAPTER II

PARENT EDUCATION AND THE COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

Need for Parent Education

We live in a fast-moving, fast-changing world. Families are caught in the tide of new scientific research findings and breakdowns of tradition. New knowledge yesterday is old knowledge today; new practices today are outdated tomorrow.

Many parents are searching for direction in bringing up their children because new knowledge in the area of child-rearing is accumulating rapidly and families' traditional guide-lines seem to be lost or wavering in the current social scene. The status of women is changing toward increased autonomy in both their family and non-family roles. Newly married couples are establishing residence apart from their parental homes causing a decline in the frequency of inter-generational family interaction. There is increased contact through immigration and social mobility between members of different ethnic backgrounds and social classes who have contrasting cultural traditions of child care. All of these things have contributed either to the isolation of the new parent from his own cultural traditions of child training, or to his exposure to different ways of rearing children which present a challenge to him.

> The consequent breakdown in tradition forces the modern parent into greater consciousness of his child-rearing practices and demands that he develop many aspects of his roles as a parent de novo, either from his own resources or with the assistance of persons outside his family group.[1]

The impact on parents of the barrage of new knowledge in the area of child development should not be underestimated. This knowledge has shown that there may exist better ways of rearing children than those prescribed by tradition. "Increased information has given parents a wider base of understanding on which to proceed in their day by day living with children, but educators and parents alike have shown some confusion in applying this knowledge."[2] An example of this confusion is seen in parental attitudes toward discipline. As parents revolted against the more Victorian, authoritarian attitudes of parental dominance in the family, and as clinical evidence of the results of repression on children reinforced their concern, many parents became more aware of a child's need for freedom and experimentation and became "permissive" in regard to their children. This permissiveness created new problems in many homes; the children's behavior often seemed to get out of bounds, and the children themselves did not appear always to be as happy with their freedom as the parents had hoped. Today, educators believe that children need guidance and control as well as appropriate freedom and independence.

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[1]Orville G. Brim, Jr., Education for Child Rearing (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1959) p. 17.

[2]Aline B. Auerbach, Trends and Techniques in Parent Education: A Critical Review (New York: C.W.A. Publication, 1961) p. 9.

Parents are sometimes in danger of misinterpreting certain specific results in their attempt to utilize the many new scientific research findings regarding child development and child-rearing. If the application of these findings does not seem to work, parents may tend to veer away from trust in the "experts" and in the validity of scientific knowledge. They may swing back toward the idea that "parents know best." They may feel that by instinct, or merely by virtue of being parents, they will do "the right thing" on their own. Therefore,

> Parent education, it would seem, has a responsibility to help parents learn to use the sound, scientific, professional knowledge in a creative, independent way, testing as they go, and carefully choosing a specific approach that they feel is valid in the light of all the information they can get.[3]

Aims of Parent Education

Aims in a parent education program are varied according to the needs of the particular parents involved in the program. Aline Auerbach believes that the aim of parent education programs should be to help parents become more effective as parents. She states that parents "need to gain understanding not only of their children, their needs and motivations at each stage of their development, but also of themselves as parents, their own attitudes, feelings and expectations, and the role they play in the parent-child relationship."[4]

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[3] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[4] Aline B. Auerbach, Parent Group Education and Leadership Training (New York: CSAA Publication) p. 1.

Jerome Frank writes, "the goal of parent education is to help parents to develop their own abilities for communicating successfully with their children rather than looking to others for ready-made solutions."[5]

Lawrence Frank believes that attitudes of parents toward child-rearing are as or more important than knowledge of child-rearing. Advice might be harmful when it results in confusion and disturbance. He feels that "individuals need time and the support of others to alter their thinking and to revise their relations." He also states, "in order to foster healthy personality development, it is obvious that some of the beliefs, expectations and methods of parents must be revised and in certain cases very largely superseded by a new orientation. But this means a genuine alteration in our culture, reforming our traditional ideas so that they are consonant with our new knowledge of child growth and development."[6]

What Makes Parent Education Effective

How can new knowledge which may result in a change from traditional and habitual attitudes toward child-rearing to attitudes more in line with new scientific findings be presented to parents?

According to Jerome Frank there are two ways in which

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[5]Jerome D. Frank, "How do Parents Learn?" Child Study, XXX (1953) p. 14.

[6]Lawrence K. Frank, "Is Parent Education Necessary?" Child Study, XXXIII (1956) p. 15.

habitual attitudes maintain themselves in the face of new experiences. The first way is by individuals continually reinforcing habitual attitudes by unconsciously sorting out from experience only those aspects which strengthen and overlooking aspects which contradict. The second way is by individuals failing to act on the basis of new experience even after it has broken through to awareness. Because of these tendencies, a learning situation must have two properties: it must convey information indicating the desirability of a change and it must create conditions which will help to bring about the change and make it habitual. Jerome Frank states that for a learning situation to be effective in changing attitudes,

> ...it should be perceived by the learner as relevant to his purposes so that he becomes involved in it. It should challenge his old ideas but support him emotionally while doing so. It should supply incentives to apply what he learns by giving him opportunities to test out his old and new attitudes and ingrain the better ones through practice--and the more it resembles the rest of his life the better.[7]

Parent Education Within the Cooperative Nursery School

A learning situation, as outlined above, may be found within the framework of the cooperative nursery school. Such schools have as their aim, not only to provide training and a happy life for children, but "to provide training and experience for the mothers that will give them help and greater pleasure in rearing their children."[8] It is in the structure

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[7]Jerome Frank, op. cit., p. 19.

[8]Frances Upson, "How Cooperative Nursery Schools Can Help Young Families," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956) p. 11.

of the cooperative nursery school that parent education has an integral place and an extremely important function. These beliefs concerning the cooperative nursery school have been expressed by many professionally trained nursery and parent educators but because the cooperative nursery school movement is relatively recent, they are not always able to support their findings with scientific research. However, the beliefs they express seem to be sound within the limits of the information available to them.

Olive McVickar writes, "We believe that a cooperative contains within its structure all the elements of the best possible education for young children. What a mother learns to do at school she finds she can also do with success at home--the same sort of discipline, the same creative encouragement, the same solutions to all the ordinary situations of life with children. For the children, it means the tremendous advantage of consistent values, the same at home and at school."[9]

Anna Wolf states, "A good nursery school, then, to some degree must always be an extension of the home. Though it offers experiences which the home, by its very nature, cannot offer, it should not break sharply with all that has gone before in the child's experience. There should be a continuous interchange of experience and counsel between parents and teachers. Teachers must recognize the parent-child relationships as the cornerstone on which the child's life is

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[9]Olive B. McVickar, "Parent and Child," New York Times Magazine (August 13, 1950) p. 36.

constructed and must understand the part they can play in strengthening it."[10]

All this may be accomplished through the parent education program within the cooperative nursery school. Katharine Whiteside-Taylor states, "No other single educational medium seems to have as many potentialities for significant parental and preparental education as cooperative nursery schools."[11]

Description of Cooperative Nursery Schools

To understand the function of parent education within the cooperative nursery school it may be helpful to describe what is meant by this term. The term "cooperative nursery schools" primarily means neighborhood schools formed through the initiative of ten to twelve families, with the parents' cooperation not only in the organization and business end but also in the educational processes of guiding the children. These schools usually operate on a half-day basis, five days a week. They are generally housed in unused schoolrooms, churches, recreation centers, private houses, and a few have built their own buildings cooperatively. Typically, a qualified teacher is in full charge every day. Each mother gives one morning a week, or the amount of time scheduled, to assist the teacher in charge, or take care of certain administrative duties. Berson and Moustakas in a 1951 survey of nursery

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[10]Anna W. M. Wolf, The Parent's Manual (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941) p. 323.

[11]Katharine W. Taylor, "Cooperative Nursery Schools Educate Families," Teachers College Record, LIV (1953) p. 333.

schools found that about 70% of the cooperatives studied had mothers serving as assistant teachers, and all of them indicated that they depended on parents to handle school policies, fund raising, administration and community relations. Two-thirds of the cooperative nursery schools studied were private, independent, non-profit organizations with at least one paid director or teacher. The other one-third were affiliated with various community agencies and educational institutions, which usually provided the housing for the school and paid the salary of the director or head teacher.[12]

Benefits of the Cooperative Nursery School to Parents

The cooperative nursery school seems to benefit parents, especially mothers, in a number of ways. Among these ways are the sense of significance and responsibility mothers gain through working and participating in the cooperative program, as well as the training in child guidance they receive from trained teachers outside their home.

It has been said that "the American mother of young children is an anomaly; she is parent and choregirl with aspirations and often training for other professional occupations."[13] Within the cooperative nursery school these mothers may find satisfaction in the following ways. By actually assisting the teacher in working with the children, the mother

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[12]Clark E. Moustakas and Minnie Perrin Berson, The Nursery School and Child Care Centers (New York: Whiteside Inc. and William Morrow and Company, 1955) p. 24.

[13]Mary Waldrop and Ruth Spiegel, "Group Processes in a Community Nursery School," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956) p. 14.

herself often becomes semi-professional in her handling of group situations. By doing various administrative jobs in connection with the running of the school and serving on committees she applies her energies and talents to something beneficial outside of the family. But the key factor, according to Waldrop, seems to be, "that the jobs mothers do and the roles they play strengthen their competence, give them real status and increase their sense of significance."[14]

> The outlet which parent cooperative nursery schools afford for young mothers seem to be of inestimable value. Young mothers who have had careers, or who have participated actively in community affairs, with the coming of children find themselves cut off from outlets for their special abilities and interests. Many mothers report that their absorption in the service possibilities which exist within a cooperative has given them a sense of significant contributions to a worthwhile community venture while permitting them to continue to carry satisfactorily their responsibilities to their own children and families.[15]

Frances Upson states that, "among the means of relieving the young mother's conflicts none offer more definite, specific help than a good cooperative nursery school...Here the young mother is given food for thought; here she has social contacts that make life pleasanter; here is a place where she can use many of her skills; here her child is safe and happy, so she can have relaxed time for shopping, visiting, etc."[16]

Dorothy Kaufman[17] conducted a descriptive study of the

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[14] Ibid., p. 15.

[15] K. D. Wann, "Some Values and Needs of Cooperative Nursery Schools," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956) p. 46.

[16] Upson, op. cit., p. 10.

[17] Dorothy Drennan Kaufman, "A Descriptive Study of the Cooperative Nursery Movement in Michigan," Dissertation Abstracts, XVIII (1958) p. 2077.

herself often been an inter-professional in a variety of group situations. By doing volunteer or administrative jobs in connection with the children's school and serving on committees she applies her organization and talents to executing beneficial outside of her family. In the day nursery, according to Waldron, seems to be, that the parents do and the roles they play strongly in their development, but then social status and income tends [illegible]."[14]

> The social value [illegible] cooperative nursery schools afford for young children [illegible] social [illegible]. Young children have been [illegible], or well [illegible] participated actively in [illegible] activities. The [illegible] sending of children time [illegible] [illegible] children [illegible] social activities [illegible]. Many [illegible] a [illegible] and [illegible] encouraging [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in a cooperative has [illegible] when a [illegible] of [illegible] contrast [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] their [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].[15]

Dorothy [illegible] [illegible], "[illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] specific [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

cooperative nursery schools in Michigan and found that the advantage parents most often cited for belonging to a cooperative nursery was that of self-fulfillment. Both parents and teachers cited more gains occuring for parents from the cooperative nursery school experience than for children. These gains were "the ability to relax tensions in the family situation and a better understanding of children."[18]

Another reason why the parent education program within the cooperative nursery school is important, is because it gives parents information and reassurance they need concerning their children. Children at three and four years of age are showing definite signs of having a will of their own that often goes counter to wishes of peers, parents and other adults. Many parents feel inadequate and not happy with their work as parents. This point in the family life cycle is clearly a "teachable moment," a time when parents need information and reassurance.

Increasing opportunity is also given both parents and children to gain in confidence. Such confidence can and often does start through learning to appreciate each child as a human personality worthy of respect.

> Elizabeth Hearly Ross has said that we gain in confidence as we can relinquish the need to "get the answers." Learning to recognize that a number of different solutions to a problem may all be correct is not an easy process for many, but when parents and teachers are trying honestly to find all possible causes of frustration and conflict and of mutual respect, growth is a natural result. As parents gain in their feeling of acceptance by other parents and the staff they are better able to relax, and to enjoy their own children as well as other children and

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 2077.

adults. In this atmosphere growth can take place. Such parents, who feel good about themselves and truly enjoy and respect their children, are ready and able to take on responsibilities for associations beyond themselves, and may take an active part in the next school experience of their child.[19]

Methods of Parent Education Used in the Cooperative Nursery School

There are many different methods of parent education utilized in the cooperative nursery school. All of these methods may in some way help parents to develop healthy attitudes toward child-rearing. A discussion of these different methods will follow.

Orientation

As a mother begins her experience with a cooperative nursery school there is usually some type of orientation program. In some cooperative nursery schools a thorough-going course in nursery school education is required of parents before they may enroll their children in the cooperative, unless the mother has already had such training. This course is followed by workshops, consisting of demonstrations of techniques and procedures, and some opportunity for practice in a demonstration center. In some cities this basic course has been expanded to about fifteen two-hour lecture-discussion meetings; required reading in child development, child guidance, and nursery education; and a similar amount of recorded observation on children's group interactions in nursery school.

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[19]Norma Perry, "Personal Growth of Parent Participants in Cooperative Nursery Schools," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956) p. 12.

It is concluded by a written examination. Those completing the work receive certificates.[20] Some cooperatives have been forced to offer an "on the job" training program for teachers and parents of the cooperative nursery school because of the shortage of qualified teachers. This is accompanied by continued in-service training.[21] In some groups a special group conference for new mothers is arranged at the beginning of each term, or more often if as many as four or five parents are in the process of entering at one time. This gives the mothers a chance to meet each other and gain security from realizing there are others at the same beginning stage, and to ask questions about what has been seen and what is to come.[22] Other cooperatives may have a very short orientation period where the parent has an individual conference with the teacher before her first participation day and learns about the school and what is required of her. Then a day of observation will be arranged when the mother can observe the teacher, the parent assistants, and the children, without participating herself. If she has any questions a teacher will be available to discuss these with her.

Observation

Observing a trained nursery school teacher work with

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[20]Katharine W. Taylor, Parent Cooperative Nursery Schools (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954) pp. 61-62.

[21]Henry Brandt, "Training Teachers and Parents for Cooperative Nursery Schools," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956) p. 6.

[22]Taylor, Parent Cooperative Nursery Schools, pp. 87-89.

the children is a valuable form of parent education. Through observing the teacher, the mother learns about the philosophy of the nursery school and how the trained teacher reacts to individual problems, administers discipline and encourages the individual child, etc.

In a cooperative there is also the opportunity to profit from observing one's own child with other children. "Parent's are not so threatened by their own child's behavior, or 'misbehavior' when they have the chance to see others behaving in a like manner."[23]

Participation

Participation, as well as observation, in the nursery school forms a very important part of the program to the parent. Without being much aware of the process, the mother is learning about individual differences and similarities in children in their physical and emotional development, language development, amount of help and supervision necessary, attention span, equipment used, and approaches to children.[24]

> Through participation under skilled teachers, a mother has an opportunity for observation and further understanding not only of her own child but of young children in general...She becomes surer and more relaxed in her attitudes as she learns what children are really like at various ages...Sensitivities and insights are born, often new attitudes taken on, which are valuable to the mother both at home and at school.[25]

Participation in the cooperative nursery school program

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[23]Perry, loc. cit.

[24]Brandt, loc. cit.

[25]Our Cooperative Nursery School (Silver Springs, Maryland: Silver Springs Nursery School, Inc., 1949) p. 13.

was felt to be so important by the parents studied by Dorothy Kaufman, that they did not favor a connection with public education because they feared they would lose the opportunity to participate in the school program.[25]

Interaction of Parents

Interaction of parents with each other is another important part of the program. Through sharing experiences with other parents, they become better able to accept their own children, themselves, and other children and their parents. They gain an increasing appreciation of the very important truth that, until you truly like and respect yourself, your ability to enjoy and appreciate others is very limited. Another way in which parents interact within the cooperative nursery school is in obtaining and maintaining equipment. Many cooperatives have a practice of enrolling the whole family in a cooperative instead of just the child. The father is often expected to take part in "work parties" where Dads get together and refurbish old equipment and make new equipment. Work parties where the mothers get together and mend doll clothes, make curtains, and work at other things to make the nursery school more attractive are also common. These work parties are valuable as social experiences for parents who perhaps rarely have a chance to get out of their homes and meet others with children of the same age who are coping with some of the same problems in child-rearing.

Other activities which require the interaction of

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[25]Kaufman, loc. cit.

parents may be: recruiting new participants; arranging the schedule for assistants to the teacher; collecting fees; taking care of x-ray reports; child health examinations; enrollment agreements; keeping a library; keeping the premises clean and orderly; planning evening meetings, as well as others.[27]

Meetings

Another method of parent education is through planned meetings. These meetings may be in the form of in-service training, held weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly according to the needs of the parents. They may be of a discussion type where the parents study and prepare to discuss relevant topics. Professional people in fields related to child development may be invited to speak or appear on a discussion panel. A film or a play may be presented to stimulate discussions. Some of the meetings may be of a general nature when all parents having children in the cooperative nursery school are invited, while others may be of a more specific nature when only mothers in a certain group would meet to discuss topics of particular interest to that group.

Another type of meeting which is a valuable method of parent education is the workshop meeting, when the presentation and use of certain types of materials and equipment are demonstrated by the teacher and/or groups of mothers. "Often the mothers themselves take the place of the children in finger-painting, music and rhythm, clay, block-building, housekeeping

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[27]Brandt, op. cit., p. 8.

[illegible] may be particularly [illegible] amongst [illegible] schools for assistance in the [illegible], including [illegible] the use of X-ray [illegible], still [illegible] [illegible] medical agencies; [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] the problem. Given art activity, [illegible] other [illegible], as well as [illegible].[27]

Reading

Another method of [illegible] elucidation is the use of [illegible] and [illegible]. These [illegible] may be in the form of [illegible] training, help [illegible], [illegible], or [illegible] according to the needs of the [illegible]. They may be of a [illegible] type where the [illegible] study and [illegible] to [illegible] relevant [illegible]. Pro-[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to child [illegible] may be invited to [illegible] or appear in a [illegible] [illegible]. A film or a play may be [illegible] to stimulate discussions. Some of the [illegible] of a [illegible] nature when all [illegible] have [illegible] in the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] also involved, while [illegible] may be of a more specific nature [illegible] only a [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to discuss [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

Much [illegible] of [illegible] which is a valuable method of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], when the [illegible] and use of [illegible] [illegible] and equipment are [illegible] illustrated by the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. Given the methods [illegible] role the [illegible] of the children in flower-[illegible], music and [illegible], clay, block-building, house-keeping

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27 [illegible], [illegible], p. [illegible].

play, dramatic play, nature study, etc. Not only do the parents in this way improve their technique in providing for play in various areas but they comprehend something of what the children themselves feel in participating in them."[28] Such meetings have been especially valuable when various groups have held them jointly, so that one or more of the groups could present to the others their way of handling certain activities.

Informal Parent-Teacher Contacts

A very important aspect of parent education is that which is given informally through interviews and conversations with the teacher, or staff supervisors. This may also be in the form of informal discussions among parents. These occur chiefly when the children are brought to the nursery and when they are picked up to go home. Parents share problems and experiences in the solutions of their problems.[29]

Paula Dickham[30] conducted a study to investigate the kind and amount of information that parents receive as a result of incidental contacts with teachers in the cooperative nursery school. She observed and reported specific parent-teacher contacts. Although no definite conclusions could be drawn, it appeared that more guidance was given to the parent concerning the progress of the child than on any other topic. It seemed that parents were interested in a report of the

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[28]Taylor, Parent Cooperative Nursery Schools, op. cit., p. 91.

[29]Brandt, op. cit., p. 9.

[30]Paula Iris Dickman, "A Study of Informal Parent Education in the Cooperative Nursery School," (unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1950).

child's activities and interests for one day, a week or even a month. Also, it appeared that parents were frequently concerned with the transition from home to school and with the health and protection of the child. The teacher more often took the cue from the parent for pursuing the discussion, this indicated the parent's interest in learning more about the development of her child.

It is the practice of some cooperative nursery schools to have a short discussion period with the parents who were assisting that day immediately after each nursery school session. In this way the parents have a chance to ask the teacher questions concerning specific incidents of behavior they observed that day, as well as questions concerning their own child. This is also a very helpful way for parents and teachers to get to know and understand each other.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

A related form of this phase of parent education is the private conference of parents and teachers regarding the parent's child. If a teacher feels that parents should be notified concerning the behavior of their child, or if the teacher is interested in finding out more about a particular child in order to understand him, she may arrange the meeting. Likewise parents wanting help in understanding their child or his progress in school may arrange the conference.[31]

Katharine Whiteside-Taylor suggests that an individual conference between the teacher and parent regarding each child

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[31]Brandt, loc. cit.

is such an important aspect of parent education that one should be held at least once each term regardless of whether any "problems" have arisen. She feels it is equally as important to discuss positive as negative aspects. Concerning reports she suggests, "a folder should be kept on each child containing written observations and anecdotes about him made by both teacher and cooperating mothers, and any pictures he has made that have not already been taken home...A written summary of the major points in each child's development should be provided parents by the teacher every term."[32]

Library

Another important aspect of parent education is information gained through reading books and pamphlets made available to the parents at the cooperative nursery schools. Many schools have their own library, which is a valuable asset to the mothers. Other schools that are not so fortunate as to have a library may provide recommended reading lists of books which may be obtained at the public library.

Aids for Parent Education

Recognizing their need for continuing education and for help in other areas of their work, some groups of parent cooperatives have formed councils or federations. The purposes of a council may be to exchange information and services through its newsletter, to hold regular meetings of delegates from each school and to arrange panel discussions for compar-

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[32]Taylor, Parent Cooperative Nursery Schools, op. cit., p. 91.

able officers from each school who meet to try to solve their common problems or, at least, to discover that kindred spirits are struggling with them, too.[33] Councils are also able to provide services that the schools cannot handle individually, such as a child guidance clinic where leading pediatricians, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, educators and council representatives may be available for consultation.

Monthly bulletins or newsletters put out by councils and/or individual schools, carrying news of activities and listings of educational opportunities and services, can be of genuine value. Some of these contain comments by teachers and committee chairmen; quotations from books or articles; summaries of talks or discussions given for various groups; specific instructions, such as for making fingerpaints or drums; or notes on new children's books, records, songs, etc.[34]

The preparation of a manual by a specific group in a council may be of value in crystallizing findings, focusing thought, evaluating procedures, raising standards, and developing a philosophy. "Although reading such publications has undoubted education value...even more intensive education comes to those who compile and write such a manual."[35]

Research Studies of Methods in Parent Education

Although there are numerous ways in which parent

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[33]Margaret Weaver, "The Montgomery County Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956) p. 16.

[34]Taylor, Parent Cooperative Nursery Schools, op. cit., p. 102.

[35]Ibid., p. 103.

education is carried on in a cooperative nursery school, there have been few scientific research studies concerning the effectiveness of certain methods and their value in relation to other methods. Clara Tucker suggests that "to measure the effectiveness of a parent education program, significance should be attached to changes found in parents' knowledge and attitudes in the methods of meeting the problems of child guidance."[36]

A number of studies have attempted to measure the effectiveness of parent education programs by measuring a change in knowledge practices and attitudes of parents toward child development and child rearing.

Change in Knowledge

Hazel Schaus[37] made a study in 1934 to compare and determine experimentally the results of teaching the same parent education subject material to two groups by different methods--lecture and study discussion. Tests were given before instruction began and again at the end. It was found that both had raised their scores on the information tests, but the tests on changes of practices did not indicate important differences.

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[36]Clara Tucker, "A Study of Mothers' Practices and Children's Activities in a Cooperative Nursery School," Teachers College Contributions to Education. No. 810, Teachers College, Columbia University (1940) p. 7.

[37]Hazel Spencer Schaus, "An Experimental Investigation of Methods in Parent Education," University of Iowa Studies in Parent Education I., VI (1932) pp. 117-134.

Gwen Andrew[38] in an experiment designed to test the effectiveness of the workshop method in teaching mental-health information regarding children used four techniques of presentation: lecture, recordings, panel discussion, and film. Of the four methods the lecture type of presentation seemed to be the most effective, and the recordings were ranked second. The workshop method using these four techniques was also found to be an effective method of teaching since participants scored significantly higher on the final test in relation to the preliminary test than did the control group.

In contrast to the above findings Gwen Andrew, et al.[39] found no significant changes in the information and knowledge of mothers attending a discussion group concerning the developmental problems of children, when these mothers' scores on a test given at the beginning and end of the series were compared to the scores of mothers in a control group.

Change in Practices

Lois Jack[40] through research in parent education, developed an instrument for scoring parents' practices and the

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[38]Gwen Andrew, "A Study of the Effectiveness of a Workshop Method for Mental Health Education," Mental Hygiene, XXXVIII (1954) pp. 267-278.

[39]Gwen Andrew, John Paul Sibillio and Vernon A. Stehman, "Utility of the Small Group Discussion Method as Practical in certain Applied Settings," American Journal of Public Health, L, part I (1960) pp. 785-790.

[40]Lois M. Jack, "A Device for the Measurement of Parent Attitudes and Practices," University of Iowa Studies in Parent Education I, VI (1932) pp. 137-149.

behavior of their children as criteria of their efficiency in child-rearing. This instrument was used to determine the improvement in parental practices of 28 mothers enrolled in a course in parent education with no previous training in this area. Tests were given at the beginning and at the end of the course. The second test showed improvement, especially in questions concerning play and discipline, and there was a suggestion that parents who made the lowest initial scores on the test had improved most.

Vera Sorosage[41] interested in the parent education program in the Spartan Cooperative Nursery School at Michigan State University, found that participation in a cooperative nursery school tended to effect changes in parents' child-rearing practices. Parents' experiences in the school tended to increase their permissiveness in discipline, provide greater variety and appropriateness of creative materials and encourage better understanding of "process over product." However, health practices had been established prior to the nursery school experience and there was almost no change following the nursery school experience.

Change in Attitudes

A review of the literature seems to indicate the effectiveness of parent education programs in changing knowledge and practices of parents toward their children. However

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[41] Alvera D. Sorosage, "A Comparison of Selected Child Rearing Practices of Cooperative Nursery School Parents Before and After Nursery School Attendance of Child," (unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1959)

important the knowledge and practices of parents toward children seems to be, Lawrence Frank suggests that it is the attitudes of parents toward child-rearing that are perhaps most important in influencing a child's personality development.

As mentioned previously, Tyler suggests four ways attitudes commonly develop or change in individuals: First through the assimilation from the environment; second through the emotional effect of certain kinds of experiences; third, through direct intellectual processes; and fourth through traumatic experiences. Parent education seems to offer experiences in the first three of those four ways.

Two studies seem to be especially concerned with the changes in the attitudes of individuals toward child guidance through assimilation from the environment.

The first study by Marshall, et al.[42] showed that classroom teaching modifies the attitudes of individual students toward approval and acceptance of children.

The second study by Walters and Fisher[43] indicated that over a two year period there was a change in the attitudes toward child guidance of individuals majoring in child development. This study suggested that since attitudes continue to change when instruction is provided in child development and

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[42]M. R. Marshall et al."Modification of Student Attitudes on Guidance of Children Scales Through Classroom Teaching," Journal of Home Economics, LII (1960) pp. 185-90.

[43]J. Walters and C. Fisher, "Changes in the Attitudes of Young Women toward Child Guidance over a Two Year Period," Journal of Educational Research, LII (1958) pp. 115-118.

guidance, attitudes are not merely a function of maturity.

A number of studies on changes in attitudes seem to be concerned with the development of attitudes through direct intellectual processes.

Walters[44] found a more significant change in attitudes toward child guidance of college women who took an introductory course in child development than of a control group who had not taken the course.

Costin[45] found that students expressed less dominating, possessive, and ignoring attitudes toward parent-child relationships after concluding an undergraduate course in child psychology, than they had prior to taking the course.

In a similar study of the change in attitudes of students taking a child psychology class, Costin[46] found, through administering the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) before and after the course, that the greatest change of attitude occured in the area of "excessive demand for striving" and "harsh punitive control." Costin also found that in spite of the fact that some students had attained significantly less information about child psychology than others, they still changed as much, on the average, as did those who showed a

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[44]J. Walters, "Effects of an Introductory Course in Child Development on the Attitudes of College Women toward Child Guidance," Journal of Experimental Education, LVII (1956) pp. 311-321.

[45]Frank Costin, "The Effects of Child Psychology on Attitudes Toward Parent-Child Relations," Journal of Educational Psychology, XLIX (1958) pp. 37-42.

[46]Frank Costin, "Measuring Attitudinal Outcomes of Child Psychology with the PARI," Journal of Educational Research, LIII (1960) pp. 289-294.

greater acquisition of knowledge.

A number of studies concerned with the effectiveness of a parent education program have found changes in parental attitudes toward child-rearing.

One study in this area was conducted in 1934 by Hedrick[47] to measure the effectiveness of a carefully constructed program of learning in changing the attitudes of parents toward the development of self-reliance in children. The subjects were 48 parents of preschool children who met once each week for a series of six meetings. The results indicated a significant change to more favorable attitudes concerning self-reliance of children. Subjects ranging in age from 22 to 29 years and from 30 to 47 years had practically the same gain.

Stott[48] was concerned with the measurement of the common attitudes and beliefs of young prospective parents about small children's behavior, care and training, and with an evaluation of the changes in these attitudes taking place during attendance at a series of eight weekly educational meetings designed to prepare these young people for parenthood. A group of 28 couples who attended the meetings were compared with a control group of 13 couples who did not attend. The results showed that on the whole, and with few exceptions,

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[47]B. E. Hedrick, "The Effectiveness of a Program of Learning Designed to Change Parental Attitudes Toward Self-Reliance," University of Iowa Studies in Parent Education III, X (1934) pp. [illegible]-[illegible].

[48]L. H. Stott and M. P. Barson, "Some Changes in Attitudes Resulting from a Pre-parental Education Program," Journal of Social Psychology, XXXIV (1951) pp. 191-202.

changes in individual attitudes were in the positive direction, toward the permissive and away from the rigid, authoritarian view of child care and discipline. The average differences in results between the first and second tests for the experimental groups were highly significant statistically while the differences between the tests of the control group were not. It appeared, therefore, that the prepparental program produced a desired modification of attitude and point of view, over and above that produced by interaction between obstetrician and patient and the usual guidance given during the course of pregnancy.

Irving Shapiro[49] found that parents who were members of the experimental group attending a series of group discussion meetings modified their child-rearing attitudes in the predicted direction (toward increased good judgment, lessened authoritarianism, etc.) to a statistically significant degree. The control group did not show significant modifications in child-rearing attitudes. Another interesting finding was that those who attended four or five meetings achieved significantly greater change than did those who attended three or fewer.

The effectiveness of methods of parent education offered in the cooperative nursery school can be seen from the results of a study by Maxine Nordquist[50] to learn if

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[49]Irving S. Shapiro, "Is Group Parent Education Worthwhile?" Marriage and Family Living, XVIII (1956) pp. 154-161.

[50]Maxine Winsor Nordquist, "Mother's Child-Rearing Attitudes Related to Nursery School Contact," (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 1961).

[illegible]

[illegible] that parents who were members of [illegible] ing a series of group discussion meetings [illegible] child-rearing attitudes in [illegible] increased good judgment, [illegible] to a statistically significant degree. [illegible] results [illegible] clinic [illegible] the results [illegible] attitudes [illegible] the [illegible] study [illegible].

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[49] Irving S. Shapiro, "Is Group Parent Education Worthwhile?" Marriage and Family Living, XVIII (1956) pp. 154-161.

[50] Maxine Minor Nordquist, "Mothers's Child-Rearing Attitudes Related to Nursery School Contact," (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 1961).

mothers' child-rearing attitudes were related to nursery school contact. The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) was given to three groups of mothers: 1) a control group of mothers attending a library story hour, 2) a group of mothers having their eldest child attending a private nursery school and 3) a group of mothers having their eldest child attending a cooperative nursery school. At the end of the six month period the PARI was again administered to these mothers and the degree of change was measured. The findings indicated that, 1) over a six month period, there were not many significant changes in mothers' attitudes regarding child-rearing practices, 2) a change in attitude was found only in the school groups, 3) the cooperative schools' experience was the most effective in changing attitudes and 4) the scales that focused on attitudes of child-rearing found in the Maternal Overprotection syndrome changed most often in attitude response. The change of attitudes within the cooperative nursery school group was contributed to the unique structure of the small group of mothers in the cooperative, the interdependence of the mothers, the opportunity to know and teach young children other than their own, and the home-school relationships which nurtured better understandings and knowledge of child growth and development.

Summary

This review of literature includes the opinions of professional people in child development and parent education and the few scientific research findings in this area. It seems to indicate that parent education is a valuable part of

the cooperative nursery school program. The results of this program may be seen in changes in the attitudes, practices, and knowledge of the parents participating in programs of parent education toward better understanding of child development and child-rearing.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Instrument

The Parental Attitude Research Instrument

The Parental Attitude Research Instrument, the PARI, Final Form IV, was chosen as the instrument to obtain the data on the mothers' attitudes toward child-rearing. See Appendix B. An attitude scale, the PARI, was selected for the survey of verbalized attitudes. Other methods often used to measure parental attitudes, such as direct observations, interviews, case studies or controlled laboratory methods did not seem feasible for use in this study and so were rejected. The PARI scale was selected because of the reliability of the items as tested by internal consistency and test-retests and because of noting the wide acceptance of this instrument among researchers in child development as a measure of parental attitudes toward child-rearing.

The PARI was developed around 1955 by Earl S. Schaefer and Richard Q. Bell[1] at the National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Maryland. Theories of parental influence upon development of children and a review of previous research had

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[1]Earl S. Schaefer, and Richard Q. Bell, "Development of a Parental Attitude Research Instrument," Child Development, XXIX (1958) pp. 339-361.

indicated to them the need for the development of a set of homogeneous measures of parental attitudes. They selected a set of 32 concepts or categories from item groupings which had shown high discriminating power in the studies of Mark[2] and Shoben.[3] Categories which were most discriminating were those of unhealthy or pathogenic attitudes. A test composed entirely of pathogenic scales left many mothers dissatisfied. Therefore, to improve the psychological satisfaction of respondents, so-called "Rapport" scales of Equalitarianism, Comradeship and Sharing, and Encouraging Verbalization were included in the PARI in spite of their relatively low reliability and poor discrimination. Attitude scales of five to ten items were developed to measure the original 32 categories and the three "Rapport" scales.

Forms I, II, and III were trial forms for testing the reliability of the items. Internal consistency reliability coefficients were calculated for the five-item scales as well as test-retest reliabilities. In general, the reliabilities in both methods were considered to be satisfactory. The five most reliable items for 23 scales were selected for the Final Form IV. The items within a scale are cyclically arranged so that the first subscale includes items 1, 24, 47, 70, and 93, the second subscale items 2, 25, 48, 71, and 94, etc. Factor analysis of the PARI scales plus the internal consistency and

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[2]J. C. Mark, "The Attitudes of the Mothers of Male Schizophrenics Toward Child Behavior," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLVIII (1953) pp. 185-189.

[3]Shoben, op. cit.

test-retest reliabilities gave evidence that the scales measure discrete attitudes.

Schaefer and Bell administered their test to student nurses, primiparae and multiparae mothers with the same specific set of directions. The forms required circling "A" for strong agreement, "a" for mild agreement, "d" for mild disagreement, "D" for strong disagreement. Weights were then assigned to the response categories, 4,3,2,1, respectively. A scale score was the sum of the item weights.

As yet the validity of this test as a measurement of parental attitudes has not been established. A number of studies using the instrument have been completed, but no predictive validity studies have been carried out. However, Schaefer and Bell cite a number of studies[4] as evidence to support the probable validity of this general approach to the study of parent-child relationships. The authors also state that "the content validity or the adequacy of the concepts of parental attitudes toward child-rearing can be determined by attempting to add concepts which would add new variance to measurement of this domain. Adequate evidence of the construct validity of these scales must be based upon research on various correlates of these measures."[5]

Explanation of the Attitude Scales on the PARI

There are 23 attitude scales included in the PARI questionnaire. Twenty of these attitude scales are expressed

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[4]Schaefer and Bell, op. cit., pp. 341-344.

[5]Ibid., p. 353.

in such a way that the lower the score on the items within the scale the more socially acceptable is the score on the attitude scale. Three of the attitude scales, which have been called "Rapport" scales, contain items stated in such a way that the higher the score on the items within the scale the more socially acceptable is the score on the attitude scale. In order to facilitate the interpretation of scores on the attitude scales in this study the writer in her description of scales reversed the name of the three "Rapport" scales from Encouraging Verbalization, Equalitarianism, and Comradeship and Sharing, to Discouraging Verbalization, Unequalitarianism, and Lack of Comradeship and Sharing. The number values assigned to the responses were also reversed. Thus, all low scores consistently indicate a similar degree of social acceptability.

The 23 attitude scales on the PARI questionnaire are as follows:

1. Discouraging Verbalization Scale: Items 1, 24, 47, and 70 are concerned with the mother's feeling in regard to permitting her child the right to express his ideas and opinions and to respect him for these opinions even if they are in conflict with her own. Item 93 is concerned with whether a child can depend on his parent's love when he is in trouble. Even though this item has a slightly different context it still measures the trend of discouraging verbalization, since a child, fearing he might lose his mother's love because of the trouble he is in, may not tell her of this trouble.

2. Fostering Dependency Scale: Items 2, 25, 48, 71,

and 94 measure a mother's attitude toward exposing her child to things that may prove to be difficult or discouraging for him.

3. Seclusion of the Mother Scale: Items 3, 26, 49, 72, and 95 deal with the feeling that the mother is and should be tied to her home and children and this should be her only source of satisfaction and happiness.

4. Breaking the Will Scale: Items 4, 27, 50, 73, and 96 measure the opinion of mothers that children must be taught early that the parent is "the boss."

5. Martyrdom Scale: Items 5, 28, 51, 74, and 97 reflect the attitude that the mother gives up everything, including her own happiness, for her children. This scale seems to be related to the Seclusion of the Mother Scale.

6. Fear of Harming the Baby Scale: Items 6, 29, 52, 75, and 98 deal especially with insecurity of mothers in their role as a mother. This applies more to mothers of infants than of preschool children but in the latter case it may reflect a mother's continuing insecurity carried over from when the child was younger.

7. Marital Conflict Scale: Items 7, 30, 53, 76, and 99 are concerned with the conflict between the husband and wife, and would not necessarily be subject to change through participation or interest in a cooperative nursery school except indirectly, as for example by allowing the mother some free time when her child is not demanding her attention, giving her a sense of responsibility outside of the home, or merely through association with other families interested

in the cooperative nursery school.

8. Strictness Scale: Items 8, 31, 54, 77, and 100 measure the attitude that a strict mother is a kind mother who prepares her child for future happiness.

9. Irritability Scale: Items 9, 32, 55, 78, and 101 measure the mother's attitude that raising children is nerve wracking and that mothers have a right to be irritable.

10. Excluding Outside Influence Scale: Items 10, 33, 56, 79, and 102 measure the feeling of mothers that children must look to their parents and no one else for the direction of their behavior and for their thoughts.

11. Deification Scale: Items 11, 34, 57, 80, and 103 measure the depth of a mother's feeling that respect for parents is a child's sacred duty. This scale is closely related to the Excluding Outside Influences Scale.

12. Suppression of Aggression Scale: Items 12, 35, 58, 81, and 104 measure the degree of discomfort that a mother feels regarding the physical aggression expressed in her child's behavior.

13. Rejection of the Homemaking Role Scale: Items 13, 36, 59, 82, and 105 are concerned with the feeling that the mother is tied to the home and cannot do anything for her own pleasure. This scale is closely related to the Seclusion of the Mother and the Martyrdom Scales.

14. Unequalitarianism Scale: Items 14, 37, 60, 83, and 106 measure one aspect of parental maturity or immaturity in family relationships, as shown through respect for the wishes of the child.

15. Approval of Activity Scale: Items 15, 38, 61, 84, and 107 measure the opinion that the happiest child is the most active and should never be allowed to waste a minute.

16. Avoidance of Communication Scale: Items 16, 39, 62, 85, and 108 indicate a mother's willingness or lack of willingness to know and respect the thoughts of her child.

17. Inconsiderateness of the Husband Scale: Items 17, 40, 63, 86, and 109 indicate the mother's feeling that husbands should be more kind and accept their share of responsibility in regard to the children, which would in turn make the mother's job easier.

18. Suppression of Sexuality Scale: Items 18, 41, 64, 87, and 110 measure a mother's attitude toward sex knowledge, behavior and curiosity which children display.

19. Ascendance of the Mother Scale: Items 19, 42, 65, 88, and 111 measure the mother's feeling that it is the duty of the mother to be the head of the household and take the responsibility upon herself for its most efficient functioning.

20. Intrusiveness Scale: Items 20, 43, 66, 89, and 112 measure the belief that the mother has a right to know everything that goes on in her child's life.

21. Non-comradeship and Lack of Sharing Scale: Items 21, 44, 67, 90, and 113 measure the attitude of mothers to discourage a cooperative, friendly, and sharing relationship between parents and children.

22. Acceleration of Development Scale: Items 22, 45, 68, 91, and 114 measure a mother's attitude toward an infant

more than toward the preschool child but the items are indicative of an attitude toward waiting for a child's maturation when guiding development. Item 63 is concerned with emotional development while the other four items are concerned primarily with physical development.

22. Dependency of the Mother Scale: Items 23, 46, 69, 92, and 113 are concerned with the maturity of the mother to face her role as a new mother. This scale is concerned primarily with items in relation to infants and seems to be related to the Fear of Harming the Baby Scale.

Establishing Attitude Scale Scores of Specialists in Child Development

In order to determine the effectiveness of a parent education program in fostering maternal attitudes considered desirable for the healthy personality development of children, the reported attitudes of a group of specialists in child development were secured. The specialist's scores on the PAMI were considered as representative of socially desirable parental attitudes the parent might be expected to develop through a parent education program. Mothers' scores were compared with those of specialists in determining the extent to which mothers' attitudes approached those parental attitudes considered conducive to the healthy personality development of children.

Ten professionally trained people in child development were selected to compose the group of specialists. The group included nine members of the faculty of Michigan State University and the director of the Community Nursery School

in Lansing, Michigan.*

All of the specialists have advanced training in child development: one has a doctoral degree in family relations and child development; seven have master's degrees in child development, psychology, or a related field; one is a candidate for the master's degree in child development; and one has had 27 hours of graduate work in child development and early childhood education as well as a vast background of experience in teaching and directing nursery schools.

At the time of the study, nine of these people were teaching and/or directing in a nursery school. Their education and background of experience, which included from two to more than 20 years of working with nursery schools, day care centers, settlement houses, as well as teaching child development and family life at the university level, were considered adequate to qualify them to serve as child development specialists.

The PARI was administered to the specialists. Each item answer in an attitude scale was given a number value 4,

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*The members of the faculty of Michigan State University were: Dr. William Marshall, Associate Professor of Child Development and Family Life; Miss Dorothy Russell, Instructor in Child Development and Director of the Laboratory Preschool; Mrs. Josephine Oudyn, Instructor in Child Development and Teacher in the Laboratory Preschool; Mrs. Diane Hanson, Instructor in Child Development and Teacher in the Laboratory Preschool; Miss Bettie Sue Torrey, Instructor in Child Development and Teacher in the Laboratory Preschool; Miss Betty Garlick, Director and Teacher in Spartan Nursery School; Mrs. Vera Borosage, Instructor in Child Development and Teacher in Spartan Nursery School; Miss Mariella Aikman, Teacher in Spartan Nursery School and Mrs. Joanne Lifshin, Graduate Assistant and Teacher in Spartan Nursery School. Mrs. Ruth Richardson, Director of the Community Nursery School in Lansing, Michigan was the tenth member of the panel of child development specialists.

3, 2, or 1, the lowest number indicating the most socially desirable attitude. The sum of the scale scores was computed for each specialist and mean scale scores for each of the 23 attitude scales were computed. The mean scale scores were used as the criterion of socially desirable parental attitudes toward child-rearing.

The specialists individual scale scores and the group mean scale scores on the 23 attitude scales are recorded in Table I.

TABLE I

SPECIALISTS' SCALE SCORES AND MEAN SCORE ON 23 SCALES

Scales	Specialists 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mean Score
1	9	3	6	8	7	8	7	9	8	7	7.4
2	10	5	10	10	8	10	7	7	10	8	8.5
3	9	7	10	10	9	9	7	9	10	6	8.6
4	7	8	5	6	6	7	5	6	8	5	6.2
5	11	5	6	6	8	8	8	8	10	5	7.5
6	14	5	8	11	9	12	11	11	10	9	10.0
7	16	17	12	13	12	15	19	14	15	18	15.1
8	10	7	8	11	10	10	9	6	10	9	9.0
9	16	13	11	14	10	15	11	12	14	9	12.5
10	9	9	7	10	6	6	5	8	10	5	7.5
11	8	8	9	10	13	10	8	8	9	5	7.8
12	9	6	7	10	9	8	10	7	10	7	8.3
13	14	5	11	13	13	13	10	9	13	7	11.1
14	9	12	8	7	8	11	7	12	11	12	9.7
15	8	5	7	11	9	7	9	7	10	8	8.1
16	9	7	7	9	8	9	11	7	10	8	8.5
17	14	5	10	11	7	12	8	8	10	10	9.5
18	9	5	7	7	3	5	6	3	10	6	6.3
19	9	5	6	10	7	7	8	7	10	6	7.5
20	8	5	6	11	6	6	6	10	10	5	7.3
21.	10	10	6	8	7	11	10	8	10	12	9.2
22	7	5	7	9	6	6	6	5	10	5	6.6
23	12	6	9	11	10	11	10	13	12	6	10.0

Selection of Subjects and Description of the Groups

Method of Selection

The mothers selected to participate in this study were mothers of preschool children (two and one-half years to five years of age) who were living in university housing for married students. Three groups of mothers were used in this study.

Group A consisted of mothers who had a child enrolled in Spartan Nursery School and had participated in the program for at least three terms. A sample of 20 mothers was drawn at random from the list of mothers meeting this criterion. These mothers all had had experience with the parent education program in a cooperative nursery school.

Group B consisted of mothers who had made application to enroll their child in Spartan Nursery School, were on the waiting list and had not had previous experience in a parent cooperative nursery school elsewhere. Seventeen mothers met these criteria. These mothers composed the group who had not had previous experience with the parent education program but had expressed an interest in a cooperative nursery school.

Group C consisted of mothers who did not have a child enrolled and had made no application to have him enrolled in a cooperative nursery school. A sample of 20 mothers who had preschool children was drawn at random from the file of married students living in university housing. The mothers in this group had not had experience nor had they indicated an interest in a cooperative nursery school.

TABLE II

DESCRIPTIVE DATA OF SUBJECTS' FAMILIES

Descriptive Data	Groups A	B	C
Number of families	20	17	19
Mothers foreign born	1	3	3
Mothers age range	21-36	23-31	20-36
Fathers age range	24-36	23-33	21-39
Mothers median age	28	25	25
Fathers median age	30	26	27
Mothers education			
High school	3	2	7
Two years of college	3	4	3
Three to four years of college	12	9	7
Masters	2	2	1
Doctorate (working on)	0	0	1
Fathers education			
Two years of college	0	0	2
Three to four years of college	2	2	4
Masters	5	3	6
Doctorate (working on)	13	12	7
Mothers working			
Full time	1	1	3
Part time	7	1	1
Mothers who are students			
Full time	0	0	1
Part time	1	1	2
Number of children			
Range	1-5	1-4	1-7
Median per family	2	2	2
Age of children			
Range	3 mo.-13 yr.	3wk.-10½yr.	7wk.-15yr.
Median age	4	2½-3	3-3½

Description of the Subjects' Families

The families in the three groups were very similar with respect to the mothers' nationality, age of mother and father, educational background of mother and father, the number of mothers who were students or were gainfully employed, the number and ages of the children in the families and the occupation the father was planning to pursue at the completion of his education. See Table II.

Fifty-six mothers gave descriptive information about their families. (Information was not available for one family)

Forty-nine mothers were born in the United States. Other places of birth mentioned were Canada, Brazil, England, Australia, and Denmark. All of the mothers could speak, read and understand English.

The age range of the mothers was from 20 to 36 years and the age range for the fathers was from 21 to 39 years. The median age for the fathers in all groups was approximately one to two years older than the median age for the mothers. The median age for the mothers and fathers in Group A was approximately three to four years older than the median age for the mothers and fathers in Group B or Group C.

Only one mother in the three-groups was a doctoral candidate, five mothers either had their master's degrees or were working on them. Twenty-eight mothers had from three to four years of college, ten had only two years of college, and 12 mothers had no education above high school.

Thirty-two of the fathers were doctoral candidates,

14 were master's degree candidates, eight had from three to four years of college, and only two had less than three years of college.

The educational background of the mothers and fathers in Groups A and B was similar and slightly more advanced than that of the mothers and fathers in Group C. For example, seven mothers in Group C had only a high school education as compared to three in Group A and two in Group B. Twelve mothers in Group A had from three to four years of college compared to only seven in Group C. Thirteen fathers in Group A and 12 in Group B were working toward doctoral degrees while only seven fathers in Group C were in this educational category.

The number of children per family ranged from one to seven with the median being two children. The age range of the children was from three weeks to 13 years of age. The median age of the children in Group A was slightly older (four years of age) than the median age of children in Group B (two and one-half years to three years of age) or Group C (three years to three and one-half years of age).

Only 14 of the mothers in the three groups worked: nine worked part-time and five worked full time. Eight of the mothers in Group A worked compared to two in Group B and four in Group C.

Four of the mothers were part-time students. Only one was attending college full-time.

The data indicated that the occupational aspiration of the fathers upon completion of their education was

professionally oriented. Of the 56 fathers represented in the study, 27 were planning to be teachers or college professors. Other professions were: journalist, food and drug inspector, urban planner, psychologist and doctor of veterinary medicine.

The groups were similar in many ways. The median age of the mothers, fathers, and children in the families in Group A was slightly older than the median age of the mothers, fathers, and children in the families in Group B and Group C. More mothers in Group A worked than in Groups B and C. The educational background of the mothers and fathers in Groups A and B was slightly more advanced than the educational background of the mothers and fathers in Group C.

Collection of Data and Method of Analysis

Method of Administration

A letter of introduction was mailed to each mother chosen to participate in the study. The letter explained the purpose of the study, how the mother had been chosen, and what she would be asked to do. See Appendix A. Approximately a day after each mother had received the letter, she was contacted by telephone to arrange a time when the questionnaire could be administered.

When the questionnaire was given to each mother, the investigator reviewed the instructions carefully with her to make sure she understood how to fill it out. She was asked to respond to the statements on the questionnaire by circling the "A" if she strongly agreed, "a" if she mildly agreed, "d" if she mildly disagreed, and "D" if she strongly disagreed.

She was requested to fill out the questionnaire as quickly as possible, recording her first reaction to each item. Every item was to be filled in. Each mother was also asked to think specifically of her own preschool child as she read and reacted to each item. Approximately one-half hour after the questionnaire was left with the mother to fill out, it was picked up by the investigator.

For a few mothers it was impossible to arrange a time when the questionnaire could be left and picked up in the manner described above. The questionnaire was left with these mothers with the instructions that when she did have time to fill it out, she should do it at one time, going through the items rapidly and recording her first reactions. The questionnaire was then picked up at a later date.

Method of Recording the Data

Each item on the PARI was given a number value 4, 3, 2, or 1 according to whether a response was Strong Agreement, Mild Agreement, Mild Disagreement or Strong Disagreement. On 20 of the scales the number value 4 was given for Strong Agreement, 3 for Mild Agreement, 2 for Mild Disagreement and 1 for Strong Disagreement. The number value given to the responses on the three "Rapport" scales was reversed so 4 was given for Strong Disagreement, 3 for Mild Disagreement, 2 for Mild Agreement, and 1 for Strong Agreement.

There were five items in each of the 23 attitude scales. The score for each scale was the sum of the five items. The highest possible score was 20, which indicated endorsement of items of low social desirability. The lowest possible score

was five, which indicated disagreement with items of low social desirability.

Ten scale scores were computed for each individual. For each group of subjects a mean scale score was computed for each of the 23 attitude scales.

Method of Analyzing the Data

To determine whether differences in responses to attitude scales existed between various groups Schaefer and Bell[6] suggested performing an analysis on the total scores for each scale, the total score for each scale being the sum of the scale scores for each subject in the group.

Using the analysis of variance technique[7] the hypothesis that the average total scale scores of the four groups would be equal, was tested for each of the 23 attitude scales. All the analysis of variance tests were performed on the mean scale scores at the 5% significance level. For the attitude scales for which the hypothesis of equality of means was rejected, Duncan's multiple range test[8] was applied to learn which means were significantly different.

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[6]Earl S. Schaefer, and Richard Q. Bell, "Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI). Normative data," (unpublished manuscript, Library, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, 1958)

[7]W. J. Dixon, and Frank J. Massey, Introduction to Statistical Analysis, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957) p. 139.

[8]C. Y. Kramer, "Extension of Multiple Range Tests to Groups with Unequal Number of Replications," Biometrics, XII (1956) p. 307.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In order to facilitate the presentation and the discussion of the results the three parent groups and the one specialist group are referred to as Group A, B, C, or D. Group A, the nursery school group, denotes mothers participating and having children enrolled in Spartan Nursery School. Group B, the waiting list group, denotes mothers having children on the waiting list of Spartan Nursery School. Group C, the group with no expressed interest in cooperative nursery schools, denotes mothers who have not participated and have not made application to have their preschool child enrolled in a cooperative nursery school. Group D denotes the specialists.

The assumption was made that comparison of attitudes of mothers who had participated in a cooperative nursery school with those who had not would be a means of assessing the effectiveness of a school's parent education program. This would lead to certain expectations regarding the mean scale scores of the four groups. The mean scale scores of the specialists (Group D) would be expected to be the lowest[1] of

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[1]The responses on the PARI were weighted so that the more socially desirable parental attitudes received the lower scores.

all the groups since their scores were considered the criterion for socially desirable parental attitudes that would help foster the healthy personality development of children. The next lowest scores would be expected in Group A, the mothers who had participated for at least three terms in a cooperative nursery school parent education program. Three terms was considered a long enough period of time for the parent education program to have a beneficial effect upon parents' child-rearing attitudes. The mothers having their children on the waiting list, (Group B) and who were interested in participating and having their children enrolled in a cooperative nursery school, might possibly be acquainted with the parent education program and the philosophy of a cooperative nursery school, and have contact with teachers in a cooperative nursery school, or with other parents already participating in such a program. Because of possible previous contact with a cooperative nursery school these mothers might be expected to have attitudes more like the mothers already participating in a cooperative than would mothers with no interest and no previous experience with such a program. Therefore, the mean scale scores of mothers on the waiting list, (Group B) might be expected to be slightly higher than for the mothers in the cooperative, (Group A). The mothers with no interest or experience with this type of program (Group C) might be expected to have the highest mean scale scores and thus would be the farthest from the mean scale scores of the specialists (Group D).

Results

There were eight of the 23 attitude scales found to

have statistical significantly different mean scale scores among the four groups at the 5% or greater significance level. Along with each attitude scale are given the means of the four groups in rank order.

TABLE III

GROUP MEAN ATTITUDE SCALE SCORES
WHICH SHOWED SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

Attitude	Group mean scale scores in rank order				F Value*
4. Breaking the Will	D 6.2	A 9.1	B 9.2	C** 9.8	4.4
8. Stoicness	D 9.0	B 11.3	A 11.9	C 12.5	5.4
10. Excluding Outside Influences	D 7.5	B 9.1	A 9.3	C 10.0	2.27
11. Deification	D 7.8	B 10.6	A 11.5	C 11.9	4.8
19. Ascendance of the Mother	D 7.5	B 9.4	A 10.6	C 10.7	3.12
15. Approval of Activity	D 8.1	A 10.2	C 11.0	B 11.2	18.3
20. Intrusiveness	D 7.2	A 8.2	B 8.9	C 9.9	3.13
21. Lack of Comradeship and Sharing	A 7.4	B 7.4	C 8.0	D 9.2	3.0

*The critical value of an F with 3 and 63 degrees of freedom is 2.72 at the 5% level and 4.13 at the 1% level. Attitude scales number 4, 8, 11, and 15 were also significant at the 1% level.

**The lines under the means indicate the relationship of significance. The means underlined by the same line are not significantly different and means not underlined by the same line are significantly different. For example, for attitude 4, Breaking the Will, Groups A, B, and C are underlined by the same line, therefore, their means are not significantly different from each other. Group D is not underlined by the same line as any other group, therefore, the mean of Group D is significantly different from the means of any of the other groups.

A discussion of the eight attitude scales that revealed a significant difference between some groups follows.

4. Breaking the Will Scale: The items in this scale measured a mother's belief that children were inherently difficult to control and the mother's need to establish herself as "the boss." Experience with a cooperative nursery school would be expected to shift mother's attitudes toward realization that children are cooperative as well as competitive, affectionate as well as aggressive and that often one can better help a child by respect for rather than by overriding his wishes. Although the mean scale scores of the three mothers' groups were not significantly different, the fact that the mean scale score of the group of mothers in the cooperative (Group A) most nearly approached the specialists' score (Group D), the group on the waiting list (Group B) next, and the group with no interest (Group C) last might be said to indicate a slight trend in the expected direction.

8. Strictness Scale: This scale measured the attitude that a strict mother was the best kind for preparing children for future happiness. Experience in a cooperative nursery school would be expected to modify this attitude toward more consideration of individual personalities and of individual strengths and weaknesses. A significant difference was found between the specialists (Group D) and the parent groups but not among the parent groups. The trend here was for the group not interested in nursery education for their children (Group C) to favor strictness more than the other two parent groups.

10. and 11. Excluding Outside Influence and Deification Scales: Since these attitude scales were closely related in meaning it was consistent that the rank of scale scores among the parent groups was found to be the same on both scales. On the Excluding Outside Influence scale there was no significant difference between the specialists (Group D) and the group on the waiting list (Group B), while there was a significant difference between the specialists and the group in the cooperative (Group A) and the group with no interest (Group C). The mean scale scores of the group on the waiting list (Group B) more nearly approached the specialists (Group D) than did the scores of the mothers in the cooperative (Group A). Thus, the trend here was not entirely in the expected direction. Experience in a cooperative nursery school where other adults become important in a child's life and where the child learns to respect other adults might be expected to cause a modification in both of these attitudes. If not, it would seem likely that the parents would withdraw their child from the nursery school.

19. Ascendance of the Mother Scale: This attitude scale measures the mother's belief that it is the mother's duty to take over the responsibilities of the functioning of the household. A significant difference was not found among the parent groups nor between the specialists (Group D) and the group on the waiting list (Group B). Differences significant at the 5% level were found between the mean scale scores of the specialists (Group D) and the mothers in the cooperative (Group A) and the mothers expressing no interest in cooperative

nursery schools (Group C). The rank order of the mean scale scores of the four groups for this attitude was identical with the rank order of the mean scale scores found in attitudes Excluding Outside Influence and Deification.

15. Approval of Activity Scale: After an experience with a nursery school program, schedule and philosophy where the child is given an opportunity for quiet, reflective times it might be expected that mothers who originally felt that constant activity for the child was beneficial would modify their attitudes. There was a significant difference between the specialists (Group D) and the parent groups. Also, there was a significant difference between the mothers in the cooperative (Group A) and the mothers on the waiting list (Group B) but not with the mothers having no expressed interest or experience with a cooperative (Group C). This may indicate that there was some other variable than interest and experience in a cooperative nursery school which influenced the modification of this attitude.

20. Intrusiveness Scale: This scale reflected a mother's attitude about being entitled to know everything about her child's life and thoughts. After experience in a cooperative nursery school it might be expected that mothers would shift to a less possessive attitude. A difference, significant at the 5% level, was found only between the specialists (Group D) and the group not interested and who had no contact with the cooperative (Group C). This is a difference in the expected direction. It was also the only attitude scale that showed no significant difference between the

specialists (Group D) and the mothers in the cooperative (Group A) or on the waiting list (Group B), yet showed a significant difference between the specialists (Group D) and the mothers with no interest or previous experience with cooperatives (Group C).

21. Lack of Comradeship and Sharing Scale: This scale measured a mother's attitudes toward discouraging a cooperative, friendly, and sharing relationship between parents and children. A significant difference was found between the attitudes of the specialists (Group D) and the parent groups. But this difference was the opposite of what might be expected. The group of specialists scored higher than the parent groups, thus indicating a less socially desirable attitude than the parents. This may be explained in part by the seeming low reliability of the items in this scale and their low discriminating power, as reported by Schaefer and Bell, following an item analysis of the items included in the instrument.[2]

The group of specialists (Group D) had the lowest mean scale score on each of the eight attitudes except for attitude 21, Lack of Comradeship and Sharing. Since the authors of PARI stated that this attitude was neither very reliable nor did it have a high discriminating power, it is not surprising that it did not follow the trend of the other scale scores.

The mean scale score of the specialist was significantly different from the mean scale scores of all the other groups

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[2]Schaefer and Bell, Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI), Normative data.

in attitudes 4, Breaking the Will; 8, Strictness; 11, Deification and 15, Approval of Activity. Specialists' scores differed significantly from the group of mothers in the cooperative (Group A) and the group of mothers not interested in a cooperative (Group C) in attitudes 10, Excluding Outside Influences, and 19, Ascendance of the Mother. The specialists' scores differed only from the mothers not interested in the cooperative (Group C) in attitude 20, Intrusiveness.

Although the differences between mean scale scores of mothers having had three terms of participation in a cooperative nursery school and those who had not had such experience did not show differences at the accepted level of significance (5%) there were some interesting trends seen in the scores.

Except for attitude 21, Lack of Comradeship and Sharing, and attitude 15, Approval of Activity, the mean scale scores of the group not expressing interest in cooperatives (Group C) were as far or farther from the mean scale scores of the specialists than the mean scale scores of either the mothers in the cooperative (Group A) or on the waiting list (Group B). However, the difference in mean scale scores between the group on the waiting list (Group B) and the group not interested (Group C) for attitude 15, Approval of Activity, was not significant. That the group not interested (Group C) usually was farthest away from the specialists (Group D) might have been expected since this group had no contact with the specialists or the cooperative nursery school. The mean scale scores for attitude 20, Intrusiveness, most nearly complied to the expected trend mentioned previously. Here the mean

of the group not interested (Group C), but not the means of the group in the nursery school (Group A) and on the waiting list (Group B) differed significantly from the specialists (Group D).

The total of the mean scale scores of each group on the eight scales found to have a significant difference in mean scale scores were as follows: Group A - 79.5; Group B - 77.3; Group C - 84.1 and Group D - 63.5. The lowest total score is indicative of the most socially desirable attitudes. The results indicate that the means of the group of mothers on the waiting list (Group B) were closest to the means of the specialists (Group D) and next were the means of the group of mothers in the cooperative. The trend that the mothers on the waiting list (Group B) would have attitudes slightly closer to the specialists (Group D) than the mothers in the cooperative (Group A) was not expected.

The frequency of the rank of each group on the eight scales found to have mean scale scores that were significantly different is shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY OF RANK OF EACH GROUP
ON EIGHT ATTITUDE SCALES

	Rank			
Group	Less socially desirable		More socially desirable	
	4	3	2	1
D	1	0	0	7
A	0	4	3	1
B	1	2	5	0
C	6	2	0	0

The ranks, four to one, of the four groups indicates the rank order from the least to the most socially desirable attitudes.

On seven of the eight scales the specialists (Group D) expressed the most socially desirable attitudes toward child-rearing. The group of mothers in the cooperative nursery school (Group A) were very similar to the group of mothers on the waiting list (Group B). On four of the eight scales the scores of mothers in the cooperative (Group A) ranked lowest or second lowest and in four of the scales they ranked third. On five of the scales the scores of mothers on the waiting list (Group B) ranked second lowest and in three of the scales they ranked third or fourth. Some similarity between the mothers in the cooperative nursery school (Group A) and the mothers on the waiting list (Group B) was expected. It was assumed that the mothers interested in a cooperative nursery school to such an extent as to make application to enroll their child might have had some previous contact with the cooperative. However, there was no attempt made in this study to determine how much influence the parent education program of the cooperative nursery school had upon these mothers previous to participation in the program. It may also be that mothers expressing interest in such a program might be those mothers that already had attitudes that were more socially desirable than mothers not expressing an interest in this type of program. The group of mothers not interested in a cooperative nursery school (Group C) ranked fourth in six scales and third in two scales. This group expressed the

least socially desirable attitudes. This might be attributed, in part, to their lack of contact with the cooperative nursery school parent education program.

There were 15 attitude scales on which there were no significant differences found among the four groups, according to their mean scale scores. The attitudes for which the mean scale scores of the four groups were not different at the 5% significance level are shown in Table V. Along with each attitude scale are given the means of the four groups in rank order.

Even though there were no significant differences in the mean scale scores, there appeared a trend similar to that shown in the eight scales in which significant differences were found among the four groups. The specialists (Group D) had lowest or second lowest (representing the more socially desirable attitudes) on 13 of the 15 scales and the mothers in the cooperative (Group A) had the lowest or second lowest on 10 of the 15 scales. The mothers on the waiting list (Group B) had the second highest or highest score (representing the less socially desirable attitudes) on 11 of the 15 scales and the mothers expressing no interest in cooperatives (Group C) had the second highest or highest scores on 12 of the 15 scales.

The total of the mean scale scores of each group on the 15 scales found not to have a significant difference in mean scores of the four groups were as follows: Group A - 151.4; Group B - 156.7; Group C - 156.8 and Group D - 150.8. The specialists (Group D) had the lowest total of mean scale

TABLE V

GROUP MEAN ATTITUDE SCALE SCORES
NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT

	Attitude	Group mean scale scores in rank order				F Value*
1.	Discouraging Verbalization	D 7.4	A 7.5	B 7.6	C 8.1	.25
2.	Fostering Dependency	B 8.2	D 8.5	C 8.7	A 9.2	.62
3.	Seclusion of the Mother	D 8.6	A 9.1	C 10.3	B 10.4	2.57
5.	Martyrdom	D 7.5	C 8.1	B 8.5	A 9.1	1.2
6.	Fear of Harming the Baby	D 10.0	A 11.8	B 12.5	C 12.5	2.47
7.	Marital Conflict	A 14.4	B 14.9	D 15.1	C 15.2	.26
9.	Irritability	D 12.5	A 13.8	C 14.3	B 14.5	1.2
12.	Suppression of Aggression	D 8.3	A 8.9	B 9.2	C 9.4	.64
13.	Rejection of the Homemaker Role	D 11.1	C 12.3	A 12.5	B 13.6	.74
14.	Unequalitarianism	B 8.3	A 9.4	C 9.7	D 9.7	1.7
16.	Avoidance of Communication	D 8.5	A 8.6	C 9.1	B 9.2	.30
17.	Inconsiderateness of the Husband	D 9.5	A 10.2	B 10.4	C 10.6	.31
18.	Suppression of Sexuality	D 6.5	B 7.2	A 7.3	C 8.0	1.4
22.	Acceleration of Development	D 6.6	C 8.1	A 8.2	B 8.7	1.7
23.	Dependency of the Mother	D 10.0	A 11.4	C 11.4	B 12.0	.9

*The critical value of an F with 3 and 63 degrees of freedom is 2.72 at the 5% level.

score, representing the most socially desirable attitudes. The next lowest mean scale scores were those of the mothers in the cooperative nursery school (Group A). The mothers on the waiting list (Group B) and the mothers with no interest in the cooperative nursery school (Group C) had higher mean scale scores than either the specialists (Group D) or the mothers in the cooperative (Group A). On some 15 scales the mothers on the waiting list (Group B) and those not expressing interest in a cooperative nursery school (Group C) had very similar total mean scores.

The frequency of the rank of each group on the 15 scales with mean scale scores that were not significantly different is shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI

FREQUENCY OF RANK OF EACH GROUP
ON FIFTEEN ATTITUDE SCALES

Group	Rank: Less socially desirable			More socially desirable
	4	3	2	1
D	1	1	1	12
A	2	3	9	1
B	6	5	2	2
C	6	6	3	0

On 12 of the 15 scales the specialists (Group D) expressed the most socially desirable attitudes toward child rearing. The group of mothers in the cooperative (Group A) were similar to the specialists. On nine of the 15 scales the mothers in the cooperative (Group A) ranked second and on one

scale ranked first. They ranked third or fourth on only five scales. The group of mothers on the waiting list (Group B) and those not interested in a cooperative (Group C) were very similar. On 11 of the 15 scales the mothers on the waiting list (Group B) ranked third or fourth and on 12 of the 15 scales the mothers not interested in a cooperative (Group C) ranked third or fourth.

The frequency of the rank of each group on all 23 attitude scales of the PAMI is shown in Table VII.

TABLE VII

FREQUENCY OF RANK OF EACH GROUP
ON TWENTY-THREE ATTITUDE SCALES

(Combination of Tables IV and VI)

Group	Rank			
	Less socially desirable		More socially desirable	
	4	3	2	1
D	2	1	1	19
A	2	7	12	2
B	7	7	7	2
C	12	8	3	0

By showing the frequency of the rank of each group on all 23 attitude scales the expected trend clearly appears. The specialists (Group D) expressed more socially desirable attitude scale scores on 20 of the 23 scales. The mothers in the cooperative (Group A) expressed more socially desirable attitude scale scores on 14 scales. The mothers on the waiting list (Group B) expressed more socially desirable attitudes on nine of the scales and the mothers not interested in a

cooperative (Group C) expressed more socially desirable attitudes on only three.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The cooperative nursery school provides a unique method of parent education which is believed by many parent and nursery school educators to foster the development of healthy parental attitudes toward child-rearing. To test this hypothesis this study was designed to discover whether or not parents who had had experience in a cooperative nursery school held attitudes toward child-rearing which were different from those held by parents who had not had experience in a cooperative.

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to assess the expressed attitudes toward child-rearing of three groups of mothers having preschool children in order to compare the expressed attitudes of mothers who had had experience in a parent cooperative nursery school with those of mothers who had not had such experience but had indicated an interest in acquiring it, and with those mothers who had neither the experience nor had they expressed an interest in participating in it.

Three groups of mothers included in this study were as follows: Twenty mothers who had a child enrolled in

Spartan Cooperative Nursery School and had participated in the program for at least three terms. Seventeen mothers who had had no experience in a cooperative but had made application to enroll their child in Spartan Nursery School and were on the waiting list. Twenty mothers who did not have a child enrolled and had made no application to have him enrolled in a cooperative nursery school. The expressed attitudes of a group of ten specialists having professional training in child development were compared with the expressed attitudes of the three parent groups as a means of assessing the effectiveness of the parent education program in fostering healthy parental attitudes toward child-rearing.

A comparison was made of the attitudes of each group of mothers with each other group of mothers and with the attitudes of the group of specialists. This was considered to be one way of assessing to some extent the effectiveness of the parent education program of the cooperative nursery school in helping mothers develop healthy attitudes toward child-rearing. This comparison might also suggest areas in which parents needed help in developing healthy attitudes toward child-rearing.

Procedure

The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PAR I) was used to measure the mothers' attitudes toward child-rearing. The PARI contained 23 attitude scales with five items in each scale. Each item was a statement to which the mother was asked to respond by strongly agreeing, mildly agreeing, mildly disagreeing, or strongly disagreeing. These four opinions were given the number value of 4, 3, 2, or 1, respectively. The sum of the five item responses in each attitude scale was

the scale score. The total scale score of the group for each attitude was the sum of scale scores of the mothers within that group. To compare the groups, the groups' means of the scale scores for each attitude were treated statistically as described below.

Analysis of Data and Findings

The analysis of variance technique was used to determine whether differences in attitude mean scale scores existed between the groups. For the attitude scales which showed a difference at the 5% significance level, Duncan's multiple range test was applied to learn which means were significantly different.

Significant differences were found between the mean scale scores of the specialists and those of one or more of the parent groups on eight of the 23 attitude scales. These scales were: Breaking the Will, Strictness, Excluding Outside Influences, Deification, Approval of Activity, Ascendancy of the Mother, Intrusiveness, and Lack of Comradeship and Sharing. In all of the attitude scales found to be significantly different, except the scale for Lack of Comradeship and Sharing, the specialists had the lowest average attitude scale score. Low scores indicated the more socially desirable attitudes.

For almost all of the 23 attitudes the three parent groups did not show significantly different means among themselves. However, the following trend did appear which might indicate to some extent the effectiveness of the parent education program in the cooperative nursery schools. The mothers

having children in the cooperative nursery school and participating in the program for at least three terms had scores that were most similar to the scores of the specialists, which indicated the most socially desirable attitudes. The scores of mothers interested in participating in the cooperative nursery school and having their children on the waiting list were next in similarity to the specialists. The scores of mothers who had not made application to have their preschool children in the cooperative nursery school and had no connection with a cooperative nursery school were farthest away from the attitude scores of the specialists.

Conclusions

Within the limits of the data of this study, the null hypothesis, that mothers participating in and having children in a parent cooperative nursery school will not report attitudes that are more socially desirable than mothers who have not participated in a cooperative nursery school but have expressed an interest in it nor of mothers who have not participated in a cooperative nursery school and have not expressed an interest in it, was tenable. In general, significant differences were not found among the mean scale scores of the parent groups, therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected. On those attitude scales found to show a significant difference among groups it was usually the specialist's mean scale score that was significantly different from the mean scale scores of one or more of the parent groups. Because the significant differences lay between the specialists and the parent groups the findings on these scales suggested areas in which parents

may need help in developing healthy attitudes toward child-rearing.

Upon inspection of the mean scale scores of all 23 scales a trend appeared indicating that the mothers in a cooperative tended to have attitudes most similar to the specialists' attitudes, the mothers on the waiting list were next in similarity and the mothers not interested in a cooperative nursery school tended to have attitudes least similar to the specialists' attitudes. These findings seem to indicate that the parent education program in a cooperative nursery school may have a beneficial effect in fostering socially desirable maternal attitudes toward child-rearing. Or it may be that mothers expressing interest in such a program might be those mothers that already had attitudes that were more socially desirable and more similar to the attitudes of mothers participating in a cooperative nursery school than mothers expressing no interest in this type of program.

From an inspection of the results of this study a number of conclusions may be drawn concerning the instrument.

As an instrument for measuring parental attitudes the PARI test appeared to be an adequate instrument to utilize in making group comparisons since the findings on a whole tended to support the trends expected.

Although the five items within each attitude scale were not analyzed specifically, an inspection of the scores indicated that individuals did not respond consistently on all five items. This inconsistency would lead one to question the homogenity of the items in each scale. It may well be

thus each item does not measure equally a specific attitude.

Areas of Limitation

There are two main areas of limitations of this study. The first limitation is that the conclusions must be restricted to a population with all of the following characteristics: Mothers of preschool children whose husbands are students attending a large Midwestern university and who are living in university married students' housing.

The second limitation is that the findings of this study do not provide predictive qualities. Research using the PARI has not reached a conclusive stage regarding the predictive validity of the scales and until such conclusions become established the PARI should be confined to research purposes. For example, the findings of this study could not be used to predict the personality development of the child of a mother included in this study because of the many other influences upon a child's personality development, neither could the findings be used to predict a mother's actions as discrepancies exist between publicly expressed and privately held attitudes.

Suggestions for Future Research

A review of the findings in this study suggest areas for future research.

The main area of importance seems to be in determining more precisely the potentialities of the educational effectiveness of the cooperative nursery schools experience for parents. The literature, at the time of this writing, contained mostly

descriptive reports of the effects of parent education but few carefully controlled investigations.

The design of this study could be repeated with other relevant variables such as:

1. A study of mothers participating in a cooperative nursery school whose husbands were not students and who were not living in university married students' housing.

2. A study of the parent's degree of participation in a cooperative nursery school in relation to attitude modification and change.

3. A study of the amount of home-school contact in relation to attitude modification and change.

4. A comparative study of the attitudes of fathers having a child in the cooperative nursery school with those not having a child in the cooperative nursery school.

The design of this study could be repeated using other instruments to measure parental attitudes.

Studies may also be conducted using a different research design than used in this study. Such studies could be concerned with the attitudes of parents previous to participation in a cooperative nursery school compared with their attitudes after three terms of participation. The change of parental attitudes could be another way of assessing the effectiveness of the parent education program in the cooperative nursery school.

There is also a need for experimental studies to be conducted to measure the effectiveness of different methods of parent education used in the cooperative nursery school in

fostering healthy parental attitudes toward child-rearing. Such methods might be parent participation in the daily teaching programs, group meetings, discussion groups and informal contacts of the parent and teacher.

Other areas where research is needed may be concerned with comparative studies, such as comparisons: between mothers' and fathers' attitudes toward child-rearing; between a mother's responses on the PARI and her overt social conduct or of the relationship of the child's perception of parental attitudes and the parent's responses on the PARI.

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APPENDIX A

Introductory Letter to Mothers

[illegible]
[illegible], Michigan

[illegible], 1963

Dear Mrs.

I am a graduate student in Child Development in the College of [illegible] Economics at Michigan State University, studying under Dr. [illegible] Borgman, Professor of Child Development. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree I have chosen a research problem in the area of parental attitudes toward child-rearing.

I am interested in what mothers think about how children should be brought up. Much has been written on this subject but I would like to learn what mothers themselves think.

Your name has been selected at random from the mothers with preschool children living in the University housing area to participate in this study. You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire which takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your opinion will be of much help to me.

I will be contacting you by telephone soon. If you are interested in participating I'd like to arrange a convenient time when I may leave this questionnaire with you. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Miss Kay Kunpel

APPENDIX B

Parental Attitude Research

Instrument

NO. _____

DIRECTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE

Read each of the following statements and then rate them as follows:

A	a	d	D
strongly agree	mildly agree	mildly disagree	strongly disagree

Indicate your opinion by drawing a circle around the "A" if you strongly agree, around the "a" if you mildly agree, around the "d" if you mildly disagree, and around the "D" if you strongly disagree.

There are no right or wrong answers, so answer according to your own opinion. It is very important to the study that all questions be answered. Many of the statements will seem alike but all are necessary to show slight differences of opinion.

It is best to work rapidly and give your first reaction. This questionnaire requires approximately 30 minutes to complete.

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