A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF PARENTING STYLES AND
BEHAVIORS OF 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN WHEN
PARENTS PARTICIPATE IN A PARENTING
EDUCATION PROGRAM

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

S. Michelle Redwine, B.S., M.Ed.
Denton, Texas
May 1997
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This study described and explored perceptions of the context and behaviors of seven 4-year-old children whose parents attended a parenting education program. The problem was to explore a group of 9 volunteer parents' perceptions of their parenting styles and perceptions of their 4-year-old children at home while the parents participated in, and completed, a minimum of 4 out of 6 Active Parenting Today parenting education classes. Volunteer parents were recruited during public school registration for prekindergarten. In addition, perceptions of 4 teachers and 4 classroom educational aides in regard to behaviors of the 4-year-old children whose parents participated in and completed the Active Parenting Today program were explored.

Qualitative research techniques were utilized to guide the inquiry in both the data collection and analysis. The primary methods of collecting data were in-depth interviews, anecdotal records, and the administration of both a questionnaire and the Child's Goals of Behavior form administered to parents and educators, respectively, at the beginning, the ending, and 10 weeks.
following the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today classes. The theoretical framework for this study was based on the conceptual theory of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological and environmental model, Cole’s social capital theory, and Stower’s theory of optimum social distance.

Results of the data analysis were used to verify the congruency among parents, teachers, and classroom educational aides regarding their perceptions of children’s behaviors. Results of the data analysis were also used to explore parents’ congruency regarding the perceptions of their parenting styles. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations generated through this study should be of interest to educators in the field of early childhood programs for at-risk populations as a means to lend credence to the need for parenting education programs as a valid component in these programs.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District and especially to David Ramsey for providing the funding necessary to conduct this research. Without exception, all school district employees involved in this research displayed genuine interest in promoting the welfare of children through parenting education. I am also grateful to the Active Parenting Today publishers for allowing me to use their program as an impetus for research. I am fortunate to have received the guidance of Professor Sara Lundsteen and my committee in helping me to explore the broad significance of this work.

Most of all, I am thankful to family members and friends for their belief in the personal relevancy of this endeavor. In particular, I am thankful to my parents, Bob and Joann Cashion, for their steadfast support. Also, I am thankful to my daughter, Hillary. She is the catalyst who inspires me to be the best role model I can be. Finally, I am eternally appreciative of my husband, Eddie, for his gentle encouragement and quiet strength.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

This study describes and explores perceptions of the context and behaviors of 4-year-old children whose parents attended a parenting education program. Research has revealed that parents can benefit from parenting education programs (Brown & Otto, 1985; Deluty & Knapp, 1989; McBride, 1990; Showers, 1991). Also, according to research, parent-child relationships can benefit from parenting education programs (Anderson & Nutall, 1987; Burke, Daly, Ruma & Thompson, 1992; Cepeda, 1991; Edwards, Koverola, Manion, & Wolfe, 1988; Firestone et al., 1989; Kuczynski, 1991). However, researchers have called for further studies that explore parent-child relationships in areas outside the home such as the school environment (Bronfenbrenner, Firestone et al., 1989). The present descriptive study is an attempt to address this concern.

This study was conducted for the following reasons:

1. Exploring parents’ perceptions of their parenting styles and adults’ (e.g., parents, teachers, classroom educational aides) perceptions of the behaviors of 4-year-old children in their home and school environments can
provide the rich descriptive data needed to view parent-child relationships from a broader perspective.

2. Exploring perceptions of the behaviors of 4-year-old children from the vantage points of parent, teacher, and classroom educational aide can provide the depth needed to describe this broad perspective of parent-child relationships.

3. Exploring these different and various perceptions within the context and time frame of a parenting education program provided the structure needed for this study.

The researcher has often witnessed the strong, the illusive connection among the child, the home, and the school during her employment as an elementary guidance counselor in a public school setting for the last decade. Reasons for the importance of this connection can become clearer as parents and educators simultaneously explore the perceptions of 4-year-old children’s behaviors within both the home and school environments. These perceptions were also explored in conjunction with parenting styles, thus providing a clear description of the input of a parenting education program on children’s school behaviors.

The broader importance of this study is its potential to boost the welfare of children and their families. Also, the exploration of adults’ perceptions (e.g., parents, teachers, classroom educational aides) of 4-year-old children’s behaviors within the home and school environments can
further assist all concerned to discover ways to increase positive
connections between home and school. To the researcher’s knowledge, no
previous study has addressed this concern.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is to explore a group of volunteer parents’ perceptions of
their parenting styles and their perceptions of the behaviors of their 4-year-
old children at home, with the parents participating in, and completing, the
Active Parenting Today parenting education program (Popkin, 1987, 1993a,
1993b, 1993c, 1993d). In addition, the perceptions of teachers and
classroom educational aides in regard to the behaviors of 4-year-old children
whose parents have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting
Today program are also explored.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is the following:

1. to examine parents’ perceptions of their parenting styles, with parents
   participating in, and completing, the Active Parenting Today program
   (Popkin, 1987, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1993d);
2. to examine parents’ perceptions of behaviors of their 4-year-old children
   in the home environment as those parents participate in, and complete, the
   Active Parenting Today program;
3. to examine teachers’ and classroom educational aides’ perceptions of
   the behaviors of 4-year-old children in the public prekindergarten school
environment when their parents have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program.

Research Questions

These research questions have been formulated in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The following questions are purposefully general to provide the flexibility and freedom necessary to explore the phenomenon in depth:

1. How do parents who have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program (Popkin, 1987, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1993d) perceive their parenting styles?

2. How do parents who have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program perceive their 4-year-old children’s behaviors in the home environment?

3. How do prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides perceive the behaviors of 4-year-old students when these students’ parents have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program?

Significance of the Study

This study, in part, continues past research that substantiated the benefits of parenting education programs for parents and their children in the home environment. This examination was accomplished by exploring the impact of the Active Parenting Today program on parents’ perceptions of
their parenting styles and on their perceptions of their children's behaviors at home.

Parenting education programs can have a positive, pervasive influence on families and children from several perspectives (Lane & Redwine, 1990). One area in which this influence is likely to occur is school, and, as such, it is prudent to explore the impact of the Active Parenting Today program on the behaviors of participants' children at school as perceived by prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides.

Home and school are the primary environmental components in the lives of 4-year-old children. As such, Bronfenbrenner's (1979b) systemic theory of human ecology can help to explain how changes in perceptions of children's behaviors at home and school might occur. Bonfenbrenner has described the ecological environment as a nested arrangement of concentric structures, beginning with the microsystem and radiating outward as the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979b), the microsystem is the child's core environment:

The child responds to the people to which he deals with face to face on a daily basis . . . the mesosystem contains other persons present in the setting and their direct influence on the developing person through their effect on those who deal with him first hand . . . the exosystem contains the linkages between settings in which the child may
participate and settings the child may never enter, but in which events occur that effect what happens in the child’s immediate environment . . . the macrosystem is the manifestation of over arching patterns of ideology and organization of social institutions common to a particular culture of subculture. (pp. 7-8)

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979b), transitional relationships are reciprocal. (See Figure 1.) Thus, when parents are involved in a parenting education class, their perceptions of their children’s behaviors are altered because the parents’ perceptions of their parenting styles are altered. Bronfenbrenner (1977) stated that “the impact of an ecological transition on other enduring subsystems in the child’s environment remains an unexplored and scientifically promising research terrain” (p. 517). This study explores the impact of ecological transition on the subsystem known as school by describing prekindergarten teachers’ and classroom educational aides’ perceptions of children’s behaviors when their parents participate in the Active Parenting Today program. This exploration can help all concerned with the welfare of children by bridging gaps between home and school.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined for this study:

Prekindergarten is the half-day public preschool program for 4-year-old children that resulted when Texas passed House Bill 72 in 1984 (K. Jones, personal communication, June 14, 1994). A 4-year-old child is eligible for
Figure 1. Transitional reciprocal relationship.

(Model is derived from Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology of Human Development Theory)

Note: The shaded area in the figure refers to the transitional reciprocal relationship.
prekindergarten if the child’s primary language is a language other than English or if the family’s income falls below the income standards set by the Texas State Board of Education. The prekindergarten program is mandated to be designed to develop skills necessary for success, including social skills (Texas School Law Bulletin, 1990).

*Parent* refers to a birth parent who is currently residing with a 4-year-old child enrolled in a prekindergarten class in the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District (hereafter known as the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw I. S. D.) and who is participating in the Active Parenting Today parenting education program.

*Leader* refers to a person who has completed the 8-hour leadership training workshop in Active Parenting Today and is certified to instruct an Active Parenting Today parent group (Popkin, 1993c).

*Prekindergarten teacher* refers to a prekindergarten classroom teacher certified by the Texas Education Agency to teach prekindergarten and is employed by the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw I. S. D.

*Classroom educational aide* refers to the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw I. S. D. employee whose job assignment is to assist the teacher in the instruction of prekindergarten students.

*Perception* in this study refers to the respondents’ definitions of situations; their definition of reality.
Limitations

This study was subject to all of the limitations associated with
descriptive research, including the arguments of both cause and effect, and
immediate generalizability. This study was also subject to limitations
associated with the Hawthorn effect. Furthermore, the sample population
was limited to parent volunteers who were involved in the Active Parenting
Today program and whose children attend the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw
I. S. D. prekindergarten program. Parents and children participating in this
study comprise a smaller subset of a homogeneous population, as outlined
in the Texas School Law Bulletin (1990) guidelines for prekindergarten
programs. No attempt was made to compare the results of this study with
other dissimilar parenting education programs or with dissimilar parent or
student populations.

Basic Assumptions

The researcher has described parents’ perceptions of their parenting
styles through the use of: the Parenting Style Questionnaire taken from the
Active Parenting Today program materials (Popkin, 1987), and from
information taken during interviews using of the Semi-structured Interview
Guide for Parents. The researcher has also described participants’
perceptions of their children’s behaviors in the home using the
aforementioned Semi-structured Interview Guide for Parents.

The researcher has described the perceptions of teachers and classroom
educational aides in regard to the school behaviors of participants' children. This description was accomplished through the use of: anecdotal records acquired during weekly monitoring visits; the Child’s Goals of Behavior form taken from the Active Parenting Today program materials (Popkin, 1987); and the Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides.

Summary

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979b) systemic theory of human ecology formed the theoretical base for this study. This study was designed to explore and provide a description of the perceptions of parents, teachers, and classroom educational aides toward children in the home and at school. This study was also designed to explore and describe the perceptions of parents’ parenting styles.

The Active Parenting Today program (Popkin 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1993d) provided structure in regard to a foundation from which to explore these various perceptions from the perspective of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979b) reciprocal transitional relationships. Concerns for building and strengthening positive reciprocal relationships between home and school formed the basis for this project.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Parenting education as a component of early childhood education is a tradition that has been advocated since the formation of the discipline. Early childhood parenting education was encouraged and instructed by Johann Henrich Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel (Elkind, 1993). Pestalozzi’s (1898) How Gertrude Teaches Her Children reflected an emphasis on the importance of training parents to raise their children effectively. In keeping with this tradition, the present review of the literature addresses four areas of parenting education: (a) the need for parenting education programs; (b) parenting styles; (c) various parenting education programs; and (d) empirical evidence concerning the positive effects of parenting education programs.

The Need for Parenting Education Programs

Within the realm of social capital, family educational capital is the subenvironment of parent-child interactions that enhances children’s attitudes, efforts, and self-concepts (Marjoribanks, 1992). This subset of family education capital can be strengthened by connections existing between the family and other settings such as the school, and thus, it is important to the child’s development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Stronger
parenting education programs are needed because it is too much to expect each parent to have all the answers to parenting ("Juvenile Injustice", 1993).

Coleman (1988) addressed the need for parenting education programs because of his belief that during the past 2 decades, the social capital within our society has been substantially declining. Bronfenbrenner (1981) saw the same concern as an erosion of the ecology of the family in the United States. The progressive isolation of families, schools, and communities and the subsequent breakdown among these social contexts are gradually resulting in the psychological impairment of our children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a).

During a *New York Times* interview, Dr. Lee Salk stated that we must learn to focus on the family as a functional, rather than as a structural institution (Hershenson, 1992). By perceiving the family as a functional unit, those involved with families and young children can begin to address areas of concern within the family and to work toward optimum functioning. This quality of functioning branches out and affects other areas of the environment. The quality of relationships that a preschooler forms with others is, in part, a function of the quality of the relationship the child has with the primary nurturer (Honig, 1985).

Because the traditional mode of child rearing in the United States has involved the use of domination, control, and frequently hurtful use of force when parents are frustrated by their children's behaviors, parenting
education programs are needed to teach parents healthy discipline strategies (Kind, 1992). Belsky (1980) employed Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological framework to explain the etiology of child maltreatment, citing one of the causes as the absence of adequate support systems.

A correlation exists between child abuse and a lack of parenting skills. Parental isolation is also a factor. Group parenting education sessions help alleviate loneliness and isolation while enhancing parenting skills (Brown & Otto, 1985). Also, inappropriate parent expectations are often linked to child maltreatment (Azar, Hekimian, Robinson, & Twentymen, 1984).

Working to build parents’ self-esteem and focusing on issues relevant to child development are important factors to include in parenting education (Fenichel, 1992).

Programs for low-income parents and minority parents must incorporate parenting education to enhance their children’s development. Low-income and minority parents are at risk of becoming stereotyped by the general population when it is assumed that they do not want to become involved in their children’s education (Gomez, Greathouse, & Wurster, 1988). Often this parental population is simply unaware of the resources available to them (Fenichel, 1992). However, when this special parental population engages in parenting skills training, positive effects do occur (Deluty & Knapp, 1989).

Parenting education programs are beneficial to young children. When
support systems outside the family, such as a supportive educational climate, can provide a parental model for coping constructively with a problem, this contributes to the resiliency of the child ("NAEYC Position Statement," 1993). As a case in point, the Silver Ribbon Panel of the National Head Start Association has recommended that Head Start broaden its family support services in the 1990s (Collins, 1993). Also, the Carnegie Foundation public report, dated December 8, 1991, included statements urging our country to spend more money in an effort to educate parents toward optimum child rearing (Chira, 1991). Recently, the National School Board Association via the Wingspread Agreement established a cooperative agreement with other national organizations to advocate services that address the needs of the whole child and the child's family. Also advocated were specific interventions at the earliest appropriate age levels and full utilization of school sites (Shannon, 1994). These examples support the general belief that parent involvement at the earliest school intervention level has a positive impact on child development (Beckman, Robinson, & Rosenberg, 1988).

Other countries realize and capitalize on the significant impact that a positive home and school relationship can have on child development. A tremendous amount of time and financial resources is expended toward parenting education in Sweden, which helps to enhance optimum child development and to promote a congruent cohesiveness within and
throughout Sweden's educational ecological topography (Redwine, 1992). Families residing in the Italian village of Reggio Emilia, whose children attend school there, are committed to a close home and school relationship. In the spirit of intense cooperation, educators in Reggio Emilia approach difficult social situations as a reason to work hard with families to counteract negative influences (Malaguzzi, 1993). Avgar, Bronfenbrenner, and Henderson's (1977) study of child-rearing practices in three Israeli settings, the kibbutz, the city, and the Moshav (a cooperative Israeli settlement), discovered that the more cooperative environments of the kibbutz and the Moshav were characterized by less administering of child discipline and more parental support both at home and at school.

In the United States, perhaps our most conclusive evidence of the positive effects of comprehensive early childhood intervention that included parenting skills training as part of parental support is found in the empirical data of the High/Scope Perry Preschool longitudinal research study. A component of a successful preschool program is an active involvement to meet the family's need for services (Bond, Epstein, Schweinhart, & Weikert, 1978). The parenting component of the program empowered parents to support their children's development. The High/Scope Perry Preschool longitudinal study findings through age 27 included such benefits as a $7.16 return for every dollar invested, and a 50% cut in participants' crime rate (Schweinhart & Weikert, 1993). Marian Wright Edelman (1992), director of
the Children's Defense Fund, has suggested that Americans must either pay now to support the optimum development of our country's children through family support systems, or we will pay later through increased levels of violence and crime in our society.

**Parenting Styles**

Exploring family ecology as a subset of human ecology can assist researchers in assessing the impact of parenting styles upon children (Maccoby, 1992). When educators investigate parents' perceptions of child-rearing, they can begin to build an optimum social distance between school and home (Stowers, 1992). Working to build positive congruency between these two environments can help to bridge cultural gaps in our increasingly multicultural society.

One of the foremost researchers of parenting styles is Baumrind (1967, 1971). Baumrind (1967) initially discovered three types of parenting styles that coincided with three groups of normal children who exhibited different social and emotional behaviors. She labeled parents of self-reliant, self-controlled, and explorative children as authoritative. Authoritative parents were rated high in both control and encouragement. She labeled parents of discontented, withdrawn, and distrustful children as authoritarian. Authoritarian parents were rated high in control and detachment and low in affection. Parents of children who were low in self-reliance, self-control, and explorative behaviors were labeled as permissive, and permissive
parents were rated high in affectionate behaviors and low in controlling and demanding behaviors.

Baumrind (1978) asserted that these three parenting styles are historically rooted in our culture. The permissive parenting style can be traced back to Jean Jacques Rousseau and the belief that, if parents essentially leave children to mature according to their own tendencies, they will naturally progress toward self-actualization. The authoritarian parenting style was preceded by the beliefs of the Puritans and the British Empiricists of the 17th and 18th centuries. They believed that the only way in which children could become acculturated was through the application of parental power. The authoritative parenting style has been influenced by the Montessori method, which is the forerunner to authoritative control because its teaching philosophy incorporates the resolution of dynamic tension between pleasure and duty and between freedom and obligation.

Baumrind and Black (1967) found in their correlational study of 95 preschool children that authoritative control facilitated responsible behaviors that conformed with group standards in the sample population, without any individual loss of autonomy or assertiveness. Baumrind’s (1971) research to further differentiate among patterns of parental authority and the resulting behaviors of children led to a study of 146 preschool children and their families. The children and their families were observed at intervals during a 3-month period at home and at school, and the parents also participated in a
structured interview. As a result of this research, Baumrind identified a fourth parenting style, labeled as the harmonious parent. The harmonious parent was characterized as having control rather than exercising control. Relationships between harmonious parents and their children appeared to be cooperatively and reciprocally intuitive.

Dornbusch, Fraleigh, Leiderman, Ritter, and Roberts (1987) used Baumrind’s (1967) parenting style topology in their study of 7,836 adolescents from six high schools in an urban California area. The sample population completed questionnaires that included items regarding student background characteristics, self-reported grades, parental attitudes, and family communication patterns. Dornbusch et al. found that the authoritative parenting style was associated with greater academic success than the authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. Baumrind (1971) has also proposed that IQ is to some extent dependent upon socialization practices as characterized by parenting styles.

Baumrind’s (1967) parenting style topology was an integral part of the research in this current study. Through the use of interviews and questionnaires, parents’ perceptions of their parenting styles were explored. Whether or not parents’ perceived their parenting styles as authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive was indicated during interviews and on questionnaires. These two data sources were then matched for congruency.

Other researchers (Cowan, Cowan, Kerig, & Pratt, 1992; Demus, Hall,
Ross, 1990) have also used Baumrind's (1967) parenting style topology to further investigate the impact of parenting styles on parent-child-relationships. Demus et al. found in their study of 21 lower socio-economic status, or SES, mothers that Baumrind's (1971) parenting styles may vary according to situations. The results of their study were preceded by Yarrow's (1977) supposition that child-rearing needs to catch up with social realism. Yarrow asserted that a "parent's neglect or hostility toward the child may not stem from a quirk in his own development of impulse control, but from the weight of intolerable and immediate pressures of poverty, social injustices and dehumanized living" (p. 246).

Cowan et al. (1992) found a relationship between Baumrind's (1967) parenting styles and parents' speech characteristics. They studied the verbatim transcripts of parent-child interactions of 10 minutes each from 36 families and their 3-year-old children. The majority of the sample was composed of white, middle-class parents with college educations. They found that authoritarian mothers used more directives and less responsive language and were less likely to use conversation-eliciting language styles than the authoritative mothers (p < .05). The inverse was true for authoritative mothers (p = .05). The researchers also found that fathers who controlled through the use of conversational directiveness rated higher in the authoritarian dimension.

Various other researchers have investigated and labeled different types

Maccoby and Martin (1983) also reviewed parenting styles identified by various researchers and grouped them into four categories: authoritative-reciprocal, indulgent-permissive, authoritarian-autocratic, and indifferent-uninvolved. They characterized the authoritative-reciprocal parenting style as high in demanding, accepting, controlling, responsive, and child-centered behaviors. The indulgent-permissive parenting style was characterized as being high in all the aforementioned parental behaviors, with the exception of control. They characterized the authoritarian-autocratic parenting style as high on rejecting, demanding, controlling, and parent-centered behaviors and as low in responsiveness. They characterized the indifferent-uninvolved parenting style as high on rejecting and parent-centered behaviors, and low in responsive, controlling, and demanding behaviors.

Becker (1964) identified a love-oriented parenting style and a power assertive parenting style as two strategies parents used to control their
children. Parents who used the love-oriented parenting style employed praise and reasoning to guide children’s behaviors. These parents also temporarily withdrew affection as a means of control. Parents who used the power-assertive parenting style were extremely authoritarian in their approach to children and often used physical punishment. Becker (1964) asserted that the love-oriented parenting style is more likely to facilitate self-responsibility and self-control within the child.

Ainsworth et al. (1971) found in their study of 25 white, middle-class infant-mother pairs that mothers who were sensitive, accepting, and cooperative had babies who were more compliant. The authors rated the behaviors of infant-mother pairs along three continuums in their correlational study: accepting/rejecting, \( r = .89 \); cooperative/interfering, \( r = .86 \); and sensitive/insensitive, \( r = .89 \).

Hoffman (1975) asserted that parental discipline is the antecedent of children’s moral internalization. He proposed that the parent-child relationship be viewed from a longitudinal perspective to chart how these influences change through time. He labeled the inductive discipline style as the optimum style of parental discipline, which facilitates children’s moral internalization processes. Hoffman (1984) characterized this inductive method of facilitating moral reasoning and development as the process through which the child internalizes parental norms and makes connections between behavior and its effects on the well-being of others. Orrell (1993)
also found in a study of 93 mothers and their 6- to 8-year-old children that the use of inductive reasoning was positively correlated with their children’s social adjustment.

In a study of parents and their elementary-aged children, Walker and Taylor (1991) also investigated the influence of parent-child interactions on moral reasoning. They identified four types of parent discussion styles (representational, supportive, operational, and informational) that either facilitated or inhibited the moral reasoning of children. The representational parent discussion style was characterized by eliciting children’s opinions, asking clarifying questions, and checking for understanding. The supportive parent discussion style was characterized by the expression of positive affect and the encouraging of participation through the use of attentive listening and humor. The operational parent discussion style was characterized by the use of critiques, counter-considerations, and competitive requests to the child. The informational parent discussion style was characterized by the statement of opinion, requests for change, and intent for closure. Walker and Taylor (1991) found that the representational and supportive parent discussion styles were associated with gains in the levels of more reasoning of children.

Balswick and Balswick (1989) and Mederer and Hill (1983) also asserted that parenting styles be viewed from a longitudinal perspective over time. Mederer and Hill proposed that parenting styles should be viewed in
relation to the family life cycle. This life cycle ranged over an 8-point continuum beginning with the onset of marriage, proceeding to the birth of the first child, and ending with the retirement of the parent(s). Balswick and Balswick (1989) constructed a developmental and linear conceptual model labeled the empowering curve. They asserted that four parenting styles (telling, teaching, coaching, and delegating) are needed for optimum child development and that each style comes to the forefront at various stages in the child’s development. They also addressed the importance of a complementarity dimension in parenting. Mothers and fathers may be complementary to one another over time (longitudinal) and may be complementary to one another on a day-to-day basis (situational). The importance of the complementarity dimension in parenting is the relief from stress because one parent does not have to meet all parenting needs alone. Kaplan (1993) addressed this complementarity dimension as co-parenting. The quality and compatibility of co-parenting have an impact on children’s social adjustment (Kaplan, 1993).

Burton et al. (1992) also used a longitudinal perspective to investigate a parenting style they identified as an overinvolved parenting pattern. They explored the transmission of maternal overinvolvement across three generations of maternal grandmothers, their adult daughters, and their grandchildren. The subjects were derived from 49 families. A majority of the sample was white and middle class, with some college education. The
sample population was derived from newspaper birth announcements. Initially, the grandmothers and their daughters completed a self-report questionnaire, which was designed to access memories of acceptance, overprotection, and idealization. Afterwards, the grandmothers and their daughters were visited when the grandchildren were 6 months old and again when the grandchildren were 9 months old. It was found that grandmothers who had been overprotective as parents had daughters who also tended to be overprotective. (p < .02).

Gender-related differences have also been found in parenting styles. Mussen and Rutherford (1968) found in their study of 63 four-year-old white middle-class boys that those who perceived their fathers as warm, sympathetic, and nurturant were less aggressive than those who did not perceive their fathers as having these characteristics (p < .01). Fagot and Hagan (1991) found that fathers consistently engaged in more large-muscle physical activity with both sons and daughters than did mothers. Bentley and Fox (1991) also found that fathers’ nurturant strategies involved more large-muscle activity than mothers’ nurturant strategies.

Hall, et al. (1989) identified three parenting styles (emotionally distant, intrusive, and hostile) of abusive mothers (n = 73 abusive mothers, n = 43 non-abusive mothers). Their examination of abused children revealed a distinct relationship between abusive parenting styles and different behavioral profiles of children. Emotionally distant mothers were
characterized as using a flat affect with negative undertones in their verbalizations toward their children. They also ignored their children’s reasonable requests and initiations often. Intrusive mothers were characterized as initiating and repeating commands even when the child was in compliance. They also relied heavily on power-assertive techniques that included negative physical treatment, threats, humiliation, and the denial of requests. Hostile mothers were characterized as ignoring and humiliating their children. They also initiated and repeated commands frequently. It was found that children of abusive mothers laughed less frequently and made more attention-getting overtures.

The continuation of poor child-rearing practices is having, and will continue to have, an increasingly negative impact on our society (Baumrind, 1974). The increase in the number of dual-income families and single-parent families has created concern for ways to promote positive congruency in child-rearing practices among the significant adults in the child’s environment (Hamburg, 1993). An awareness of different parenting styles, particularly those that are beneficial to optimal child development, can help promote this congruency. If educators are to impact optimal child development by promoting positive parenting styles, they must take into account the parent’s needs and emotions (Holle, 1986).

Parenting Education Programs

Head Start programs are dedicated to involving parents. One aspect of
this involvement is through parenting programs. The purpose of one parenting education program at a Head Start Resource Center for Parents and Children was to determine if parents' potential for child abuse as measured by the Child Abuse Potential Inventory could be reduced (Stanberry, 1992). The program was based on Belsky’s (1980) ecological model of child maltreatment. The program’s goals were to link parents with community resources, to provide child development information, and to train parents in nonviolent discipline techniques.

Another Head Start-based program was a parent involvement program designed as a component of an American Indian Head Start preschool (King, 1992). The primary goal of the parent involvement program was to create an optimum social distance by learning about, and incorporating aspects of, the culture and belief systems of these parents into the preschool setting. Because this particular parent population was reticent toward school involvement, it was hoped that creating congruency between the family structures and the school environment would enhance parent participation. Also, a parent discussion group for preschool parents used a manual developed for Head Start at the request of Theresa Counts, Director of a Head Start program in USD 501-Topeka, Kansas, and Barbara Hodges, a consultant to that program (Rousey, 1991). The preschool discussion group dealt with parenting skills, enhancement of the home environment, and positive discipline techniques.
Parenting education programs not affiliated with Head Start have also addressed the needs of families with at-risk children. Jennings (1991) developed a program to increase positive experiences for at-risk preschoolers by coaching parents in parent-child interactions. The goal of the program was to improve positive experiences for preschoolers by assisting parents in changing parenting strategies. The Child Parent Centers in Chicago is another early educational intervention program designed for at-risk preschoolers (Fuerst & Petty, 1996). Total student enrollment at each center was approximately 20. A multidisciplinary approach was used by employing a league of professionals that included, but not exclusively, social workers, psychologists, nutritionists, and nurses. The foundation of the program was built around extensive parental involvement.

Children with alcoholic parents form a part of the at-risk population. The La Frontera Center, The Tucson Council for Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, and the Community Organization for Drug Abuse Control were all funded to carry out an educational program to reduce alcoholism and other drug abuse in the Tucson, Arizona, area (Miller, Peck, & Powers, 1992). The program was designed as an early intervention for 3- to 5-year-old children whose parents had a history of addiction to alcohol or other drugs. The foremost goal of this early intervention program was to increase parent effectiveness.

Parental illiteracy also places children at risk. The Kenan Family Trust
Family Literacy Project, an outgrowth of the Parent and Child Education Program in Kentucky provided individual instruction and joint learning for parents and their preschool children (Darling, 1988). Two of the project goals were to improve parenting skills and to form a positive home-school partnership.

Children of young parents are at risk, due, in part, to the correlation between incidents of child abuse and the age of parents (Braden, Hayner, Lenz, Siewers, & Steinberg, 1988). Families at risk for aggressive pathology use negative reinforcement, which accelerates and sustains coercive cycles, so that the child’s home constitutes an aggressive training ground (Hartup & Moore, 1990). Family Focus, a parenting education program based in Chicago, and founded by Bernice Weissbourd, concentrated on teaching non-abusive discipline techniques and attempted to dispel common child-rearing myths, for example, that parents spoil their children by picking them up too often (Braden et al., 1988).

Another program designed for younger parents of preschool children was provided by the campus child development centers on the nine campuses of the Los Angeles Community College District (Carfagna-Hunt, Hernandez, Kester, Lally, & Simone, 1986). The parental population was made up exclusively of college students and the program goal was to enhance their parenting skills. This enhancement was attempted through a college instructional program, parent-teacher meetings, and group
discussions. Gathering parents together to form a support network before their child’s entrance into public school can provide parents with the sense of connectedness they may need with each other during their child’s toddler years (Debban, Hare, Jamison, Molton, & Wintczak, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c).

The Parent Walkabout-Parent Toddler Programs and Parent Cooperative Preschool Programs at Columbia Basin College in the state of Washington developed a parent cooperative group for parents of young children who had not yet entered public school. Some specific topics addressed at the meetings were play, learning, responsibility, discipline, guidance, health, and safety.

Other parenting education programs are generally designed to meet the needs of diverse populations. A review of these particular types of parenting education programs revealed that they were based on the child-rearing theories of Dreikurs (1964), as specified in his classic book *Children: The Challenge*. In particular, two chapters in this work outline the basic premise of effective child-behavior management and, as such, are encapsulated in the following parenting education programs.

Pardeck (1988), Professor of Social Work at Southeastern Missouri State University, developed a five-session parenting seminar on effective discipline, using Dreikurs’ (1964) theory of natural, logical, and illogical consequences. The goal of the seminar was to encourage an authoritative parenting style and to discourage overly permissive and overly punitive
parenting styles. A similar parenting education program was developed by Clifford (1987) in accordance with his duties as a consultant to the Parenting Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. The focus, which was akin to Pardeck’s, was to effect a change in parenting style to assertive, as opposed to non-assertive and aggressive.

Hare, Jamison, Molton, and Wintczak (1987) developed a parenting education program founded by the State Board for Community College Education. This program was also based on Dreikurs’ (1964) theory and focused on family relationships, conflict resolution, discipline theories, and parenting styles.

Yet another program based on Rudolph Dreikurs’ (1964) goals of misbehavior was designed by Irving (1991), who used excerpts from Don Dinkmeyer’s Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) program and from Michael Popkin’s Active Parenting Program. Program criteria included understanding the child, discipline, communication, and democracy in the family.

Three commercialized parenting education programs for use with varied populations are Thomas Gordon’s Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) program, and Michael Popkin’s Active Parenting program (Fine & Gardner, 1991). Popkin’s Active Parenting program has recently been updated into the Active Parenting Today program (Popkin, 1993c). According to Fine and Gardner, the PET program focuses heavily on communication, active
listening, problem ownership, nonjudgmental concern, and win-win solutions. The STEP program focuses on the democratic style of parenting, goals of misbehavior, redirecting misbehavior in developmentally appropriate ways, and facilitating self-esteem. The Active Parenting program incorporates components of both the PET and the STEP programs into a well-organized video format and has an instructor training and certification component.

The Active Parenting Today program (Popkins, 1993c) was chosen as the parenting education program for this study. The Active Parenting Today program format incorporated both Baumrind's (1967) authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles and Dreikurs' (1964) goals of behavior. This combination was deemed the most advantageous for exploring perceptual congruencies regarding children's behaviors, as well as parents' parenting styles, among the adults involved in this study.

McClellan, Swick, and Varner (1991) proposed that states adopt a systematic statewide means to evaluate parenting education. They recommend early intervention during the child's first 5 years with the purpose of improving school success by strengthening the family. They believe that by demonstrating effective methods of parenting training and by providing support, parents can excel in their role as the primary educators of their young children.
Empirical Evidence of the Positive Effects of Parenting Education Programs

The growing concern for young children and their families has empirical underpinnings (Kabacoff, Kochanek, & Lipsitt, 1990). Often these concerns paint a bleak and hopeless picture by focusing on a deficit model that pervades the outlook of social and educational problems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a). Perhaps a more optimistic and ultimately more motivating perspective can be derived by focusing on empirical evidence that indicates that parenting education does make a positive difference in the lives of children and their families (Anderson & Nutall, 1987; Bates & Pettit, 1989; Bugental & Lewis, 1991; Burke et al., 1992; Eddy, 1991; Edwards et al., 1988; Firestone et al., 1989; Kochanska, 1990; Kuczynski, 1991; LaRose & Wolfe, 1985; Menaghan & Parcel, 1993).

Kochanska (1990) twice assessed 68 mothers and their children: first, when the children were between 16 and 44 months of age, and again when the children were 5 years old. During the second observation, only 56 mother-child dyads were available for observation. Both times, the mother-child dyads were assessed in two half-day sessions, which were videotaped in a naturalistic setting with age-appropriate toys. Kochanska found that mothers who endorsed strict authoritarian attitudes continued to use prohibitive interventions and that their children were more likely to fail in their own attempts at self-control. Kochanska also discovered that mothers
using an authoritative-democratic approach were less likely to respond negatively to their children’s overtures.

Anderson and Nutall (1987) looked for significant changes in parent and child behaviors by conducting a parenting program of six sessions for 2 hours and 30 minutes each session. The study included 118 parents with a child in one of three age categories: 3-5, 6-12, and 13-15. Results suggested that the most beneficial workshop component was related to changes in parents’ authoritative and intrusive-restrictive behaviors. Reported positive changes in authoritative behaviors were significantly related to high ratings on the usefulness of role playing ($r = .26$, $p < .05$). Significant improvement in the parents’ self-reported parenting skills followed the communications skills training workshop. Parents also reported positive changes in their children’s level of cooperation. Anderson and Nutall suggested that communications training programs geared toward young children may also benefit parents of older children.

Bates and Pettit (1989) assessed the relationship between behavior problem ratings and family relationship quality in a sample ($N = 29$) of 4-year-old children and their mothers. The researchers hypothesized that proactive involvement prevents problem behavior development and minimizes the need for reactive control. The observed parents were encouraged to engage their children positively and proactively in a natural setting. Bates and Pettit concluded that the absence of positive parental behaviors is as important in
problem behavior development as the presence of negative parental behaviors.

Menaghan and Parcel (1993) conducted a study that compared survey information from the 1986 and 1988 mother-child supplements to the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). They chose to include only those mothers who had at least one child between the ages of 4 and 6 in 1986. One conclusion was that parents who adopt an active model in parenting are likely to make an effort to encourage their children to adopt internal measures of personal behavior and that these internal models result in children's exhibiting fewer behavior problems. The authors defined active parenting as a belief within parents that their behavior can influence the outcome. They also found that parenting styles are negatively influenced by the limitation of parents' personal resources.

Eddy's (1991) study of 172 kindergarten children and their two-parent families, through the use of telephone and laboratory interviews, led to the conclusion that the strongest predictor of children's antisocial behavior is inept parental discipline. Burke et al. (1992) found in their study of an 8-week skills training program for 54 parents that, as parents gained in parenting skills, they reported a decrease in child behavior problems. By analyzing their qualitative data, it was found that the results reported by parents were maintained 1 year later.

Bugental and Lewis (1991) studied how parents interpret and respond
to the behaviors of their children and found that more negative responses came from parents who perceived their parental control level as low. The study was conducted in a laboratory setting with 160 mothers and their children. As the mothers attempted to teach their child a video game, they rated the child's behaviors by indicating their feelings toward their child's behaviors with a happy or a sad face.

Kuczynski (1991) studied children’s responses to parental control and found a positive correlation between the child’s response to parental control and the parents’ parenting skills. The researcher concluded that parenting skills could be used to promote the child’s internally motivated behavior in a positive direction. LaRose and Wolfe (1985) found a similar correlation between parents’ emotional reactivity and attributes in relation to aversive child behavior during their study using a video-simulated stress procedure for abusive parents.

Firestone et al. (1989) found that improvement in child compliance is mediated through parents’ improved behavior management skills. This quantitative study employed a sample of 46 parents (23 control and 23 treatment) by using pre and posttest measures and an additional 3-month follow-up measure. The treatment was a program designed to improve the child behavior management skills of parents. The researchers stated that there is a need for further research to determine whether or not improvement in child compliance behaviors filters over into the school
The challenge from Firestone et al. (1989) to conduct further research focused on whether or not parenting education impacts children’s behaviors in the school environment was recognized by this researcher as a call to explore the two theoretical constructs upon which the current study is based. These two theoretical constructs, Coleman’s (1988) social capital and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979b) ecology of human development, built the framework upon which to explore perceptual congruencies regarding children’s behaviors, as well as parents’ parenting styles, among the adults involved in this study. Thus, ultimately, this current study explored ways to strengthen the connections between home and school. Bronfenbrenner referred to these connections as reciprocal transitional relationships. Stowers (1992), who built upon Coleman’s social capital theory, referred to strengthening these connections as optimum social distance.

Another study using similar procedures was conducted by Edwards et al. (1988) to determine whether or not decreasing at-risk characteristics on the part of parents resulted in a decrease in child behavior problems. The study involved 30 mother-child dyads divided equally into treatment and control groups. Parent at-risk characteristics and child behavior problems were assessed, with pre and posttest measures, and a 3-month follow-up.

Only the mothers in the treatment group who received parenting skills training reported significant improvements in decreased at-risk parenting
characteristics and decreased child behavior problems.

In 1990, those involved in conducting the Cleveland Public Schools Family Literacy Program found that gains in parenting skills, as determined by teacher observation of parent-child interactions in structured parent-child activities, resulted in positive parent-child interactions. The sample population was 60 non-high-school-graduate parents of preschool children. Information from the study was derived from parent participation in a 9-week parenting course, which met 12 hours per week and focused specifically on child development and parenting skills.

Deluty and Knapp (1989) found that modeling and role playing provide an effective means of training lower SES mothers in positive parenting skills. Using an n of 49, the sample was randomized into two approximately equal groups, each of which participated in an 8-session parenting education group. The pedagogy employed in one group included strictly group discussion, dissemination of handouts, and assignment of homework. The pedagogy employed in the second group also included group discussion, but introduced skills modeling by the instructor and role playing among the participants.

Modeling and role playing components similar to the components used in the study by Deluty and Knapp (1989) were incorporated into the parenting education classes of the current study. The parent population in the current study was classified in the low-SES range, as was the parent
population in the Deluty and Knapp study. Thus, the researcher tried to increase the likelihood of effectively training parents in positive parenting skills through the incorporation of modeling and role playing.

Those involved in parenting education are increasingly interested in father-child dyads. As yet, there is little in the literature about this important relationship. However, McBride (1990) investigated the effects of a parenting education play group program on the types of involvement fathers have with their children and on the fathers' perceived competence in their parenting skills. An experimental group of 15 fathers participated 1 hour a week for 10 consecutive weeks in a parenting skills and child development discussion group. The fathers also spent 1 hour a week during the same time frame involved in activities with their children. The control group of 15 fathers was promised the program at a later date. Significant program effects for treatment fathers were found in the areas of self-perception of responsibility, measured level of involvement, and an increased self-perception of competence in parenting skills.

McBride replicated his study in 1991, using the same research format with a sample of 54 fathers. In this instance, he wanted to learn whether the treatment group showed significantly reduced parental stress as indicated by the Parenting Stress Index. McBride found, not only that fathers' parental stress was reduced as a result of the treatment, but also that the way fathers perceive their children's behaviors, including
misinterpretation of children’s behaviors, led to greater levels of stress.

Showers’ (1991) approach used parenting education from a different didactic route, through the use of 5 X 8 cards containing appropriate developmental and behavioral expectations of children and nonviolent approaches to child behavior management. The subjects were 743 teenaged parents and pregnant teenagers enrolled in the Ohio public schools. By using pretest, posttest, and follow-up measures, Showers found significant gains overall in answers to the questions (p < .01). One implication was that teenaged parents can improve their knowledge of child development and behavior management with exposure to appropriate material.

Cepeda’s (1991) research focused, in part, on the impact of a parenting education program upon parents and their children’s behavior. The entire study included 157 children contained in three preschool units. Of this total sample, 67 children were identified as at-risk for academic difficulties. Parents of the at-risk preschool population received parenting training conducted in the form of monthly workshops during the 1990-1991 school year. Pre and posttest data were used to assess children’s gains in several areas, including social and emotional development. Results indicated that the parenting training workshops were a successful means of positive intervention for behavioral change in preschool children.

The current study also extended beyond Cepeda’s (1991) findings that
parenting education positively impacts the behavior of at-risk preschool children. The extension of Cepeda's findings were accomplished in the current study between adults' (teachers' and classroom educational aides') perceptions at school and adults' (parents') perceptions at home regarding children's behaviors during and after parents attended parenting education meetings. Such an in-depth focus was best explored by conducting qualitative research.

From the vantage points of Coleman's (1988) social capital and Bronfenbrenner's (1979b) ecology of human development, there is a need for parenting education programs. This need is further substantiated by the current efforts being made through the advocacy of various organizations and individuals concerned with the well-being of children.

In summary, parenting styles that promote pro-social behaviors and the likelihood for academic success need to be encouraged. Educators can have an impact on creating an optimum social distance (Stowers, 1992) between home and school by encouraging parents in positive parenting styles. It is also important for educators to be cognizant of social and economic variables that can have a negative impact on the quality of child rearing.

Parenting education programs may focus on a specific parent population in an attempt to remedy the parenting skills deficits and childrearing challenges associated, in part, with membership in the specific parent population. Also, parenting education programs may be designed,
either commercially or noncommercially, to address the educational and
skills needs common to all parents. Regardless of the focal point on which
a parenting education program is founded, it is generally agreed that, the
earlier the intervention, the better it is for all concerned. For this reason, a
majority of parenting education programs single out the parent population of
preschool children.

In order to bridge gaps and create optimum relationships between home
and school, researchers must explore the ramifications of parenting
education programs in other important areas of the young child’s
environment-namely school. The current study, which is focused on this as
yet largely uncharted portion of the ecological topography, can be likened to
a single sturdy plank upon which this bridge can be built.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study was designed to facilitate exploratory study into parents’ perceptions of their parenting styles and perceptions of the behaviors of their 4-year-old children in the home environment. Another focus was prekindergarten teachers’ perceptions and classroom educational aides’ perceptions of the behaviors of 4-year-old children whose parents had volunteered to participate in this study. The researcher was responsible for all data collection for this study.

Recruitment of Volunteers

Parents of 4-year-old children were directed to respond “yes” or “no” to sign-up sheets posted in English, Spanish, and Laotian (see Appendix A) during prekindergarten registration, which was held from June through August 1994. These three languages were used because they represented the languages primarily spoken by families whose children attend prekindergarten in the school district. It was the researcher’s concern that all parents be provided with an equal opportunity to volunteer.

A total of 29 parents signed the posted information sheets. Of these, 26 parents were primarily English speaking, and 3 were primarily Laotian
speaking. They were aware that an interpreter would be provided to work with them if they chose to participate. The Laotian parents were also aware that spoken and written communication would be provided in Laotian if they chose to participate.

The group of 29 parents was called during the first 2 weeks of the school year to determine whether or not they would be interested in attending the 6-week parenting education program. Thirteen of the group of 29 parents declined the invitation to attend. The reason most often cited was prior schedule and work commitments. This left a total of 16 parents who agreed to attend the parenting education program. Participants had to attend a minimum of four out of the six parenting education meetings to be included in this study, and a total of 9 parents met this requirement.

Two spousal groups were included among the 9 parents who attended a minimum of four parenting education meetings. This parent group represented a total of seven preschool children.

Active Parenting Today Parenting Education Program

A total of 9 parents participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today parenting education program. Before the onset of the program, they were informed of the research to be conducted (see Appendix C). The Active Parenting Today program met once a week on Tuesday evenings, from 6:00 to 8:00, for 6 consecutive weeks beginning in
October. Another elementary school counselor in the district, who was certified to teach the Active Parenting Today program, conducted the weekly meetings. This freed the researcher to observe and take notes during the meetings.

To help ensure attendance at all six sessions, a variety of incentives was offered. Supper for adult participants was provided, with babysitting for children of participants provided by members of the district’s National Honor Society as a service project. These incentives were offered at no cost to the participants. The babysitting took place in the gym. A drawing was held each week to award a door prize (home decoration) to a participant who was present. At the conclusion of the sixth session, a participant’s name was drawn for a $100 gift certificate for the local supermarket. Only participants who attended all six sessions were eligible for the gift certificate. A record of attendance was kept.

The Active Parenting Today meetings were held in the school library due to the ease of access to audio-visual equipment, the comfortable seating, and the friendly surroundings. The researcher was seated unobtrusively near the group during each meeting in order to take notes.

The meetings began with a 30-minute supper. During this time, parents could share information with one another in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. After the first session, this time was also used for parents to
share their reports of the homework activity assigned at the end of the previous week's videotape. (See Chapter 4, Analysis of Data and Findings for further description).

For an hour after supper, the participants received Active Parenting Today video-based instruction, guided by the group leader. This group leader was trained to use discretion and to stop the video at any point to discuss ideas introduced, answer questions, and model desired parenting behaviors. Modeling is defined as the depiction of desired behaviors as shown in the videos and as evidenced in the behaviors of the group leader. The final 30 minutes of each meeting were used to guide participants in role playing the parenting challenges presented in the video and in a voluntary group discussion of common parental concerns. Role playing is defined as the practice of desired behaviors through the use of parent-child scenarios to help build positive parenting skills. The group leader was trained to coach and guide participants toward desired parenting behaviors.

The components of the Active Parenting Today parenting education program are as follows:

1. The Active Parenting Today program is a six-session, video-based parenting education program that promotes a democratic parenting style for the parents of children from 2 to 12 years of age (Popkin, 1993a).

2. The Leader's Guide contains the curriculum and outlines the format,
goals, and objectives for leading the Active Parenting Today program (Popkin, 1993c).

3. **Active Parenting Today Video Format** refers to the set of six videos to be used in the six sessions of the Active Parenting Today program. Listed in order, meetings 1 through 6, the videotapes are titled: *The Active Parent, Instilling Courage and Self-Esteem, Understanding Your Child, Developing Responsibility, Winning Cooperation,* and *Active Parenting in a Democratic Society* (Popkin, 1993d).

**Parenting Style Questionnaire**

Each participant completed the Active Parenting Parenting Style Questionnaire (described below) at the beginning, the conclusion, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today parenting education program. Active Parenting publishers gave written permission to use the questionnaire and any portion of their program that the researcher found useful (see Appendix C). The purpose was to explore the participants’ perceptions of their parenting styles over the duration of the program.

*Identifying Your Parenting Style* is a two-part 30-item questionnaire that determines a parent’s parenting style as autocratic, democratic, or permissive (Popkin, 1987). The democratic parenting style is defined as a positive synthesis of autocratic and permissive parenting styles. This
parenting style promotes freedom within limits, encourages cooperation, and stimulates learning. Popkin defines the permissive parenting style as one that promotes freedom without limits and often results in insecure children who lack respect for their parents. The autocratic parenting style is defined as the parenting style used by a dominating and authoritarian parent who uses reward and punishment to enforce orders. Popkin characterizes this type of parenting style as limits without freedom.

Child’s Goals of Behavior

Prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides were asked to identify the primary behavior of the 4-year-old students whose parents participated in the Active Parenting Today parenting education program (targeted students), according to the behaviors defined on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form (Popkin, 1987). The form may be found in Appendix B). This informal interview took place at both the beginning and the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today program, as well as 10 weeks afterward. The purpose was to explore for the duration of the program, and the 10 weeks following, the prekindergarten teachers’ and the classroom educational aides’ perceptions of the behaviors of targeted children. These four goals of behavior listed on the form are (a) contact, (b) power, (c) protection, and (d) withdrawal, with the definitions as follows:

Contact. Children seek physical or emotional contact with others out of
a desire to belong. An encouraged child seeks contact through recognition; a discouraged child seeks contact through undue attention.

**Power** Children seek to influence their environment and gain some measure of control over it. An encouraged child seeks power by showing independence; a discouraged child seeks power through rebellion.

**Protection** Children seek protection in order to survive and to thrive, and they have an instinctive desire to repel physical and psychological attack. An encouraged child seeks protection by being assertive; a discouraged child seeks protection through revenge.

**Withdrawal** Children withdraw as a way to regroup and center themselves. Withdrawing counterbalances the goal of contact. An encouraged child withdraws to center and regroup, whereas a discouraged child withdraws as a means of avoidance.

**Anecdotal Records of Prekindergarten Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides**

The researcher scheduled weekly informal visits with prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides to monitor their perceptions of the behaviors of targeted students. The researcher recorded the anecdotal information that prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides gave regarding their weekly perceptions of targeted children’s behaviors. The purpose was to explore prekindergarten teachers’ and classroom
educational aides’ perceptions of the behaviors of targeted children for the duration of the program.

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Parents

Within the 6-week time frame of the Active Parenting Today parenting education program, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with each parent participant using the Semi-structured Interview Guide for Parents (see Appendix B). The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into possible reasons for parents’ perceptions of their parenting styles and their perceptions of their children’s behaviors. Heath’s (1985) and Williams’ (1990) formats were used to aid in the construction of the Semi-structured Interview Guide for Parents.

The researcher received signed permission to record these interview sessions on audiotape. All 9 parents participated in the semi-structured interview process. Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to as long as 1½ hours for some parents. As stated in the parent information and the parent permission letters, all information was confidential and all identities remained anonymous (see Appendix C). Each interview was transcribed verbatim at a later date.

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides

During the last week of the Active Parenting Today parenting education
program and within 3 weeks after its conclusion, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview, using the Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides with the teacher and classroom educational aide of each 4-year-old student whose parent was a participant (see Appendix B). Heath's (1985) and Williams' (1990) formats were used to aid in the construction of the Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides. The researcher received signed permission to record these interview sessions on audiotape. Four teachers and 4 educational aides participated in the interview process. Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to as long as 1½ hours for some teachers and educational aides. All information was confidential, and all identities remained anonymous. This confidentiality factor was stated in the teacher and educational aide permission letters. Permission to interview the teachers and classroom educational aides of participants' children was also secured through parent information and permission letters (see Appendix C). The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into possible reasons for prekindergarten teachers' and classroom educational aides' perceptions of their targeted students' behaviors.

Coding Protocols

The researcher coded participant behavior during each Active Parenting Today meeting. A code sheet was constructed for each of the six sessions
(see Appendix B). The code sheets were constructed with the aid of Lebo's (1955) categories for quantifying group process to depict levels of participant interest, participation, and attitude. The purpose of the use of the coding protocols was to document the manner in which the parenting education meetings were conducted to ensure participant interaction and learning. Participants were labeled by letters of the alphabet to ensure anonymity.

Files

A file was kept on each of the 7 target children. These files included all transcribed parent interviews. The files also included information taken on each of the 7 targeted children as relayed through the parents', teachers', and classroom educational aides' by the use of the previously mentioned procedures. In addition, all three administrations of the parenting questionnaire and all three administrations of the Child's Goals of Behavior form were filed appropriately. Finally, all permission forms signed by parents were filed in the corresponding folder of the target child.

Another file was kept which contained the transcribed tapes of the prekindergarten teachers and the classroom educational aides interviews. In addition, this file included the prekindergarten teachers' and the classroom educational aides' signed permission forms. The file also contained all coding protocols and outlines of the activities during each of the parenting
education meetings.

Analyzing Data

Data were analyzed according to procedures outlined in Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory and Techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) which are described in this section. Grounded theory is a transactional system and, as such, is a method of analysis that examines the interactive nature of events. Interaction of events is explored through the process of using open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. These coding procedures require the researcher to use inductive and deductive reasoning by asking questions and making comparisons of all data accumulated (see Figure 2).

Open coding is generally defined as the process whereby concepts are identified and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. Axial coding is generally defined as the process of relating subcategories to a category. Selective coding is defined as the process of integrating and validating all the data to arrive at the core category. These three components provided the framework from which to analyze and describe the data. Following is a more detailed description of open, axial, and selective coding:

Open Coding is the process of breaking down, examining, conceptualizing, and categorizing data. Open coding entails the conceptual
**Figure 2.** Data collection and triangulation.

Model is derived from Corbin and Strauss' Grounded Theory.
process of analyzing the data (p. 61).

**Axial Coding** is the set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories. Axial coding is the conceptual process of synthesizing the data (p. 96).

**Selective Coding** is the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in the categories that need further refinement and development. Selective coding is the conceptual process of evaluating the data (p. 116).

The organization of data through the use of grounded-theory methodology provided a means of studying phenomena situated in different but related contexts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). A similar grounded theory approach was recently used in a study by West (1994). Grounded-theory methodology was the most advantageous qualitative means by which to analyze the data because it facilitated the researcher’s ability to examine and describe the interactive nature of events through the exploration of congruencies.

**Summary**

This was a descriptive study that explored the interactive nature of parents’, teachers’, and educational aides’ perceptions of 4-year-old children’s behaviors at home and at school. There were 7 targeted children
in this study. Data were gathered from several vantage points to ensure triangulation. All participants were English-speaking. A description of all data collection modes has been noted earlier in this chapter. Examples of protocols used for data collection can be found in Appendix B. For a concise listing of the time frame of the data collection and the variety of data collection methods used, see Table 1.
Table 1

Data Collection Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presenter</td>
<td>Conducted the APT meetings</td>
<td>Onset of data collection and 6 weeks following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Weekly observations of participants in the APT meetings</td>
<td>Onset of data collection and 6 weeks following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Weekly anecdotal records during the 6-week period focused on the seven target children as reported by the teachers and the aides</td>
<td>During the 6-week period in which the APT meetings were held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Interviewed parents with the Semi-structured Interview Guide for Parents</td>
<td>During the 6-week period in which the APT meetings were held</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: APT = Active Parenting Today program; teachers = prekindergarten teachers; aides = classroom educational aides.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Interviewed teachers and aides with the</td>
<td>During the last week the APT meetings were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured Interview</td>
<td>offered and 3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guide for Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides</td>
<td>thereafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Three administrations of the APT Parenting Style</td>
<td>During both the first and last APT meetings,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire taken by parents</td>
<td>and 10 weeks following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Three administrations of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form taken by teachers and aides</td>
<td>During the first and last weeks of the APT meetings, and 10 weeks following</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: APT = Active Parenting Today program; teachers = prekindergarten teachers; aides = classroom educational aides.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

In this study, the perceptions of the behaviors of seven 4-year-old children whose parents participated in a parenting education program are described and explored in three different contexts. First, parents’ perceptions of their 4-year-old children’s behaviors are explored and described in the context of the home environment. Second, the prekindergarten teachers’ perceptions of the same population of 4-year-old children’s behaviors are explored and described in the context of the school classroom. Third, the classroom educational aides’ perceptions of the aforementioned population of 4-year-old children’s behaviors are also explored and described in the context of the school classroom.

First, in this chapter, the 6 parenting education meetings and the overall behaviors of participants are described. Second, background information derived from interviews with 4 prekindergarten teachers and their 4 classroom educational aides are described. Third, analysis of data and findings according to the three research questions as they pertain to the parents’, teachers’, and classroom educational aides’ perceptions of the 7 children whose parents were involved in at least 4 of the 6 parenting
meetings are described.

All names are fictitious to preserve the anonymity of the participants. Because the common link of the data analysis and findings is the 7 children, data analysis and findings in this chapter are organized around each child.

Parenting Education Meetings

Facility and Format

All parenting education meetings were held in the school library. The library was situated in the middle of the school. A sign-in table was set up outside the library for parents to register each week. This procedure provided an advantageous opportunity to provide a friendly, individual greeting to all parents and children. Whenever a parent attended a meeting for the first time, he or she was given the Parenting Style Questionnaire to fill out. After signing in, parents escorted their children to the gym located at the eastern end of the school building. Because the gym and the library were not in close proximity, there were no interruptions once the meetings began.

The library was a large and inviting facility conducive to group interaction. Six round tables with four chairs at each table were arranged in a semicircular fashion in an open area. It was easy for parents to have visual and auditory access to the TV screen and a large dry erase board.

All meetings began with a 30-minute informal mealtime. The lesson format lasted 1 hour. The last 30 minutes were used for role play and to
reinforce positive parenting skills. The group's behaviors during the meetings were assessed using the Coding Protocols forms, which may be found in Appendix B.

Meeting 1

Eleven parents attended the first meeting. Seven of the parents in attendance were included in the final data analysis. One parent required a Laotian translator and reported that she planned to attend the other meetings. She attended only the first session, however, citing work schedule difficulties as the reason for not being able to continue. Overall, the group was quiet and apprehensive during the initial mealtime. The participants spent the first 30 minutes eating supper and filling out the Parenting Style Questionnaire. The presenter ate with the group and supplied the parents with general information.

The lesson topic of Meeting 1 was to define and identify the dictatorial, permissive, and democratic styles of parenting. The use of choice to avoid engaging children in power struggles was also introduced. Participant behaviors that were common during the lesson were interest, active listening, friendliness, sharing of information, parenting insight, and good-natured laughing. Each participant shared the make-up of their families and the ages of their children.

Only 3 parents volunteered to engage in a role play to practice the democratic parenting technique of allowing the child to make choices to
avoid power struggles. The scenario was as follows: The presenter took a concern that a parent had mentioned earlier. The concern was when a child begs for candy in the grocery store. Three parents volunteered and each of those parents took a turn to play the role of the child and the parent. The presenter coached each parent as she or he played the role of the parent in the grocery store. With the help of the presenter, one parent said, "You can keep begging for candy and we will go sit in the car for five minutes. Or you can stop begging and we can look for the kind of cookies you like to eat when you come home from school. Which do you choose?" After the role playing exercise, a homework assignment was given. Parents were asked to make time for an enjoyable activity with their child.

Meeting 2

Nine parents attended the second meeting. Five of the parents in attendance were included in the final data analysis. Parents attending for the first time completed the Parenting Style Questionnaire. Three of these parents were included in the final data analysis. Two fathers, who were included in the final data analysis, were in attendance for the first time during this session. During the mealtime, 3 parents shared the enjoyable activity assigned the week before. One parent read to her child. Another parent played volleyball with her sons. The third parent stated that she spent time with each of her daughters separately.

The lesson topic of Meeting 2 was to recognize ways to instill courage
and self-esteem in children. The techniques of encouragement, focusing on strengths, and facilitating success were also introduced. Participant behaviors that were common during the lesson were interest, active listening, friendliness, sharing of information, and good-natured laughing.

During this session, parents made an equal number of insightful and ambivalent statements as they were asked to share childhood fears. For example, some parents stated common fears such as the fear of heights, and the fear of closed-in spaces. One parent stated, "I had a fear when I was a little girl that if I stepped on a crack, my mother's back really would break. I still watch out for cracks."

Each participant shared how he or she encouraged the child in a role-play format. As a homework assignment, each parent was instructed to write a letter of encouragement to his or her child.

**Meeting 3**

Eleven parents attended the third meeting. Nine of the parents in attendance were included in the final data analysis. Only 1 parent shared her letter of encouragement to her daughter during the mealtime. The letter read as follows:

Dear Marie (pseudonym), I know it is hard to be the little sister of two brothers. I know it is hard to share with your brothers, too. Thank you for sharing your bubble bath with Kenny and P.J. (pseudonyms). It made their bathtime fun. I love you. Mommy.
Six parents did share what they were doing to encourage their children. These parents were included in the final data analysis.

The lesson topic of Meeting Three was to define and identify the goals of behavior, which were power, contact, protection, and withdrawal. The positive and negative components of each behavior goal were introduced. Ways to recognize a child's behavior goal were also introduced. Participant behaviors that were common during the lesson were interest, active listening, friendliness, sharing of information, parenting insight, and good-natured laughing. Each parent participated in a role-play activity as he or she described a common behavior that his or her child displayed, either positive or negative, and then interacted with the presenter playing the part of the child. Participants were then asked to identify the goal of the behavior. The homework assignment was for each participant to assist his or her child in learning a skill.

Meeting 4

Nine parents attended the fourth meeting. Eight of the parents in attendance were included in the final data analysis. Halloween was the night before, and, as of the previous weekend, daylight savings time was no longer in effect. Overall, during the mealtime, the group seemed tired. Many of the participants were coughing. Three parents shared what they had done to help their children with a skill in which each child was interested. These parents were included in the final data analysis.
The lesson topic of Meeting 4 was how to help children develop responsibility. The concept of logical consequences and helping children learn from their mistakes was introduced. The power of "I messages" was also introduced. For example, when role-playing an "I message," one parent participant said, "I see that your room is dirty. It makes me feel embarrassed when you want to bring your friends to your dirty room. I'd like you to keep it clean regularly."

Participant behaviors that were common during the lessons were interest, active listening, sharing of information, restlessness, and, again, good-natured laughing. Seven parents participated in a role-play activity to practice the use of logical consequences and "I messages" as they described a common misbehavior their children displayed and then interacted with the presenter playing the part of the child. Six of the parents were included in the final data analysis. The homework assignment was for the participants to practice using positive "I messages" with their children.

Meeting 5

Twelve parents attended the fifth meeting. Eight of the parents in attendance were included in the final data analysis. Overall, once again during the mealtime, the group seemed tired. Two parents shared how they had used "I messages" with their children in positive ways. Both parents were included in the final data analysis.
The lesson of Meeting 5 was how to win cooperation from children. The importance of the parent's word choices, tone, and body language was introduced. The predominant participant behavior during the lesson was good-natured laughing. Four parents, however, were completely silent during this session. These 4 parents were included in the final data analysis. Three parents participated in a role-play activity to practice stating their requests positively to help children in potential problem-solving situations with peers. These parents were included in the final data analysis. The homework assignment was to establish or recognize the importance of a bedtime routine.

**Meeting 6**

Eleven parents attended the sixth meeting. Nine of the parents in attendance were included in the final data analysis. During the mealtime, the parents completed the Parenting Style Questionnaire. The predominant behavioral atmosphere of the group was anticipatory. Each parent shared his or her child's bedtime routine or the problems in establishing a bedtime routine.

The lesson topic of Meeting 6 was parenting in a democratic society through the use of family meetings. The predominant participant behaviors during the lesson were interest, confidence, active listening, friendliness, positive comments, sharing information, insightful statements, and good-natured laughing. In addition, some whispering and restlessness were
observed. Three parents participated in a role-play activity to portray a family meeting. These parents were included in the final data analysis. Certificates of participation and parenting books were given to each parent in attendance who had been present for at least 4 of the 6 meetings.

Research Questions

The first research question was the following: How do parents who have participated in and completed the Active Parenting Today program perceive their own parenting styles? This question was explored through information shared in the parent interviews. The query was also explored through the administration of the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning of the parenting education meetings, at the end of the sixth and final meeting, and again 10 weeks after the conclusion of the six meetings.

The second research question was the following: How do parents who have participated in and completed the Active Parenting Today program perceive their 4-year-old children’s behaviors in the home environment? This question was explored through information shared during the parent interviews.

The third research question was the following: How do prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides perceive the behaviors of 4-year-old students when these students’ parents have participated in and completed the Active Parenting Today program? This question was explored through the weekly gathering of anecdotal information from the
prekindergarten teachers and the classroom educational aides. This question was also explored through information shared by the prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides during the interview process. Finally, this question was again explored through the use of a Child’s Goals of Behavior chart, which was completed by the prekindergarten teacher and classroom educational aide at the beginning, the conclusion, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today program. (See Appendix B for examples of data collection instruments.)

Background Information on Prekindergarten Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides

Mrs. Mays

Mrs. Mays came to my office for her interview during her 1-hour break between the morning and afternoon sessions of prekindergarten on a Tuesday. The interview was conducted 3 weeks after the parenting education class had concluded.

Mrs. Mays was a 42-year-old Caucasian who had only taught 11 years because she had chosen to stay at home with her children when they were younger. Her teaching experience had been as a first-grade, a kindergarten, and a prekindergarten teacher. This was her fourth year to teach prekindergarten. Her son was 4 and her daughter was 11. She and her husband had been married for 20 years.
She came from an educational background. Her father was a high school band director and her mother was a school secretary. When Mrs. Mays was in high school, her family relocated to the present area, where her father was the band director at the high school that Mrs. Mays attended. She reported that she grew up with multicultural influences because her elementary school years were spent in the Rio Grande Valley.

I learned Spanish when I was younger. We had it in elementary school. I’m not fluent. I can understand it. I can’t speak it very well. I remember the music and just trying to learn to speak the language and playing with the kids on the playground.

Mrs. Mays had a bachelor’s degree in elementary education and certification in early childhood. She regretted not finishing her master’s degree, but it was difficult to accomplish with the demands of young children at home.

Mrs. Mays perceived herself as a competent and firm yet loving educator, saying, “I think you have to establish rules, but you can be kind and gentle in a firm way.” She perceived part of her competence as a responsibility to keep parents informed through a weekly newsletter. She said, “I know the kids go home and are asked what they did. So I try to let them know everything we did on our workjobs and everything in centers and special things that are upcoming.”

Although she thought that the parenting classes were a good start,
Mrs. Mays could envision a family-oriented school with extended childcare to help parents. She, however, did not negate the role that parents would play in a family-oriented school. "We have some families who take advantage of everything. We need to get parents involved to share the responsibility."

Mrs. Mays stated that her greatest joy in teaching was "to see the children develop and to be happy at school." Her greatest challenge was in trying to teach language skills. "It's a rewarding challenge because you didn't think that they were learning English," she stated.

Mrs. Mays thought that the 3-hour prekindergarten class was overwhelming to children. Her daily schedule was filled with many activities, and there was not time to savor the experiences. They are just not here long enough. I know they're 4 and they're tired after 3 hours. If they could come from 9:00 to 2:00 and have that time to wind down? We could help them get lunch and have a rest time. If there was a slower pace, we could do more.

Miss Janese

Miss Janese was the classroom educational aide for Mrs. Mays. Miss Janese came to my office for her interview during her 1-hour break between the morning and afternoon sessions of prekindergarten on a Tuesday. The interview was conducted 1 week after the parenting
education class had concluded.

Miss Janese was a 19-year-old who was born and raised in the immediate area. She had been married for a little over a year. She was the oldest sibling in a blended family. Her parents divorced, and both married other spouses shortly after their divorce. As the oldest sibling, Miss Janese assumed childcare responsibilities in both of her parents’ homes.

Miss Janese took child development classes while in high school. During her last class, she was assigned to a kindergarten teacher who became a mentor and role model. It was at this time that she decided to pursue a degree in early childhood education. Currently, Miss Janese is a part-time college student.

Perceiving herself as caring and protective in her role as a classroom educational aide, she stated, "I care about them a lot. I want them to learn and get what they’re here for. I want to take care of them. I don’t want anybody messing with them.” She then recollected an unpleasant experience when she was an educational aide for a substitute teacher.

I don’t like to see any children being verbally abused. A substitute was rude to one particular child the whole day and that child really was upset about it, and it was hard for me to keep my mouth shut and not just say something to her because I really didn’t like that. I do expect them [adults] to treat them [children] nicely and fairly.

Concerning home-school communication, Miss Janese deferred to
Mrs. Mays. “There’s been a few times I’ve called a parent or sent a note home, but I have to go through Mrs. Mays,” she said.

Because of experiences in high school child development classes, Miss Janese thought that the parenting classes were beneficial. In regard to other services that schools might provide to families, Miss Janese replied, “Maybe some type of interaction class would show the parents who really don’t know how to help their kids in school. Some kind of class like that could help them.” She also thought that extending the prekindergarten day by at least 1 hour would help to create a more leisurely pace that would be beneficial for the students.

Miss Janese perceived her biggest challenge as coping with misbehavior. “Some days some kids just really don’t want to be here. They’re hyper and that’s sometimes a challenge.” She stated that her greatest joy as an educational aide was:

Just seeing them when they learn to do something . . . just seeing them because they are so excited that they can do this and to know that I helped them learn this, I think that’s neat. They come up and give you a hug and tell you they love you, and that just melts your heart.

Mrs. Haas

Mrs. Haas came to my office for her interview during her 1-hour break
between the morning and afternoon sessions of prekindergarten on a Friday. The interview was conducted 3 weeks after the parenting class had concluded.

Mrs. Haas was a 42-year-old Caucasian with 12 years of teaching experience. Her teaching experience had been as a second-grade and a fifth-grade teacher. This was her fifth year to teach prekindergarten. She was married and had two sons, ages 13 and 15.

Mrs. Haas’ father was in the military throughout her youth. Although she was born in Spokane, Washington, her family soon moved to England. She lived there until she was 5 years old. She stated, “I lived in England for several years and had an English accent. Then I moved to Fort Worth and outgrew my English accent.” Other than living in California for 2 years while she was in high school, Mrs. Haas has spent her life in the Fort Worth area.

I’m very Texan. When I went to California, I stood out. People would ask me what part of Texas I came from. But when I came back from California, my friends thought I was talking funny.

When asked what prompted the Haas household to move to the area 9 years ago, she stated, “My family [Mrs. Haas’ parents] and my church.” Mrs. Haas took an educational aide position in a nearby school district when her family first relocated to the area.

Mrs. Haas earned a Bachelor of Science degree that certified her to teach elementary school. She later returned to school to receive an
additional certification to teach prekindergarten. She stated, "I’m now certified to teach prekindergarten, but my previous experience has been in first through fifth grades. This is my fifth year to teach prekindergarten. All of my experience as a prekindergarten teacher has been at Elkins Elementary."

Mrs. Haas enjoyed staying professionally current by attending an annual, local early childhood conference. She stated, "I go to the conference they have in Dallas. I stay 4 days and it’s wonderful. You get to make things and share ideas with other educators."

When asked to describe herself as an educator, Mrs. Haas said, "I think I’ve become stronger and better." When asked to elaborate, she indicated that she worried about the well-being of her students, stating, "I still try to give them self-confidence like I always have, but I used to take it home and be all frustrated and worried about their life. I’ve learned to let that go."

Mrs. Haas put forth great effort to keep parents up-to-date regarding the happenings in her classroom. "I have my star reports. Anytime there is something to inform a parent of, I send home a star report." She expressed frustration, however, because she perceived her efforts to elicit parent support and involvement as unsatisfactory.

Some parents, no matter how I explain it and call them on the phone, do not understand. They don’t read the notes. We have used bright
colored paper when it’s something like going on a field trip. Today we had a mother send $2.00 for Santa’s Secret Shop that’s been finished a week, yet no money for the field trip that was due today. We called her and asked her if we could use 50 cents of the money for the field trip since Santa’s Secret Shop is over. That’s all we can do.

Mrs. Haas perceived the school staff as being responsive to the needs of students’ families. “They extend their jobs and there’s the time involved in calling and writing notes,” she stated. When asked her opinion of the parenting class that was offered, Mrs. Haas expressed her views assertively.

I think it’s wonderful. I think all prekindergarten students’ parents should attend parenting classes. I think it would be nice if we could offer something every month; not just a PTA meeting, but have speakers come in. Something that could help parents with their children.

Mrs. Haas again expressed frustration regarding concern for her students’ well-being when asked her greatest challenge as a teacher.

To be able to read those little kids’ minds at age 4 is my challenge.

Being able to understand if there’s a real problem because I’m the first one who sees them. If I let it go, the next teacher could let it go.

Her greatest joy as a teacher was observing the growth and maturation of her students, especially non-English-speaking students.

My greatest joy is seeing the children learn and mature. The neatest
thing about prekindergarten is we have these non-English-speaking children, and now every one of them are speaking English. They’re all talking (English) and developing personalities.

When asked what she would change about prekindergarten, she mentioned concerns regarding the developmental appropriateness of some of the schoolwide activities in which her students were expected to engage. They are asked to do things that I don’t think 4-year-olds understand, like the drug abuse prevention program. They’re not ready for that, but they have to participate because they’re at school with all the other kids. I just think they’re too young for some of the things they’re exposed to.

Mrs. Haas stated that her daily class schedule was structured according to the sequence of activities, rather than time increments. She gauged the flow from one activity to another by observing the behavior of the children. We never look at a clock; we just all know what’s going to happen next. We do the same thing every day. When they get squirmy, I stop and move on. I believe in teaching one activity a day. I teach the lesson in “large group,” then go on to the tables and do that activity. Then we have centers and later come back and talk about our activity. We learn something new every day.

When asked what she thought children should get out of the time they spent in prekindergarten, Mrs. Haas perceived the most valuable outcome to
be associated with affective development.

I think they should be happy. I think they should learn to have a love for learning and to feel good about themselves. Their self-esteem should be improving their self-confidence. I see it! It happens every year.

**Ms. Babs**

Ms. Babs was the classroom educational aide for Mrs. Haas. Ms. Babs came to my office for her interview after school on a Wednesday. The interview was conducted 2 weeks after the parenting education class had concluded. Ms. Babs was a 47-year-old Caucasian who had 10 years' experience working in a church daycare setting. "I started in bed babies and moved up to 3s and 4s," she stated. She had 2 years' experience working as an educational aide at Elkins Elementary School.

Ms. Babs was born in Yazoo County, Mississippi. She spent her childhood and adolescent years in Mississippi and Louisiana. She had lived in the immediate area for 16 years. She stated that she was not aware of growing up with any multicultural influences. Ms. Babs was not bilingual.

Ms. Babs lived with her husband and two children, a 13-year-old daughter and an 18-year-old son. She briefly explained what brought her to this area. "My husband's people live in Texas. He and I both were from Mississippi and his mother moved to Texas and he wanted to be closer to his mother."
Originally, Ms. Babs’ post-high school educational goal was to attend college and major in either education or law. She attended college for 1 ½ years, then married and focused her attentions on establishing a home and raising a family.

Ms. Babs perceived herself as congenial and helpful to both Mrs. Haas and the children.

I generally get along very well with the children. I enjoy the things that we do. Mrs. Haas and I work real well together. We kind of follow each other, and I pretty much stay where I believe she needs me to be as far as kind of reading into what she wants me to do next.

When asked to elaborate on the intuitive process she described in collaborating with Mrs. Haas, Ms Babs explained,

We have our planning and we have our structure of what we’re doing each day, but we’ve worked together long enough now that we’re kind of like a husband-and-wife team, and we know what each other is thinking. We feel a lot. We both feel the same way about pretty much everything that goes on in our classroom. We usually have a smooth going because our relationship is good.

Ms. Babs stated that she learned her childcare skills from “the adults... [she] looked up to.” She also stated that she was strongly motivated by her feelings toward young children. “I’ve always loved children, especially some of the children here. You feel like you can make a difference.” Ms. Babs
perceived her efforts toward positive relationships with children to be reciprocal, saying, "You get so much back from them!"

Ms. Babs considered home-school communication, discipline reports, and progress reports to be Mrs. Haas’ domain. She stated that she would not cross these professional relationship boundaries unless Mrs. Haas made a request for her to do so.

Ms. Babs thought that providing parenting classes on the campus was a "very good idea." She thought that schools could also provide guest speakers who dealt with topics of parental interest. "Parents would feel like they had some support, especially single parents. A lot of parents just don’t know where to turn."

Ms. Babs stated that she thought the school’s staff was very responsive to the needs of students’ families, especially the office staff. "Of course the office knows the families. I think it is a personal touch."

When asked to explain the class schedule, Ms. Babs again referred to the importance of structure, saying, "Children, like all of us, are creatures of habit. They do so well when they know what is expected. Occasionally we do get off schedule, but we pretty well stay within the structure of the schedule."

Once again, when asked to describe her greatest challenge in working with young children, she mentioned the importance of structure. "It is in
getting the child oriented to structure. Some of them do not have any structure at home."

When asked to describe her greatest joy in working with young children, she again mentioned the satisfaction she received from the reciprocity of good relationships with children. She indicated, "You get a lot back from the children. Their appreciation, the excitement of a new activity, like it’s something that’s just been invented! Getting hugs, I like the hugs. At this age they have so much love."

Ms. Babs thought that an extended prekindergarten day, rather than morning and afternoon sessions, would be a beneficial change for children. "They just come and get into class at 8:00 and at 10:30 we’re pretty much wrapping up the day. If they could come at 8:45 and stay maybe until 1:00 or 1:30, we would get more done," she suggested.

Mrs. Rossio

Mrs. Rossio came to my office for her interview before the afternoon prekindergarten class had begun. She taught only the afternoon session. The interview was conducted on a Thursday, 2 weeks after the parenting education class had concluded.

Mrs. Rossio was a 40-year-old Italian-American who had been born and raised in New Jersey. "My mother was born here [in the United States], but her family lives in Naples. My father was born in Italy on a small island off
the coast," she explained. Mrs. Rossio stated that she was bilingual, but did not consider herself fluent in the Italian language. She also stated that she had traveled to Italy to see her relatives regularly throughout her life.

Mrs. Rossio had been raised with a strong work ethic. She explained that the motivation to work hard and succeed were behaviors that she believed superseded cultural barriers.

I was raised with the message that no one owes you anything. We were raised old-fashioned. My grandparents owned land that was my parents' inheritance. We were taught that education was the key to success. I had friends that were Irish, German, Czechoslovakian, Russian. The cultures were all different and they had different traditions, but we were all taught to be independent. We were also taught the value of education. It's important to set this precedent for your children.

Mrs. Rossio had lived in the immediate area for 18 years. Her husband's business interests brought them to the area.

He [Mr. Rossio] is a design engineer. He's been involved in a lot of technology. There is not as much money in it as you might think. In fact, he's gone into business for himself. That's when I went back to teaching.

Mrs. Rossio had taught afternoon prekindergarten for 2 years. She had earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas Christian University.
majored in child studies, minored in psychology, and graduated Magna cum laude. "When you're going to school, it's hard on your family," Mrs. Rossio explained. Mrs. Rossio had three children. Her two sons were aged 19 and 15 and her daughter was 12 years old.

Mrs. Rossio perceived herself as an educator who worked to motivate her students. "I have to help them feel successful in what they are doing. I hope I can instill humor and challenge the children to think," she explained.

When asked to explain how she communicated with parents, Mrs. Rossio described three procedures. "I phone them when necessary. We also use a newsletter. We have a daily folder that goes home."

Mrs. Rossio thought the parenting education class that was offered was "wonderful." However, when asked what other services schools might offer families, her voice tone changed dramatically.

"We offer too much! I'm really upset because we do all this, but the parents won't put forth the effort to make any positive changes, and I think the children suffer. You can tell which children are nurtured and which aren't. All children deserve to be nurtured.

Mrs. Rossio's reply was also critical when asked how responsive she thought the school staff was in meeting the needs of children and their families. "We spend all this time on the low and high children. We have a whole middle section of children who are lost. They don't get any services!"
It needs to be equal."

Mrs. Rossio stated that her greatest joy in teaching was “to know that I have taught something the children soak in and understand. To see that excitement! To see that look when a concept finally clicks.”

Her greatest challenge was managing effectively within the educational facility. “It’s the schedule--starting late, not having enough materials, having to share the room [with the morning prekindergarten teacher],” she explained.

Mrs. Rossio thought that a slower paced schedule would be beneficial for the students. She also thought that prekindergarten students should not be required to participate in schoolwide activities that were not developmentally appropriate.

Mrs. Rossio’s class schedule included everyday large-group activities such as the pledge, calendar, and date. However, aside from the opening activities, her schedule was flexible. “I usually change my lesson as I walk into class everyday,” she stated.

**Ms. Emma**

Ms. Emma came to my office for her interview before the afternoon prekindergarten class had begun. She worked only during the afternoon session as Mrs. Rossio’s educational aide. The interview was conducted on a Thursday, 3 weeks after the parenting education class had concluded.
Ms. Emma was a 45-year-old who was born and raised in New York. Although she replied “Caucasian” when asked her ethnic identity, she later referred to her Polish heritage. “I have a tad of my language of origin, which is Polish, only because a lot of the family spoke it here and there.”

Ms. Emma attended Catholic school through the eighth grade and then attended and graduated from a public high school. Although she did not elaborate, she stated that the transition from parochial school to public school was “a very big change.”

Ms. Emma did not consider herself bilingual, but in addition to some knowledge of the Polish language, she also mentioned that she took Spanish-language classes during high school and college. She had also completed a social sciences associate degree.

Ms. Emma kept a Spanish dictionary in the classroom at all times. She was prepared to translate when necessary. However, to date, all of the Spanish-speaking parents had been conversant in English also.

Ms. Emma and her family had lived back and forth between Texas and Colorado since 1974 because of her husband’s various job transfers.

Ms. Emma had a 12-year-old daughter and a 15-year-old son.

Ms. Emma had 4 years of experience as an educational aide, all in the Eagle Mountain school district. She was a middle school aide for 2 years, and had also held her current assignment as a prekindergarten aide for 2
Ms. Emma perceived herself as a person who was growing in confidence and patience as she worked with young children. She also mentioned that she had improved in her ability to encourage children. "I know what to expect of the kids as far as maybe their little failures and what to say to them to make them either feel better or to get them motivated a little more."

Ms. Emma stated that she and Mrs. Rossio were close personal friends. She perceived this friendship as beneficial to their professional relationship.

When we first decided to try this, she [Mrs. Rossio] and I felt pretty good about it because we've known each other for a very long time. We're friends since our children were little, too. But even so, we had a few people saying, "Do you think this might damage your relationship having to work together on a daily basis?" You know how people can be when they're too close. We would say, "No." And it really hasn't. If anything, it's made us closer. We think alike. We have a rapport. I think we work with the kids well together.

Ms. Emma assisted Mrs. Rossio with home-school communication by seeing that notes were placed in take-home folders. She also checked the folders to see which notes had been returned. She expressed concern for children whose parents did not take time to check the folders and stay
informed. "We only hope that the parents see it because we have some of the children come back and we know the papers in the folder have never been touched or looked at."

Because she thought that "somebody should have some kind of education on the art of parenting," Ms. Emma perceived the parenting education class as beneficial. In regard to other services that schools might offer to families, Ms. Emma mentioned the importance of child-abuse-prevention education. "They [parents] just 'lose it [their temper].' You see this in younger parents. Something where you could go for help when there’s a problem might save a few [children]."

Ms. Emma perceived the school staff as being responsive to the needs of children and their families, especially "less fortunate" families. She elaborated, "From what I’ve seen of giving the gift baskets and the canned food drives, I would say it’s a very good response."

Ms. Emma perceived her biggest challenge as helping the children improve in needed areas. "I like to see improving in any area whether it be the social skills, the kids making friends, or improvement of large motor skills." She stated that her greatest joy as an educational aide was "when they come over and tell me that they love me. And some of them want to give you a kiss and they give you hugs and it makes you want to cry!"

When asked what she would change about prekindergarten, Ms. Emma
was critical of the lunch schedule.

I think that not having a lunch, having the kids come right in and starting the class at a decent time so that we have more time with them in class would be better. Instead of the government funding it so that we had to feed them the food that half or three quarters of it goes right in the garbage can because they don’t even eat it—they should just give us the ability to have a snack time in class.

Next, when Ms. Emma was asked to describe the daily schedule, she began by stating, “We spend the first 45 minutes in the lunch room!” Ms. Emma stated that during large-group activities she checked students’ folders and during recess, she prepared the room for centers. “Once we start the centers, she [Mrs. Rossio] and I observe the kids and give the help that they need,” Ms. Emma said. She stated that the day usually concluded with a large-group story time or sharing time.

Ms. Emma thought that positive "socialization" was the most important developmental process in prekindergarten. “They’re going to have to deal with children their own age and older. If they don’t have those social skills to get along with those kids, they’re pretty lost,” she said.

Mrs. Morris

Mrs. Morris came to my office for her interview an hour after the morning prekindergarten class had been dismissed. She taught only the
morning session. The interview was conducted on a Thursday, 2 weeks after the parenting education class had concluded.

Mrs. Morris was a 32-year-old Caucasian who had spent her life in the northwest portion of the Fort Worth area. Although she had taken 2 years of high school Spanish, she did not consider herself proficient in the language. She was married and had a 5-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter.

Mrs. Morris graduated with a bachelor’s degree in science from the University of North Texas in Denton, and was certified to teach prekindergarten through sixth grade. Mrs. Morris had a total of 11 years of teaching experience. All of her teaching experience had been in the same school district. Initially, she secured a job at the elementary school where she was assigned to do her student teaching. “I taught fifth grade for 1 year and third grade for 4 years, kindergarten for 1 year. I have been teaching prekindergarten for 5 years,” she said. Mrs. Morris stayed professionally current by attending local workshops.

Mrs. Morris perceived herself as an educator who was willing to bring new experiences to her students to enhance their education.

Just trying new things all the time and really making an effort to teach from a hands-on approach instead of giving the kids worksheets. Instead of cutting out pictures of trees or a rose and gluing them on paper, we bring in a tree or a rose. We smell, feel, and taste.
Mrs. Morris indicated that the key to good home-school communication was persistence on her part.

I call them. I write notes all the time. If I don’t get a response from a parent, I’ll call them and ask them why. They [parents] were a lot more responsive when I started calling. I really try to make them understand the importance of correspondence.

Mrs. Morris thought that the parenting education class was “great!” She also thought that the free adult classes offered in the English language were a beneficial service provided by the school district. However, she stated that she would extend this service to provide a paid translator to assist teachers in conferencing with limited-English-speaking parents. She extended her opinion further to include written translations. “I we just had a full-time person who could go from school to school and translate notes, that would be helpful,” she commented.

Mrs. Morris stated that her greatest challenge as an educator was “the situations they come from at home.” When asked to elaborate, she stated, “I’m talking about caring as far as spending time, emotional nurturing. I feel like I do their [parents’] job, but I’ve got 16 to nurture. Mrs. Morris’ greatest joy as an educator was “to be with the children and watch them grow and learn and know that I’ve made a difference.”

Learning to share was the skill that Mrs. Morris considered most
important in prekindergarten. She stated, "They have to listen and cooperate, work with other children, wait their turn, no pushing and shoving. Sharing is a big one!"

When asked how she would change prekindergarten, Mrs. Morris replied, "Smaller classes, 10 or 12 kids max. A bigger room, more space. Bigger classrooms, smaller classes."

The daily schedule in Mrs. Morris' classroom was consistent in regard to events and times. She adhered to a written daily schedule. First, they had center time as the children arrived sporadically to the classroom from breakfast. Next, they had large-group time for traditional activities such as the date and the pledge. The remaining sequence of the daily schedule was recess, followed by story time, music time, and small-group activity time.

Ms. Pat came to my office for her interview after the morning prekindergarten class had been dismissed. She worked only during the morning session as Mrs. Morris' educational aide. The interview was conducted on a Tuesday, which happened to be the same day that the sixth and last parent education class was held.

Ms. Pat was a 27-year-old Caucasian who was born and raised in the state of Vermont. She met her husband, who was born in Laos, through a mutual friend. They married when she graduated from high school at the age of 18. Her husband had family in the Fort Worth, Texas, area, so they
moved here. She had a 7-year-old son.

Ms. Pat was aware of multicultural influences while growing up. During her adolescent years, she lived in Springfield, which had a moderately-sized Asian population. "There used to be a lot [of Asians], but people have gone to the big city in Vermont and Connecticut. There are lots of mix [in Springfield] like Cambodian and Vietnamese," she explained.

Ms. Pat was fluent in speaking and understanding the spoken Laotian language. She stated that, when she was 16, she was motivated to learn to speak Laotian in order to communicate with her friends.

When I went to school, there were six Laotians and we would sit together. We would mingle with friends and I would pick up words. I would help them with their homework after school, and they would tell me things. Then, when we moved down here, I decided if I wanted to know what everyone was talking about, I needed to learn a little bit more. I picked it up here and there. They [bilingual adolescent family members] taught me some, and my husband taught me some. I would hear him talking to someone and I would pick up two or three words and ask him what they mean [sic] and the next day I'd hear some more, so, little by little, I learned.

When asked to elaborate on her dual-culture lifestyle, Ms. Pat explained how important it was to Laotians in general not to offend Americans through their cultural beliefs and practices. She also stated that many Laotians
wanted to do things the "American way."

I can remember one incident. When I first came here, we went to a friend’s house. They had killed a calf and were getting ready to eat it. They didn’t want me to see that because "she [Ms. Pat] might think bad of us or think that’s gross." A lot of time they are wanting to know the way American people do it because they are afraid of making a bad impression or, especially if they are meeting someone for the first time, they might say the wrong thing or someone [will] think they are not very smart or that they were raised that way.

Like in the home life in American homes, sometimes you have extended family, aunts and uncles living with you. Or, depending on how old you are, maybe brothers or sisters-in-law, cousins living with you. And that’s like with the Laotian family. Sometimes they get married and don’t move out. In Laos 2 years ago, when my husband went back, there were cousins and wives and kids still living in one house. Some families stay together. It’s up to the family. When they come over here, they want to do like the Americans. When they get married, they want to move out. As far as beliefs and church, some are Buddhists, some will switch over to Catholic or Jehovah’s Witness. We have some friends who are Jehovah’s Witness.

Ms. Pat thought that the biggest source of pride for Laotians in general was "in their children. They [parents] want them to study, study, study. They
say, ‘You can work or anything you want after you get out of school, but your education comes first,’” she said.

Ms Pat had 2 years’ experience as a prekindergarten educational aide. Before that, she had worked at several different fast food restaurants.

Ms. Pat saw herself as a patient and caring classroom educational aide. Because she knew many of the parents of children who attended prekindergarten, she used her link between home and school to benefit children and their families.

I’ll tell them if it’s [their behavior] right or wrong. Sometimes they listen. Sometimes I’ve talked to the parents, not telling them it’s right or wrong or how to raise their kids. When you’re all from this neighborhood, you know everybody. I think I have a good relationship.

In regard to home-school communication, Ms. Pat thought that more parent-teacher conferences should be scheduled. “I don’t think that 10 minutes once a month that’s [sic] a big deal to come in and see what your child’s doing,” she stated.

When asked her opinion of the parenting education class that was offered, Ms. Pat said, “I’m sure those who went to all the meetings learned a lot.” She stated that starting an after-school sponsored and organized homework club would be another way in which the school could be responsive to the needs of children and their families. She also thought that
smaller student-teacher classroom ratios would be beneficial.

Ms. Pat felt that her biggest challenge in working with prekindergarten children was to listen to children. "We just assume they [prekindergarten children] don’t know what they’re talking about. I believe, ‘Yes they do.’ Listen to them and you may learn something from them," she said.

Ms. Pat stated that her greatest joy in working with young children was "seeing the children grow. They’ve changed so much in just a short time, it’s hard to believe."

When asked what she thought children should primarily get from their prekindergarten experience, Ms. Pat said, “I think it’s very important to learn patience and cooperation.” She also stated that the daily schedule was structured and that she assisted in helping the children during small-group activity times.

Parents’, Prekindergarten Teachers’, and Classroom Educational Aides’ Perceptions of Seven Children

Jeannie Ramone

Introduction

Jeannie was a tall, lanky 4-year-old girl with long brown hair and expressive brown eyes. Although Jeannie’s mother, Sandra, was Caucasian, she listed Jeannie as Hispanic because her [Jeannie’s] father was Hispanic. Jeannie’s father was also listed as being fluent in Spanish
and English. All other family members were listed as English-speaking only. Both of Jeannie’s parents held blue-collar jobs at a nearby factory where technological equipment was built. Jeannie also had a 3-year-old sister, Amy. Both Jeannie and Amy attended daycare. Jeannie attended Mrs. Mays’ morning prekindergarten class. The classroom educational aide for Mrs. Mays was Miss Janese.

Jeannie’s mother, Sandra, was administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Sandra scored in the permissive parenting style range on the first two administrations. She scored in the democratic parenting style range on the last administration of the Parenting Style Questionnaire.

Overall, Sandra attended 5 of the 6 parenting education meetings, including all but the second session. The following data in this section on Jeannie Ramone contain the abundance of detailed description necessary for qualitative analysis. For a concise listing of the data findings on Jeannie Ramone, see Table 2 on page 108.

Interview with Sandra Ramone

Sandra was the only parent who invited me to her home for the personal interview. (Sandra had attended 5 of the 6 parenting education classes at the time of the interview.) The Ramone family lived in government subsidized apartments. When I arrived at the apartment
complex on a cold and windy evening around 7:00 p.m., Sandra was waiting outside for me. She escorted me to her apartment because she felt that it was not safe for me to be searching in the dark for where she lived.

Sandra readily welcomed me into her home. Her husband, Aldo, kept Jeannie and Amy occupied in the family room with the videotape Sleeping Beauty. This left Sandra and me free for our interview, which took place at the kitchen table. Sandra was a gracious hostess who had prepared finger sandwiches, chips, and homemade hot sauce. She prepared glasses of Coke for everyone while I set up the tape recorder.

Sandra was 33 years old and was born in Houston. Her parents separated when she was approximately 4 years old. At that time she moved with her mother and sister to Fort Worth. She remembered her mother and father as being strict and punitive parents.

I used to go to school on the south side of town. I used to make my skirts real short because my mom always made me wear real long dresses and I couldn’t wear pants. I used to wear this Chinese jumprope and I’d pull my skirt up. I’d get home and forget to take it off and I’d get in trouble. So Mama started putting me in church school. I went there from 13 until I was 18.

I used to live in Florida with my dad for about 3 months. That’s all I could stand. Because we broke his waterpump, he sent us home. But he gave us 10 licks with a belt before we went. I didn’t even
understand what happened.

Sandra had difficulty remembering much about her elementary school years. However, she did have a pleasant recollection of a time she played a Munchkin in the *Wizard of Oz* for a school play. She laughed, "I wore one of those little leprechaun dresses." Sandra also recalled that she especially enjoyed taking classes in home economics and childcare at the parochial high school she attended.

Sandra expressed relief that the parenting classes did not meet her initial expectations.

I thought it would be in the auditorium, sitting close just listening to somebody talk to us. Like a lecture maybe. It wasn’t nothing like that. We all sat in the library around tables and ate barbecue sandwiches, talked to everybody. Very calm, very comfortable.

When asked about her expectations of adults at school who came in contact with Jeannie, Sandra’s response was unusual.

This is the first year my child’s ever been in school. I don’t know what to expect, so I guess that’s why I don’t get mad about anything. I don’t know what I’m suppose [sic] to get mad about.

Sandra thought that communication between home and school was a cooperative endeavor that took equal amounts of effort from both parties. She recalled an incident in which she and the teacher communicated back and forth about the problem of Jeannie’s being sleepy in class.
I write notes to the teacher and ask her if she can let me know about anything that needs to be discussed or if there's any problem. One day we wrote back and forth. She said Jeannie had trouble staying awake in school. She'd act real sleepy a lot. I told her maybe it was because Jeannie goes to bed late and has to get up early. I have to get her up by 6:00, and we leave by 6:20 or 6:30. She needs more sleep.

It was obvious that the family's weekday schedule was trying on everyone. Sandra usually began her day at around 4:00 a.m. She, her husband, and the girls would leave the house at 6:20 in time to drop Jeannie and Amy off at daycare. Before they arrived at work, Sandra and Aldo would stop and pick up Aldo's brother who worked with them.

Although it was obvious that Sandra was affectionate and caring with her children, she viewed her parenting style as punitive and her children as spoiled, strong-willed, and mischievous.

I yell too much. That's the main problem, I yell too much. I'm negative. In a way, she's [Jeannie] real spoiled. I try to calm her down and make her behave, but she doesn't behave. She whines a lot. I think she manipulates us. I know that's not a good word, but I think she has us wrapped around her finger. She can make us feel sorry for her so we'll hug her and kiss her. She'll act like she's hurt and she's really not. She wants attention.

She's [Amy] even more spoiled than Jeannie because I hold
her all the time. I’ll be cooking and I’ll hold her in my arms.

They’re [Jeannie and Amy] always making messes with water.

They say they have to go potty and after 10 minutes, I go check on them and they’re pouring water in cups. Yesterday, they poured about 10 packs of candy in a bowl with water and were stirring it. When I asked what they were doing, they said they were making Kool-Aid®.

When earlier asked what other type of service that schools could offer to families, Sandra wryly replied, “Would you have one for kids to teach them how to act?” At another point during the interview, however, Sandra recounted a more democratic parenting style and a different perception of her girls’ behaviors.

My mom tells me now when I should spank them. I tell her they’re not hurting nothing. I make my mom nervous. My kids make my mom nervous. When we go over there, after 30 minutes she’s ready for us to leave. She’s afraid the kids are going to get hurt because her house isn’t prepared for little kids. And it’s not beautiful; it’s messy!

I believe in putting your house in the way the kid won’t get hurt. They play and they have toys everywhere, but I want them to enjoy their lives. I don’t want to be griping at them all the time. It’s just when I want to clean up, I want to clean up. I’ve taken all the toys and put them out on the patio in the storage closet. Now they want to know why I don’t have any toys for them, and I say, “If you
can’t keep them cleaned up, I put them in the shed. When you want to play with them, you go on the patio and play with them and put them back when you finish. If you leave them outside, they’re going to get rained on.” So, between daddy and them, they put them back. Daddy usually helps them.

Sandra went on to share that, even though she became frustrated with her daughters’ behaviors, she would handle the frustration differently now and also in a way that was different from her parents.

The radio’s on, the TV’s on and I’m talking on the phone. You’ve got someone talking in your ear and someone on the phone. I don’t know how I can concentrate!

I don’t hit them like I used to. I would have got a whipping with a belt if I did what my kids do. If I jumped on the bed, I’d have got 10 licks with a belt.

Sandra, however, still perceived her greatest challenge as a parent as having patience with her daughters’ behaviors and her greatest joy as receiving love from them when she felt she did not deserve it.

It’s easier to get mad and run my mouth, but I don’t need to be doing that. I have to apologize a lot of times. I say “I’m sorry Mama got mad, but when you’re jumping on the bed and you’re making a mess with water and pouring shampoo down the drain that I need, I tend to get upset.”
My joy is wanting them to sit on my lap and [them] wanting to hug me and kiss me and knowing that I don’t deserve it, because I was mean to them that day or griping too much.

Sandra reported that both of her daughters were energetic and interested in many activities that involved large-muscle movement. These were also the types of activities in which Sandra enjoyed engaging with her daughters.

Jumprope and skating. She [Jeannie] sat on the couch last night and watched skating. She loves Kristi Yamagouchi. She loves gymnastics. She wants to learn gymnastics.

They [Jeannie and Amy] want to learn to swim. I’ve never let them. I don’t know how to swim. I think they’d like to learn tennis. I tried to teach them to jumprope, but the rope’s too long. It’s hard for them. Jeannie’s doing pretty good, though. And hopscotch.

Sometimes we’ll play tag or hide-and-seek in the house.

However, Sandra also enjoyed opportunities to spend time with, and listen to, her daughters in more tranquil settings. She stated, “When they go to bed or when they’re in the bathtub taking a bath, I’ll sit there and just listen to them.”

Although sometimes in the previously mentioned settings Jeannie would talk about school, the best time to find out about school was when Sandra picked up her daughters from daycare. This was also a special time
to find out how Jeannie felt about Mrs. Mays and Miss Janese.

She brings home papers every day, and she’ll show you the paper and explain how they made it. She always sings about Mrs. Mays and about how her name is like the month of May. She loves Miss Janese. If I ask her if her shoe comes untied, will Mrs. Mays tie it, she says no, but Miss Janese will.

Sandra’s expectations of Jeannie’s prekindergarten experience centered mostly on academics. She also stated that this was an expectation for herself as a parent, but was finding it difficult to achieve. “I’d like her to learn her ABCs. Write the alphabet. I try to work with her on numbers. She works more at school than she will with me. She won’t hardly let me work with her.”

Throughout the interview, Jeannie and Amy were occupied with Aldo and the movie they were watching. Sandra and I were not interrupted. As I was leaving, I noticed that Jeannie and Amy were fast asleep on the couch on either side of their father. Sandra walked me out to my car. I waited until she was back inside her apartment before I drove off.

Information from Mrs. Mays

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings, Mrs. Mays provided information on her perceptions of Jeannie’s classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Mrs. Mays perceived Jeannie as an intelligent child who often came to school tired. Mrs. Mays indicated that when
Jeannie was tired, her behavior was often noncompliant.

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Mays described Jeannie’s behavior as “quiet, pouty, and moody.” Mrs. Mays also described Jeannie as a “very artistic” girl who “draws elaborate pictures.” According to Mrs. Mays, Jeannie was also “older, taller, and bigger” when compared to her classmates. Mrs. Mays expressed concern that Jeannie was often “tired” and that Mrs. Rodriguez had stated that Jeannie “was anemic.”

During Week 2 of the program, Mrs. Mays again expressed concern for Jeannie’s health. Mrs. Mays stated that Jeannie “comes to school either sick or tired.” When Mr. Rodriguez came to school to take Jeanie home, Mrs. Mays reported that he explained that Jeannie “won’t go to bed.”

Mrs. Mays’ Week 3 report, however, was positive. She stated, “Jeannie does her work eagerly and happily! She really seems to like school.”

Yet, once again, Mrs. Mays expressed concerns during the fourth week of the parenting education meetings. She stated, “Sometimes Jeannie has a sour look on her face. It takes a hug to get it off. Sometimes I wonder what kind of morning she has had at home to be so sour when she gets to school.”

During the fifth week of the program, Mrs. Mays described Jeannie’s
behavior as bright and energetic. However, she also recalled an incident of misbehavior.

Jeannie likes to test authority occasionally. Last Tuesday she was supposed to go out to recess after she finished her work job. On her way out [to recess], she ran down the halls yelling. She was caught and had to sit in time-out during recess. She pouted. She likes to test authority, but she does better after she has experienced the consequences.

By the last week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Mays had reached some conclusions regarding her perception of the cause for Jeannie’s misbehavior. “It’s [Jeannie’s behavior] only a problem when she is tired. She becomes overactive when she is tired,” Mrs. Mays explained.

Mrs. Mays’ perceptions of Jeannie’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning and end of the parenting education class, Mrs. Mays perceived Jeannie’s primary goals of behavior as seeking power in a positive way through independence. Ten weeks after the conclusion of the program, Mrs. Mays perceived Jeannie’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

When interviewed, Mrs. Mays stated that she perceived her relationship with Jeannie as “a very good one.” She reported that the biggest difference
between home and school activities for Jeannie was “to wait her turn.” She also intimated that “Jeannie is probably able to manipulate her parents a little bit more than she is able to manipulate her teacher at school.”

Mrs. Mays found that the best time to listen to Jeannie was during group time. “She does add comments when we’re having a group discussion, and she’s not afraid to say something.”

Mrs. Mays expressed an appreciative viewpoint of Jeannie as a unique individual in her classroom.

I love her voice. She’s got this low, deep sounding voice, and she has a good sense of humor. She’s a real funny little girl when you talk to her. She’s almost got this devious little smile. She’s the one who wants to sit on my lap. She loves art. She’s creative.

Information from Miss Janese

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings, Miss Janese provided information on her perceptions of Jeannie’s classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Miss Janese’s perceptions of Jeannie’s behaviors during this time frame ranged from “quiet and shy” to “social and bossy.” Miss Janese also observed several occasions when Jeannie did not feel well.

Miss Janese observed that Jeannie was “withdrawn and quiet” during the first week of the parenting education class. She stated that Jeannie
"doesn't want to play outside unless someone will play with her. She will walk around by herself [if she does not have a playmate]."

During Week 2 of the parenting education meetings, Miss Janese reported that Jeannie was "quieter than usual." She also mentioned that Jeannie "felt bad and went home sick."

During Week 3 of the program, Miss Janese perceived Jeannie's behavior as "shy." Miss Janese had observed that Jeannie "was uncomfortable during a [prekindergarten class] parade around the school."

The behaviors that Miss Janese observed during the fourth week of the parenting education meetings were very different from the behaviors observed during the previous weeks.

She [Jeannie] is bossy and not cooperative with the other children. She wants her way. If she doesn't want to do something, she will pretend like she didn't hear you. If she goes to a center with another child, even though there are plenty of materials for all, she will be territorial and hoard them and not share or play with the other children, like in blocks, for example.

Miss Janese's perceptions of Jeannie's behaviors during the fifth week of the parenting education meetings were positive. "Jeannie has been more compliant and, lately, easier to get along with. She is very social," stated Miss Janese.
During the program's final week, Miss Janese reported that Mrs. Rodriguez was concerned about Jeannie's hearing.

We got a note from Jeannie's mom earlier in the week. She was concerned that one reason that Jeannie talks so loud [sic] is because she has a hearing problem. The nurse checked her hearing, and it's okay, but she has had a cold and maybe her ears are stopped up. It has made her voice sound different.

Miss Janese's perceptions of Jeannie's overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child's Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and at 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Miss Janese perceived Jeannie's primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition. At the end of the parenting education meetings, Miss Janese perceived Jeannie's primary goal of behavior as seeking power in a negative way through rebellion. Ten weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, once again, Miss Janese perceived Jeannie's primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

When interviewed, Miss Janese indicated that she perceived Jeannie to be a loud and manipulative child. She mentioned that a possible hearing problem had been discussed with Mrs. Ramone because "usually you will have to say something a few times before she [Jeannie] realizes she's being
In regard to the manipulative behavior, Miss Janese stated, "Jeannie probably gets away with a lot at home because she is rather bossy and tries to manipulate you to do what she wants. We don’t tolerate that here. She doesn’t get everything she wants."

Later, Miss Janese portrayed a different perception of Jeannie as a sweet child who enjoyed art activities. She said, "She’s really sweet. She’s pretty friendly. She’s always at the art center. Every morning when she comes in, she goes straight to the art center." However, once again, she mentioned concerns with Jeannie’s manipulative behavior. "She’s so outgoing that sometimes she dominates over them [peers]."

When asked about the ways she listened to Jeannie, Miss Janese expressed frustration. "I always try to listen so if somebody is calling me I can help them and not ignore them. Jeannie will just call you from across the room. She doesn’t mind. She’ll just holler out your name."

Carlos Munoz

Introduction

Carlos was a small yet sturdy 4-year-old boy with well-groomed brown hair and solemn brown eyes. Carlos and his family were Hispanic. All family members living at home spoke both Spanish and English. Inez Muñoz was a housewife, and Juan Muñoz held a blue-collar job with an automobile parts company. Carlos had two older brothers, Juan, Jr., who was 14, and
Table 2

**Perceptions of Adults Involved with the Parenting Education Program and Jeannie Ramone**

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<td>10 weeks post-program</td>
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<td>Child's core behavior</td>
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<td>Challenge to optimum</td>
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<td>10 weeks post-program</td>
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Roberto, who was 8. Carlos and his family lived close to the school, and he attended Mrs. Mays' morning prekindergarten class. The classroom educational aide for Mrs. Mays was Miss Janese.

Carlos' father, Juan was administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Juan scored in the democratic parenting style range on the first administration. He scored equally between the permissive and the democratic parenting style ranges on the second administration, and he scored in the democratic parenting style range on the last administration of the Parenting Style Questionnaire. Carlos' mother, Inez, was also administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Inez scored in the permissive parenting style range on the first administration. She scored in the democratic parenting style range on the second administration, and she scored equally between the autocratic and democratic parenting style ranges on the last administration of the Parenting Style Questionnaire.

Overall, Juan attended four of the six parenting education meetings, including sessions 2, 3, 5, and 6. Inez attended all six of the parenting education meetings.

The following data in this section on Carlos Muñoz contain the abundance of detailed description necessary for qualitative analysis. For a
concise listing of the data findings on Carlos Muñoz, see Table 3 on page 136.

Interview with Juan Muñoz

Juan arrived at my office at 8:00 a.m. on a Friday for the personal interview. (Juan had attended 3 of the 6 parenting education meetings at the time of the interview.) Juan was a 38-year-old man with a quick smile and a courteous demeanor. He and his family had lived at their present location since 1983.

Juan was born in Texas. When he was an infant, he was sent to Saragosa, Mexico, to be raised by relatives. He moved back to Texas when he was "16 or 17."

Moving back to Texas after being raised in Mexico made the academic requirements to finish high school difficult for Juan. He spoke only Spanish when he returned to Texas. Juan recalled the memories of the challenges he encountered due to his lack of familiarity with the English language.

I went through my kindergarten and elementary and 2 years of secondary, and then when I come here, I enrolled to high school. I went to high school here in Northside. I think they started me in the ninth grade and then in half the year, they put me in sophomore. I stayed the whole year here in Fort Worth, and then we had some family difficulties and I had to move. I went to Solana, Texas, and I was there for the tenth and eleventh. I graduated there. The whole
issue in being at school was that nobody could help me with my English. That’s why I don’t write well. I don’t know how to spell, either. I spell some words, but not that much.

Ever since I was a kid over there in Mexico, they pick a few students in school who have a good memory. We would have to say the pledge every day, and at the end of the month, someone would have to make a speech. They picked someone with a good memory because they would have to memorize three or four pages. I never was that smart to remember.

Here [Texas], they give you vocabulary words to look at and learn to spell. Over there [Mexico], they don’t give you vocabulary words. You read a book every morning in school. The Spanish is not too difficult to spell, but they don’t ask if you can spell the word—you just say it. Here, some words have silent letters, like the ‘h’ in father. But in Spanish, padre is spelled exactly like it sounds. We don’t know how to spell words because there, you didn’t have to, but here you have to. Here, I was scared being in school because I didn’t know how to spell. I was 18 when I enrolled in school here so when I graduated, I was over 20 years old. I was older than everybody at school.

When asked what language was most often spoken at home, Carlos replied, “Half and half.” Then he expressed concern that his boys know how to speak Spanish as well as English.
I need to speak full Spanish so they can learn. I’m so used to speaking English and just throw in a little Spanish. That’s the way it’s been since my wife and I married. That’s the way our culture is. Carlos and Roberto don’t really want to speak Spanish, but they understand it. The older son, Juan, Jr., wants to speak Spanish.

Juan expressed initial confusion in regard to the purpose of the parenting education meetings. “I didn’t know what the meeting was for. I realized then they were teaching couples how to become better parents.” His overall perception was favorable.

I believe it is excellent. Believe it or not, you can learn from others. You can learn more from others than you can from yourself, or just trying to think you can make it. When you’re in a group that someone is leading, they are going to have pictures [videotape format] and things like we’ve been doing in these meetings.

Also, Juan relied on his wife as a source for learning parenting skills. He stated, “My wife reads a lot and she learned a lot about how to take care of kids from reading.” He did, however, indicate that they had different opinions regarding child rearing that sometimes caused conflict.

There’s a conflict sometimes because I was trying to do something my own way and she told me that was the wrong way. I said, “Let’s do it this way first.” She said, “No, that’s not right.” It’s just natural that
way we’re going to parent our kids [sic]. You learn a lot from the public, even from TV. There’s a lot of programs that help you become a parent. When I was a teenager, I lived with my older brother. I knew a lot of things they did wrong and the way they needed to be. One thing I learned about both of you working, when your kids grow up, you’re not going to have any control. I knew that for a fact. That’s why my wife takes care of the kids. Only one time I had to bring a girl to take care of Carlos. I had no choice because I was making very little money and she [wife] had to help me out. It was only temporary for 6 or 8 months. Juan, Jr., and Roberto were raised by my wife all the time. I can compare how we raised our kids with my brother. They always had someone take care of their kids and they are now teenagers and they have all kinds of trouble.

Juan was asked what his expectations were of the adults at school who came in contact with Carlos.

What I like is just guiding them through the school time and take the time to do their work. As parents, we teach them how to behave. When they [children] come here to school, they know we are not around and they can get away from other people because they [adults at school] don’t have the authority to be real strict. Be real close with them because they always want to play. They’re supposed to be listening. Roberto sometimes plays a lot. The same with Carlos. He’s
still a little kid.

Again, when asked what he wanted Carlos to get out of his prekindergarten experience, Juan mentioned the importance of listening. "Nothing special, just to listen. That’s very difficult because he’s still in prekindergarten," he replied.

Juan kept up with home-school communications through the notes his sons brought home. When asked if there had ever been a problem in being informed about school happenings, Juan replied, "No, usually we get that information from the school through them [sons]. Anything that happens to our kids at school, my wife calls and talks and they [adults at school] listen."

Juan indicated that the family schedule revolved around his sons’ schooling, mealtimes, and religion. He stated that he helped his wife by sharing some of the responsibility for cooking. "I get up and fix breakfast usually or they’ll eat cereal. That’s what they like most of the time. She fixes lunch and supper. Sometimes I cook outside," Juan explained.

Imparting religious beliefs to the three boys was perceived as his wife’s domain and Juan indicated that he respected these beliefs.

My wife keeps the boys busy twice a week with book [Bible] study. Study [of the Bible] helps them become more close to God. They also become more responsible because of it. It [religion] is very important.
My wife’s beliefs and my way is different. I just don’t interfere. It’s not that I don’t want to be close to God, it’s just that I’m not too religious like she is. I just respect her beliefs.

Although Juan deferred to Inez on most child-rearing concerns, he had a strong sense of himself as a father and of his relationship with each of his sons. However, most of his parenting concerns revolved around Carlos.

The older son [Juan, Jr.] is real shy. If he has to say something, he comes straight. Roberto’s not too shy. He’s pretty open. Carlos is more close to his mother. I’m more strict with the little one. His [Carlos’] behavior has been rather hyper and he acts too much like a boss. The other two, I don’t really worry. Just like everyday things you have to do, in the morning I wake them up and the older and the middle get up and get ready. The little one, naturally, is the baby. He knows how to put his clothes on, but he just wants attention like an infant. He’s been kind of different. I blame this nanny when we were both working.

Communication within the family was perceived as open by Juan. Family discussions usually took place at dinner time. “Most of the time we just set down and talk things over when we are eating at the table,” Juan explained. He also stated that his sons began talking about their school day as soon as they arrived home.

They just can’t wait to come out of school and, boom, right there!
That’s the way they are. Unless it’s something they did wrong that they don’t want us to know; they hide it. Later on, not that particular day, but the next couple of days, we find out he [any son] was hiding it. Especially, when they get hurt, they’ll come and tell us. My wife will find out who hit who and communicate with the teacher. There are other kids who tell their parents and the parents really care like the rest of us and feel it their obligation to come and get things straight.

When asked what kind of activities Carlos and his brothers engaged in when they weren’t in school, Juan described several activities.

They like to read. It’s just like with Roberto—if there’s a book he has to read he doesn’t waste any time. The older boy, you have to push him to read. He [Juan, Jr.] likes to draw. They [Carlos and Roberto] like to play a lot outside at home when they get out of school.

Later, Juan mentioned more activities that Carlos, Roberto, and Juan, Jr. enjoyed engaging in outside of school.

They like to play video games. They do that all the time. The little one likes to play a lot with his toys. They like for me to take them out all the time to the park so they can enjoy it.

Trying to change his parenting approach was what Juan perceived to be his greatest challenge. He said, “I try to be careful with myself. It’s hard. Sometimes I make mistakes. I tell them when I’m wrong and want them to do things another way.”
Juan responded quickly when asked to describe his greatest parental joy. "That I got three boys. Sometimes I wish I had a girl, but I’m very happy with three boys," he said proudly.

Outings to the park and riding little race cars were Juan’s favorite father-son activities. Juan exclaimed, "There’s a lot of fun out there!"

Interview with Inez Muñoz

Inez arrived at my office at 8:00 a.m. on a Tuesday for the personal interview. (Inez had attended 5 of the 6 parenting education meetings at the time of the interview.) Inez was a 34-year-old woman with a solemn smile and a serious demeanor.

Inez spoke fluent Spanish and English. When asked what languages were spoken in her home, her response was the same as her husband’s. "It is about one half English and one half Spanish," she replied.

Inez was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. This was also where she met Juan. "I went to school in El Paso. I met my husband while I was going to school. He had moved there with relatives," she explained.

When asked what she thought of the parenting education class, Inez said, "It has really helped our family. I have learned so much that makes things clearer. It’s really difficult sometimes." She attributed most of her parenting difficulties to Carlos.

I hate to say it, but that’s how I feel. Carlos is terrible and puts a strain
on our marriage because sometimes my husband and I both run out of patience. I still think I have a little more patience than him [sic], but I run out of patience myself, too.

Like her husband, Inez perceived that their parenting difficulties with Carlos began when they hired someone to help take care of him.

I had to start working when he was one and a half [years old]. I used to have this girl who took care of him and another lady, too, and he has problems going to the restroom to this day. I think he had problems with his bowels because they scared him. They’d hit him. One time I found bruises. So he started to hold it [bowels] because he was scared. Ever since then, I decided to stay home.

Inez elaborated on the benefits of the parenting education meetings. She perceived that the meetings had helped Juan with his parenting skills, and she also indicated that their involvement in the parenting education meetings had the potential to help lessen the child-rearing conflicts between them.

I think it’s [parenting education] helped my husband. It’s helped me, too, but I think it helped him more. Sometimes he thinks I want to tell him what to do and he’s got this macho image that they don’t want women to tell them. I think it’s better for him to hear it from somebody else. Then he won’t think I’m just telling him what to do.

Inez indicated that in regard to her parenting style, she tried to maintain
a balance between firmness and fairness. She explained, "I try not to be too strict, but I try to do what's best for them." Inez also mentioned concern for "the world out there" and the safety of her sons.

As far as letting them go sleep somewhere else, I don't like to do that. I don't mind kids coming over to play with them or mine going over to play maybe for a little while. But not spend the night. I don't know what might happen. I'm not the kind of parent who just lets my kids run around loose. I want them always by my side. I know that someday they'll have to grow up and they're too close to me. Someday they'll have to spread their wings and fly away. I just want what's best for them, and it's hard out there, especially at their age.

Inez described her relationship with each of her sons as "close." She perceived Juan, Jr., as "very open." Inez considered herself closest to Juan, Jr. This was incongruent with Juan's perception that Inez was closest to Carlos. "He's [Juan, Jr.] closer than the others. Usually when they go somewhere with their dad, the other two will go and he stays with me," she explained.

Roberto was described as "having an attitude problem" in regard to willingly participating in their religious home study sessions. "He'd rather be watching TV than reading and studying with us," she said. However, she went on to describe Roberto as a "real nice boy, very lovable."
A description of the boys’ daily chores provided additional information regarding Inez’s perceptions of her sons’ behaviors.

He [Juan, Jr.] helps me a lot with the other ones, especially Carlos. If I ask him to do it, he’ll do it. I usually do all the work at our house.

They’ll pitch in and get their clothes in the washer and dryer. I’ll make sure they’re responsible for getting that [laundry] separated and to each other’s rooms. I’ll have them sweep and dust. I try to do that with Roberto, too. But, of course, Roberto’s got that attitude where he just doesn’t want to be told what to do. He does it, but sometimes he’ll be in a bad mood and give you a dirty face. And Carlos does it, too, so I’ve got those two together. I don’t have any problems with Big J [Juan, Jr.]. Mainly with Roberto and Carlos.

Inez worked diligently to provide and maintain a structured daily schedule at home in regard to health and hygiene. She indicated that this was another reason that she preferred to keep her sons home rather than to let them stay overnight with friends.

The first thing in the morning, they get up and wash and brush their teeth and eat breakfast, even if it’s cereal, and get dressed. I don’t like for them to go around dirty. I don’t mean real dressed up or anything, just clean. My kids are used to taking a shower before they go to bed. That’s the way we are, and sometimes when you go to other people’s houses they’re not like you. That’s why I usually keep them at home.
We do it and we get tired of it, but I don’t want anyone else having to be up with them in the morning and feeding them breakfast, lunch, and supper. It’s a lot of work; it’s not easy. And people say you’re not working and maybe you don’t call it that, but at home you never finish; there’s a lot of work.

Like Juan, Inez stated that she was informed of school happenings through her sons, either verbally or through written information they brought home. Because of their schedules, Inez also had the opportunity to visit with each son individually about his school day. Further, Inez believed that the best time to listen to her sons was whenever they wanted to talk. She thought that being accessible was important.

I usually find out because they tell me, and I get their papers they bring home from school. They set them aside. Carlos usually brings his everyday. Roberto usually just once a week, but he brings a lot.

Carlos just goes till 11:00, so I pick him up and ask him. And Roberto gets home around 3:00. Then Juan, Jr. gets home after 4:00, so they all get home at different times and have plenty of time [to talk].

I feel I have to listen right then. If I’m real busy, I’ll ask that they give me a few minutes to finish. Then I can give you my attention. That’s what I usually try to do, right then and there when they come to me. Otherwise, I think they’ll forget about it.

When asked from what sources she learned her parenting skills, Inez
explained that she relied on her church and the Bible.

The main thing that has helped me is my church. They put a lot of emphasis on family with the articles they [church publishers] put out. They [articles] are just a guide that lead you to the Bible. The Bible is a manual for us. We just read it. If you buy a vacuum cleaner, you get a manual, but if you don’t read it, you don’t know how it’s going to work. If you don’t use it correctly, like it says, then it’s going to break down and that’s how we are as a family. If we follow those guidelines and principles and morals that are set for us in there [Bible]--and I realize we are not perfect--it will help us. I think that’s what really helped me.

Religion was also a concern when Inez was asked what other ways schools could benefit families.

One thing is that we don’t celebrate holidays. We try to tell the teachers we don’t mean to make it hard on them and tell them or bring them a book [explaining beliefs]. I appreciate the teachers, but sometimes they give them work that pertains to that holiday [Halloween], which I’d rather my children not learn about. We don’t even pledge allegiance.

Inez continued to explain that she was concerned about the confusion that this caused for Carlos between their family’s religious beliefs and school activities.
We've been having trouble with Carlos right now. He's little and wants to please his teacher and it's kind of hard for him. I would ask him if he did it [the pledge], and he'd say yes. I would say he's not supposed to do it and he would say, "Yes I am. It's the law and if I didn't the teacher would tell me to." That booklet [school handbook] says we have to respect the laws of the school, but when it comes to God, we have to do what God says first in scripture.

When asked if she had expressed her concerns with Mrs. Mays, Inez replied, "No, not yet, but I talked to her at the beginning of the school [year]. They're [holidays] just traditions that they [school personnel] follow. I respect other people's beliefs, I just want them to respect mine, too."

Religion was again the topic when Inez was asked what activities her sons engaged in at home that they did not engage in at school.

We study religiously. Right now, we're studying the Revelation book from the Bible. So I have to make time the day before we meet to read it and go over it with them [sons]. The study is in the form of questions, so they raise their hand.

According to Inez, the responsibility of religious practice and teaching by herself caused marital conflict. "He [Juan] doesn't go with me [to church]. He's not against me, he just doesn't put forth the effort. It all has to come from me. It puts a lot of strain on our marriage."
Inez continued to explain that, except for their income, she shouldered the responsibility for most of the family's functioning. She stated, "He's a good man, but I have to take care of everything. I have to help the kids with their homework. I end up having to do it all. It's hard."

When asked what she would like for Carlos to get out of his prekindergarten experience, Inez answered, "What I really like is for him to get along with other kids." Inez quickly connected her desire for Carlos' acquisition of social skills with her frustration toward what she perceived as Carlos' rebellion at home.

I know he's very rebellious right now. He does not like to be told what to do. You tell him to do this and that and he'll say no, he's not going to do it. I'll argue with him and tell him a couple of times, but he still wants to argue. I'll tell him he's going to do it my ways and I'll turn around as if I have forgotten, or ignore him, and he'll do it.

When asked to summarize her sons' main personality traits and interests, Inez readily responded. Juan, Jr. is the responsible one. He is studious and enjoys his school subjects. Roberto is loving and affectionate. He is usually interested in whatever his dad is doing. Carlos is rebellious, but can be loving. Mainly, he just likes getting attention.

Religious study was the activity that Inez enjoyed best with her sons: My favorite activity is when we are around the kitchen table doing our Bible study and memorizing scriptures. The kids have a class where
they go in and recite scripture, and I really enjoy that time together as I
listen to them recite what they’ve learned at home.

Inez perceived her greatest parental challenge as “giving them [sons] a
solid and good religious background for when they grow up.” She perceived
her greatest parental joy as “to know that I’m doing the best I can from
what I know in my heart is my job to do, so that they may have the best life
possible.”

Information from Mrs. Mays

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings,
Mrs. Mays provided information on her perceptions of Carlos’ classroom
behaviors on a weekly basis. Mrs. Mays perceived Carlos as an intelligent
child whose behavior was mostly stubborn and sometimes compliant. She
perceived his parents as overprotective.

During Week 1 of the program, Mrs. Mays reported that Carlos “wants
everyone doing for him.” She also reported that Carlos had "trouble
sharing."

Mrs. Mays also stated that she thought Carlos’ parents were “overly
concerned about elimination.” She explained that they had sent a banana to
school with Carlos [to help with elimination] and that he was to eat it when
he arrived. Mrs. Mays observed no problems with elimination at school; she
stated, “He does okay at school.”
Because Carlos could not participate in the pledge for religious reasons, Mrs. Mays had designated him as the flag holder. She did not perceive her action as noncompliance with the Muñoz family’s religious beliefs.

During Week 2 of the parent education meetings, Mrs. Mays again reported that she had observed some obstinate behavior from Carlos. She explained, “Today, older students [fifth grade] came to help in workjobs, and Carlos had a bad attitude toward them and would not cooperate.” However, Mrs. Mays also stated that Carlos “usually has a great attitude.”

Mrs. Mays also reported that Mr. Muñoz had been “upset to find out that Carlos was the flag holder.” She stated that he spoke with her about it when he walked Carlos to class in the morning. As a result of her brief conference with Mr. Muñoz, Mrs. Mays had made arrangements for Carlos to go out to the hall with Miss Janese for a brief activity during the pledge. Mrs. Mays expressed concern that Carlos “would feel left out.”

Once again, during Week 3 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Mays reported that Carlos’ behavior “was stubborn.” Also, she again reported that Carlos “doesn’t like working in Care Pairs [fifth grade student helpers].”

Mrs. Mays’ information about Carlos’ behavior during the fourth week of the program was positive. She stated that Carlos was “so smart.” She had observed that he “sometimes mixes his Spanish and English.” However,
she indicated that this did not deter his academic progress when she explained that “he is not in ESL [English as a Second Language class].”

Mrs. Mays’ recent recollection of an episode at recess portrayed a different perspective of Carlos’ behavior.

At recess, he picked flowers and put them in his pants’ pocket. Then he would have me guess which hand the flowers were in. Of course, they weren’t in either. He laughed and showed me what he’d done and then gave them to me.

Also, Mrs. Mays recalled an incident when she did not comply with Carlos’ parents’ request.

He has had a cold. His parents come to the door of the classroom and have hot tea for him to drink. He doesn’t like it. After they leave, I don’t make him drink it; I let him pour it out.

During the fifth week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Mays perceived Carlos’ behavior as generally “uptight.” She stated that Carlos “is more uptight when his dad’s around.”

Mrs. Mays explained that Mr. Muñoz had come to school each morning of that week to bring a “special breakfast that he’s [Carlos] had to eat in the cafeteria while the others are eating the school breakfast.” Although Mrs. Mays stated that Mr. Muñoz did not give an explanation, she assumed that Carlos’ parents were concerned with his elimination process again.
Mrs. Mays reported two incidents of Carlos’ behavior that she perceived as being stubborn.

He had to sit in time-out because he wouldn’t glue the feathers on his Indian page until he had Miss Janese’s approval [that he had completed the task successfully]. He brought his brother’s [Roberto’s] old book from kindergarten and wouldn’t go to centers. He sat at a table to work on his letters in the book.

During the last week of the program, Mrs. Mays expressed concern that Carlos’ parents were “overprotective.” She also stated concern that “he was spanked [at home] this morning because he wouldn’t wear an undershirt.” Mrs. Mays wondered if some of Carlos’ stubborn behavior was because “he wants to be so grown up and independent.”

Concern was also expressed in regard to the upcoming holiday season and the Muñoz family’s religious beliefs. “He [Carlos] may not participate in any holiday room activities,” Mrs. Mays said. She expressed further concern, “How will this affect him and how will I handle it?”

Mrs. Mays’ perceptions of Carlos’ overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Mrs. Mays perceived Carlos’ primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through
recognition. At the program’s end, and 10 weeks after its conclusion, Mrs. Mays perceived Carlos’ primary goals of behavior as seeking power in a negative way through rebellion.

When interviewed, Mrs. Mays indicated that she perceived Carlos as “a little man with a sense of humor.” She expressed concern at Carlos’ attempt to be adultlike in his behavior. “He needs to loosen up a little because he’s not a little man. He just thinks he is,” she explained.

At home, Mrs. Mays assumed that Carlos was “the ruler of the household at times.” When asked what she thought was the main difference between home and school for Carlos, Mrs. Mays replied, “He probably gets more individual attention [at home].”

Mrs. Mays stated that the best time to listen to Carlos was during unstructured times such as recess. She also referred to Carlos as a “block kind of guy.” She stated that “Carlos likes to build and construct out of Legos and snap blocks.” A favorite activity that Mrs. Mays recalled helping Carlos with was constructing with parquetry blocks.

Mrs. Mays perceived her relationship with Carlos as “very good.” She said, “He was a little ‘stand-offish’ [at the beginning of the school year]. He’s loosened up quite a bit. I think he has respect for his teacher.”

Information from Miss Janese

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings,
Miss Janese provided information on her perceptions of Carlos' classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Miss Janese perceived Carlos' behavior as usually noncompliant.

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings, Miss Janese reported her concerns regarding fastidious attitude.

Carlos' hair and clothes must be perfect and plastered with gel [Carlos' hair]. He doesn’t like to be touched on the head. He doesn’t want to get his hands dirty with activities like food coloring, shave cream, or finger paints. He scrubs and scrubs his hands.

Miss Janese stated different concerns during the second week of the program.

Carlos hasn’t done well the last couple of days since he can’t participate in the pledge. He seems confused and doesn’t seem to understand why he can’t do the pledge. He goes with me, and we run errands during the pledge.

By the third week of the parenting education class, however, Miss Janese’s report of Carlos’ behavior was a bit more positive.

Carlos seems to be getting a little less worried about his personal appearance, but he does still worry more than most [children]. He’s been a little more cooperative. He’s confused about being sent to the hall during the pledge.

During the fourth week of the parenting education meetings,
Miss Janese exclaimed that Carlos had "been a little toot lately!" She stated that he had spoken in a bossy manner to her and to his classmates.

Miss Janese then recalled an incident in which Carlos had spoken with a disrespectful tone. She said, "He was not eating his biscuit in the cafeteria. I said, 'Carlos, you need to eat your biscuit.' He threw it on his plate and said, 'I am eating my biscuit!'"

During the fifth week of the parenting education meetings, Miss Janese stated that Carlos' behavior was "defiant" and that he had a "smart mouth." She recalled another incident as an example of these behaviors.

Whoever is at the head of the line on the way to the bus holds my hand. I told him to hold my hand, and he said, "I'm not going to hold your hand!" If he doesn't want to do it, he won't," she explained.

Miss Janese stated that the struggle over holding her hand continued during the final week of the parenting education meetings. However, she said that she now insisted that he hold her hand if she thought it was necessary. "I insist because sometimes the little ones see their parent drive up and they just start running across the parking lot. They could get run over," she reasoned.

Miss Janese's perceptions of Carlos' overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child's Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education
meetings. At the beginning of the program, Miss Janese perceived Carlos' primary goal of behavior as seeking withdrawal in a negative way through avoidance. At the end of the program, and 10 weeks after its conclusion, Miss Janese perceived Carlos' primary goals of behavior as seeking power in a negative way through rebellion.

When interviewed, Miss Janese indicated that she perceived her relationship with Carlos as a parent-child type of relationship. "I feel like I’m kind of his mom here at school. He’s my responsibility," she stated.

Miss Janese readily complied when asked to elaborate more on her perceptions of Carlos' behaviors.

Carlos is sometimes a little bit bossy and that probably has to do with having a big brother at home, because I’m sure big brother is probably bossy to little brother, so he learned that there. He’s said his mom compares him a lot, so there’s things that he won’t do because he doesn’t want to be compared with somebody else and if he can’t do it perfect, he won’t even try. He’s very much a perfectionist.

However, Miss Janese later described a different perspective regarding what she perceived as Carlos' perfectionistic behavior and his behavior in general.

He’s usually very conscientious. He’s really sweet. He’s really not bad. He’s conscientious and careful about what he does. He’s kind of picky about the way he looks. He’s the only one after we go to the
Miss Janese stated that she tried to listen to Carlos whenever he had something to say. "Carlos will usually come up and barely tap and say your name, but it's very quiet," she explained.

When asked what types of activities Carlos engaged in at school that he might not engage in at home, Miss Janese responded, "...using scissors. Some parents are afraid to let them use scissors at home, and that is one thing they need to learn for their coordination."

According to Miss Janese, the block center and the home center were Carlos' favorite school activities. Her favorite activities to engage in with Carlos were art activities. "I like to do that because I'm crafty and I like to do that kind of thing myself," she explained.

Gina Cushman

Introduction

Gina was a small 4-year-old girl with long light-brown hair and blue-gray eyes. Gina was an only child who lived with her mother and father. The family was Caucasian and all members spoke only English. Sarah, Gina's mother, was a homemaker. Roger, Gina's father, held a blue-collar job with an aviation repair company. Gina attended Mrs. Haas' morning prekindergarten class. The classroom educational aide for Mrs. Haas was Ms. Babs.
### Table 3

**Perceptions of Adults Involved with the Parenting Education Program and Carlos Muñoz**

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<td>Child’s Goals of Behavior</td>
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<td>End of program</td>
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<td>10 weeks post-program</td>
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Gina’s father, Roger, was administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Roger scored in the permissive parenting style range on the first administration. He scored in the democratic parenting style range on the second administration. Roger again scored in the permissive parenting style range on the last administration of the Parenting Style Questionnaire.

Gina’s mother, Sarah, was also administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Sarah scored in the democratic parenting style range on all three administrations of the Parenting Style Questionnaire.

Overall, Roger attended all but the first session. Sarah had perfect attendance at all six sessions.

The following data in this section on Gina Cushman contain the abundance of detailed description necessary for qualitative analysis. For a concise listing of the data findings on Gina Cushman, see Table 4 on page 158.

Interview with Roger Cushman

Roger arrived at my office at 2:30 on a Wednesday afternoon for the personal interview. (Roger had attended four parenting education meetings at the time of the interview.) Roger was a 41-year-old man with a cautious
smile and a gruff demeanor.

Roger was reticent when asked about what memories he had from his school years. "Same old school is school. I went every day," was Roger’s reply to the question.

Although Roger was also hesitant to talk about his family of origin, he did provide some information. Roger was born and raised in the area. After high school, he joined the Navy and was stationed in various locations. Two years ago, he retired from the Navy and returned to the area, where his family of origin was still located.

Roger’s initial expectation of the parent education class was for the class to provide him with “a better way of doing things.” He stated that he thought the class had helped him learn some different approaches to parenting.

I used to be the kind who if she [Gina] didn’t do something right there on the spot, I was just going over there and knock her across the room. But not anymore. I’ve mellowed out. I’m a little more patient. She’s only 4 years old and she really doesn’t know any better.

Later, Roger provided other examples of how he had changed his parenting style.

I used to say if she isn’t going to mind me this is what I’ll do. I used to whip her. At 4, she doesn’t really know what that means yet. There are other ways to make her understand, like make a game of it.
When Roger was asked to provide an example of a situation in which he used a playful approach rather than the punitive approach that he had used in the past, he complied.

I guess you wouldn’t really call it a game, but there was a time that we told her to do something and she wouldn’t do it and we finally ignored. I told her when she’d get this done, we’d go somewhere and she jumped right up and did it.

Roger stated that he also learned some of his parenting skills from other sources. “Since Gina’s been born, I think I’ve learned a lot. Since she’s our first child, I’ve learned a lot of things from her. Just from watching other people,” Roger explained.

“Outstanding” was the word Roger used to summarize his relationship with his daughter. He elaborated several times on their relationship and his perceptions of Gina’s behaviors.

We play all the time. I come home from work, I open the door and she says, “Daddy, Daddy” and spreads her arms out and comes running up there and gives me a big old hug. She laughs all the time. She hardly ever cries. She’s a happy child. I haven’t done anything to discourage her.

Roger expected the adults at school to “try to help her [Gina] a lot.” He said, “Her teacher is Mrs. Haas, and she’s trying to get her into a speech
class and that would be good. Gina should be talking better than she’s
talking at 4 years old.”

There was a defensive tone in Roger’s voice, however, when he
explained, “She’s only 4, and she’s not really comprehending yet a lot of
things. She’s a good kid. There’s nothing wrong with her.”

In addition to having a lot of energy, Roger mentioned several times
about how talkative Gina was with him.

She tries to tell us, bless her little heart. I’ll ask her what she did at
school today, and she’ll say, “I drew a spider or I drew this or I drew
that.” “Did your teacher read you a story?” [Roger would ask] She’ll
say, “Oh, yeah.” I’ll ask her what it was about and she’ll try to tell me.
She’s trying to tell me, but it’s hard for me to understand her a lot, but
I find out from her.

When you get her started, she’ll repeat it four of five times. You
have to tell her, “Okay, you told me once. That’s enough.” After that,
you have to ask her. But once you get her started, she won’t shut up.
She’s that way. She’ll get excited and keep going on and on and on
until you agree with her. If you agree with her, she still keeps harping
on it. She bugs you to death at night. She tells you she has to go to
school tomorrow. We tell her we know.

She talks in the car, and she’s always asking, “What’s this?
Why?” She likes for us to read. If she sees a big sign at the side of
the street, she’ll ask what the sign says. We read it to her if I’m going
fast [slowly] enough. Sometimes she’ll scream at you to get your
attention, but she’s in the car.

When asked about his family’s daily schedule, Roger said, “Basically,
it’s just normal, everyday come home and go to work . . . I get up every
morning about 2:15. I leave for work about 3:00 [a.m.] I get home about
1:30 p.m.” Roger indicated that his early morning work schedule provided
flexibility for family activities, saying, “If we want to go do something, we’ll
do it [when he gets home from work]. If we don’t we just come home.”

Roger perceived his greatest parental challenge as “raising Gina.” When
asked what his greatest joy was as a parent, he replied, “I want her to do
right.”

Later, when Roger described Gina’s personality and interests, his
description was self-revealing.

She’s me all over. [She is interested in] accepting me. There’s a lot of
things I used to do that she does. I just think she’s [takes] after me.
She likes to run. She gets out and runs. I used to do that. All kinds of
things. I think it’s half and half--some of it’s me, some of it’s her
mama.

Roger stated that his favorite father/daughter activity was to “just sit
there and play with her.” When asked to elaborate, he replied, “I’ll wrestle with her. I wrestle with her sometimes until I hurt her. I don’t want to, but I do sometimes. I get her head locked, and she’s sitting there pinching me. That’s what it is.”

Throughout the interview, Roger mentioned the consequences of his sometimes rough physical behavior with his daughter. However, earlier during the interview, Roger expressed his apprehension over Gina’s small size when he reminisced about being the father of a newborn infant. “At first, I didn’t think I could handle this. They’re so tiny and fragile that it’s almost kind of scary. You’re afraid they’ll break,” he said.

**Interview with Sarah Cushman**

Sarah arrived at my office at 1:30 on a Wednesday afternoon for the personal interview. (She had attended five of the six parenting education meetings at the time of the interview.) Sarah was a 26-year-old woman with a shy smile and a quiet voice. She was born in Beaumont, Texas, and throughout her childhood and part of her adolescence, Sarah and her family frequently moved.

We moved around a lot. My mom and dad separated for a little while. We had a hard time. We lived with an aunt and uncle for a while. Later, my mother died in a car wreck. When we lived in Missouri, I met Roger when he was in the Navy there. I was 16 or 17.

Sarah’s explanation regarding her memories of school experiences was
brief. "I liked school as a little child. I didn’t like junior high, and I didn’t like high school until about the eleventh grade."

When asked what her expectations of the parenting education meetings were, Sarah said, "I wasn’t sure. I knew it would be good and benefit me in the future in raising Gina and any other children we might have." When asked to evaluate her experience in the parent education class, Sarah replied, "Excellent!"

Sarah expected the adults at school to "treat Gina good." Sarah perceived the adults at school in general to be "getting more responsive" to children’s needs.

They [adults at school] try to prevent gangs and look after children more. When I was Gina’s age, I never had to worry about other kids, gangs, and drugs. She will have to as she gets older. I think the schools help here.

When asked how she found out about happenings in Gina’s class and at school in general, Sarah indicated that efforts toward communication were reciprocal. She explained that she found out about school information through "the letters from the teacher." She also mentioned that she initiated communication when she "called and talked to her [teacher]."

Sarah perceived Gina as a child who minded well and provided a special dimension of companionship to her life.
She is very dear. When we had her, it was just me and Roger. He worked long hours. I had someone to play with. She has been a lot of company. She minds pretty good. She will sulk up when you get on to her, but that’s about all. Pretty easy going and minds well.

When asked to describe her parenting style, Sarah indicated that she rarely used a physically punitive approach with Gina. “You mean as far as spanking? I don’t like to spank her very much. It hurts my feelings more than her. I try to talk to her and explain. Going to class hasn’t made a difference here.”

Sarah reminisced about her mother when asked from what other sources she had learned her parenting skills.

I think it’s from my parents, even though my mom passed away, because I’ve always wanted someone to talk to. “What should I do about this or that?” My mom used to play with me and show me how to do things.

Regarding the family schedule, Sarah’s explanation was similar to Roger’s.

Sometimes it’s flexible. It depends on Roger’s schedule whatever or whenever we eat. When he’s off, when he’s working, we eat according to his schedule. I try to keep Gina on a good schedule of going to bed.

When asked to describe the different ways she listened to Gina,
Sarah’s reply was similar to Roger’s. “A lot of times when we go somewhere in the car, she’s constantly talking or when she’s being put to bed.”

When asked to elaborate on the differences between the types of activities encouraged at home and school, Sarah mentioned the amount of contact Gina had with people in the two environments.

She’s never had a babysitter. She has me all to herself, so she doesn’t have others to play with. At school, she plays with a lot of other children. I know she needs that. To be around other kids. Maybe it will help her to open up more to be around other people.

Sarah’s expectations of Gina’s prekindergarten experience were both academic and social. She explained: “To learn her letters and colors so she can pass and to get help with her talking and to be with other children.”

“Getting Gina to mind when she sulls up,” was Sarah’s greatest parental challenge. Sarah’s greatest joy as a parent was “having Gina around.”

Sarah stated that some of Gina’s favorite activities were to “go to McDonald’s and Wal-Mart . . . She also likes to draw and paint.”

When asked to describe her favorite mother/daughter activities, Sarah replied, “I like reading to her.” In addition, she indicated that she enjoyed rough-and-tumble play like her husband, Roger. “We play and tussle. We all get involved as a family. We try to take daddy down.”
Information from Mrs. Haas

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas provided information on her perceptions of Gina’s classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Mrs. Haas observed Gina as a child that needed intervention of special school services to help her with developmental challenges.

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas perceived Gina’s behavior as generally nonparticipatory.

Her spoken language is [developmentally] low. She won’t speak. She wouldn’t tell the cafeteria worker which cereal she wanted. She couldn’t find her way to class, and she wouldn’t say my name. She doesn’t participate in songs.

Mrs. Haas observed during the second week of the program that Gina was “loosening up a bit.” She perceived Gina to be “affectionate, yet shy.” Mrs. Haas stated that Gina “played well with others.” She also observed that Gina had “a little bit of a speech impediment. I referred her for speech just today.”

During the third week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas reported, “Gina will play well around other children.” She added that “she also enjoys playing by herself.”

Concerns for Gina’s optimum development came to the forefront of
Mrs. Haas' reports during the fourth week of the parenting education meetings.

Gina has a lazy eye. The nurse will call the parents about getting it fixed. She is going to be tested for speech. I was worried at first that she was mentally slow because it took her so long to find her way around and she wouldn't respond when spoken to, but now I think it's lack of exposure.

During the fifth week of the parent education class, Mrs. Haas again expressed concern that Gina "may have a learning problem . . . she is the only student who still has a problem with the center chart [a chart that directs children to activities in the room]." Mrs. Haas reported that Gina would be tested for speech this week."

Results from special services testing on Gina were completed by the final week of the parent education class. During the gathering of background information prior to testing, Mrs. Haas found out that Gina had previously had eye surgery when she was 15 months old.

She passed the school eye exam on the second try, but her eye still wanders. The speech teacher noticed it, too, during testing. She qualified for speech [class] and was given the Columbia Mental Maturity Test and scored in the low-average range. She was also given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, and it showed she was delayed in her language by 18 months. The nurse is going to talk to the family
about Gina’s eye.

Mrs. Haas’ perceptions of Gina’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Mrs. Haas perceived Gina’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition. At the end of the meetings, Mrs. Haas perceived Gina’s primary goal of behavior as seeking protection in a positive way through assertiveness. Once again, 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas perceived Gina’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition. When interviewed, Mrs. Haas indicated that she perceived Gina as a child who “needs a lot of love.” However, Mrs. Haas also stated that she thought Gina had been “babied” and that she needed “to be pushed a little harder.”

Gina needs a teacher with a lot of patience and love. She showed her insecurities when she came and lacked self-confidence. We’re working on her confidence to build that up and make her trusting. She wasn’t trusting. She’s trusting now.

Mrs. Haas later explained the observations that led her to suspect that Gina had special educational needs.

I just see a problem there . . . I don’t feel trained to know what it is, but I know that it’s not right. As far as processing oral instructions,
she doesn’t follow through and looks at me with a blank stare. For large group, I don’t have her attention. She isn’t focused on what I’m saying. If I ask her to pick something up and hand it to me, she looks at me in a blank stare. Or I’ll say “put your hands in your lap,” and she won’t. At first, it looked to other adults like she was shy. By now the shyness with me should be gone.

Mrs. Haas was also concerned that Mr. and Mrs. Cushman did not share the same concerns in regard to Gina’s special learning needs.

Gina’s mother and dad need to realize that there is something there with Gina . . . she’s not able to learn like the other kids. A little bit slower. I don’t think they see it. When I talked to them, they said, “Well, when we take her home, she does such and such at home. She does really well at home.” But she needs to do well at school. I need to see it with me. She’s immature for her age. When she doesn’t get her way, she cries. Every time I see her with her parents, she’s crying. Every time! She’s sensitive, and she’s quick to tears if she doesn’t get her way. When she came from the [parent-teacher] conference, she cried and cried when she left because she didn’t want to leave the room. That’s why I see immaturity there. When I had the conference I tried to explain. I like to let them [Mr. and Mrs. Cushman] know the strengths of the child. I talked about her fine motor skills and that she did very well with her art and music. I think when they left, they took
too much of the good and didn’t realize the importance of what I was saying about the listening and sitting at large group and not understanding what was going on.

When asked what type of activities Gina engaged in at school that might not be encouraged at home, Mrs. Haas was quick to respond.

Gina has not been exposed to others. She didn’t speak. She’d use one- or two-word responses. She wasn’t speaking in sentences for a long time. Now that she’s around children, her vocabulary’s increased and she does speak in sentences. She responds more verbally. I don’t think she was talked to or read to.

Mrs. Haas perceived Gina to have a “sweet, very loving, and caring” personality.

Gina has a little friend named Julie [a student of Mrs. Haas’ who wore leg braces]. Gina just walks with her and holds her hand and takes care of her. Her feelings are right out there—now easily knocked off because she’s so tender and she thinks the world should be just as tender. She gets her feelings hurt a lot and she cries, but she’s better.

When asked to describe the ways in which she listened to Gina, Mrs. Haas mentioned two different ways.

Gina comes to me everyday when she comes in [to class]. If you don’t respond to her, she’ll keep standing there waiting. Every day we talk
about what she had for breakfast. The morning time when she first comes in the room is the most time I have to talk to her. I have a teacher table . . . at least once a week I set there and there’s just one or two children at the table and that’s the time I talk to them and ask them questions and how they feel. Gina opens up to me at the teacher table, too.

**Information from Ms. Babs**

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings, Ms. Babs provided information on her perceptions of Gina’s classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Ms. Babs perceived Gina to be generally reticent in her behavior and sometimes confused.

During the first week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Babs reported that Gina was generally quiet.

When she first came here [school], it appeared that she had not been exposed to any type of learning situation. She would not talk. It took her a long time to learn her way around. She talks now, but still not much.

Ms. Babs shared positive information regarding Gina’s developmental and social skills during the second week of the program. Ms. Babs observed that Gina had “excellent fine motor skills” and was “artistic.” She also stated that Gina was “shy, but good in one-on-one situations.”

According to Ms. Babs, a helpful student had formed a friendship with
Gina. "A kindergarten student who rides the same bus has taken Gina under her wing and walks her to class every morning," she explained. Ms. Babs also reported that Gina "was scared today getting to the classroom because of the rain and thunder and lightening."

Ms. Babs also recalled a recent misunderstanding with Mr. Cushman:

Gina's dad was up at school earlier in the week and was mad because they [bus driver] took Gina home, but no one answered the door, but he [Mr. Cushman] was there. They brought Gina back to school, and her dad had to come and get her.

During Week 3 of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Babs perceived Gina to exhibit some ambivalent behavior. "She is so shy, but she wants to be noticed," Ms. Babs explained. "When it's clean-up time, she comes over and asks me, 'Ms. Babs, does this go here?' or 'Where does this go?'"

Ms. Babs' observations of Gina's behaviors during the fourth week of the program were all positive. "She is reaching out more, is initiating contact, and is friendly to children," were the phrases Ms. Babs used to cheerfully explain Gina's social behaviors.

However, the information Ms. Babs shared during the fifth week of the program revealed her ambivalence regarding her perceptions of Gina's general behavior. Ms. Babs described Gina as acting "out to lunch . . .
sometimes she seems real 'with it,' and other times, she doesn't."

During the final week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Babs again expressed her ambivalence in regard to Gina's recent test results and her own perceptions of Gina's behaviors. "She passed the hearing test, but I wonder if she really hears well. We can ask her several times before we get any eye contact or any response," Ms. Babs revealed.

Ms. Babs' perceptions of Gina's overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child's Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At each of these three intervals, Ms. Babs perceived Gina's primary goals of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

When interviewed, Ms. Babs stated that she perceived Gina as a "loving child." However, she also indicated concern regarding Gina's ability to "focus."

She gets so excited when she's done something that she thinks is really special. She just gets so excited when she's accomplished something. There are days when she doesn't seem to focus as well as other days. As far as being a loving and caring child, and warm, I think she is.

Gina has times where she doesn't seem to be focusing in as much. Not that she really doesn't want to mind. I don't feel like she's doing it
on purpose. Just sometimes she isn’t focused.

Ms. Babs indicated that she thought Gina’s parents could help her by “following up on all that we do in class or all that Jackie [the speech therapist] does.” When asked to explain how Mr. and Mrs. Cushman could help Gina, Ms. Babs stated, “She [Gina] doesn’t always listen well. At home, I’d think the parents would try to get her to be more attentive to hear things.”

When asked what types of behaviors might be encouraged at school that were not encouraged at home, Ms. Babs’ reply was unusual.

We [the children] have to follow rules and be aggressive. At home, she’s an only child; if she doesn’t respond, it’s not that big a deal. It wouldn’t disrupt things at home because it’s just she and mother and daddy. At school, if she is not attentive, like if you’re doing workjobs and she doesn’t get up when it’s her turn, it messes it up. At home, they may not have that problem since she’s the only child and they [parents] can go with the flow.

Ms. Babs stated that Gina had several activities that she particularly enjoyed at school.

She really enjoys art. She enjoys coloring and doing the activities that we do. I would think that was her most enjoyable. I think she enjoys that more than anything that we do. She loves to be outside.

Yesterday, we were on the geodome [an outdoor climbing toy] and she
was like a little monkey. She was so excited. She really enjoyed that and was able to swing and do really neat things.

Ms. Babs explained that the best time to listen to Gina was when she needed assistance. Her favorite time with Gina was in the morning when Gina entered the classroom after breakfast.

Juanita Sanchez

Introduction

Juanita was a small 4-year-old girl with long, tangled brown hair and sparkling brown eyes. She lived in a single-parent home with her mother, her half-sister, and her half-brother. Each child had the same mother. Juanita was her mother’s youngest child. Tina, the 13-year-old half-sister, and Mike, the 9-year-old half-brother had the same father. Trudy, Juanita’s mother, Tina, and Mike were Caucasian. Juanita’s father, Ruben, was Hispanic. Juanita did not have contact with her father because he was in prison. English was the only language spoken in the home.

Juanita and her family lived in a small, rented duplex. Her family had been living in the area for approximately 1½ years.

Trudy worked as a food service employee in a fast food restaurant. Juanita’s child care was often the responsibility of Tina or Mike because Trudy usually had to work a night shift.

Juanita attended Mrs. Haas’ morning prekindergarten class. The classroom educational aide for Mrs. Haas was Ms. Babs.
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Juanita’s mother, Trudy, was administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Trudy scored in the democratic parenting style range on the first administration. She scored in the permissive parenting style range on the second and third administrations of the Parenting Style Questionnaire.

Overall, Trudy attended four of the six parenting education meetings. She attended sessions 1, 3, 5, and 6.

The following data in this section on Juanita Sanchez contain the abundance of detailed description necessary for qualitative analysis. For a concise listing of the data findings on Juanita Sanchez, see Table 5 on page 177.

Interview with Trudy Sanchez

Trudy arrived at my office at 8:00 on a Friday morning for the personal interview. (Trudy had attended 3 of the 6 parenting education meetings at the time of the interview.) Trudy was a 29-year-old woman with a gruff yet friendly demeanor who spoke with a rapid voice.

Trudy was born at an army base in Fort Hood, Texas. Because it made her feel uncomfortable, Trudy declined to share much information regarding her childhood memories. However, she did share that she “completed the ninth grade and had started the tenth and just gave it up.” When asked if there was a particular reason as to why she didn’t finish high school, she
replied, "I just don’t want to go to school."

Trudy explained that her initial expectations of the parenting education meetings was "to help me understand more, my kids and myself." When asked her expectations of adults at school who came in contact with Juanita, Trudy became more animated in her conversation.

Now, Juanita’s teacher, I only talked to her a few times, and she seems like she’s patient a lot. She says Juanita doesn’t listen. Juanita’s headstrong and she does whatever she wants to do. We found that out on the report card [progress report]. We talked to Juanita, but it’s her first year. This lady [Mrs. Haas] says she has to sit down, and Juanita wants to sit here. They go around and around and around. So, I guess more or less, I want the teacher to teach her because next year they’ll be patient, but by then, Juanita should know the difference between if they say sit down, she has to sit down, and what’s going to happen if she doesn’t sit down. They don’t really punish them in prekindergarten. I think she said they make them sit out on the rug. She has to spend some time on the rug every day. But it seems to me [that] Juanita’s getting used to going to the rug, so I don’t see the purpose in that anymore. It’s like, well, when I go to school and I do this, I’ll go to the rug today.

Trudy also was quick to give her opinion when asked what other types of services that the schools might provide for parents.
Too bad they [schools] don’t have life skills. Like how to cope with parents themselves and kids and how to deal with everyday problems. Because now I work and have another whole set of problems at work and a whole other set when I get home. Something like where parents can blow off steam.

Overall, Trudy perceived the adults in the school as responsive to the needs of children and their families. However, she did have a suggestion in regard to accommodating parent work schedules.

I understand a lot of parents, not just me, work until 5:00, and a lot of these classes, the teachers get off at 3:00 or 4:00 or they leave. And a lot of parents don’t get off until 5:00 or 6:00. Maybe one day a month or something, they could schedule something like 6:00 or 8:00 for parents like me who can’t get off at these times. They’ll know 2 weeks ahead of time, and so they can schedule that time to come then. It would be putting the teacher in a bad spot because maybe she doesn’t want to stay until 6:00, 7:00, or 8:00. Maybe just once a month, they could compromise.

Trudy’s reply was brief when she was asked to share her opinion about the helpfulness of the parenting education meetings. “I like it,” Trudy stated.

Keeping a consistent schedule was a difficult task for Trudy. When her work shifts changed, the family schedule was affected. Sometimes separation from Juanita at school was a problem.
See, my schedule varies so much. Sometimes I have to be there at 7:00 [a.m.] until 6:30 [p.m.]. And they're [employment] open at 6:30, so I drop her off myself [at daycare] and I don't have a problem. But when I drop her off at this school, I've actually had to see Mrs. Haas drag her down the hall screaming and kicking to get her to go to class. Working a double shift made child care arrangement confusing. Sometimes, I'll be home at 5:00 [p.m.]. I'll go get Juanita from daycare and then I'll take her to the house or the lady next door. Then [after going to work again] I get home anywhere from 8:00 p.m. to midnight.

When asked to talk about each child's interests and personalities, Trudy responded with confidence.

Tina's an outspoken person. She's interested in band and she's proud of it. Mike is a quiet person. He likes football and TV. Juanita, I don't know yet. She may be a mixture of both of them. She is into Barbie dolls and Barney.

Trudy perceived her relationship with each of her children as "totally different." During her description of her relationships with her children, Trudy's concerns over Juanita's separation anxiety surfaced again.

Each one's different. Tina and me get to a point we just don't talk. Because I guess she's going through her changes and then she resents that I'm not home as much as I used to be and I'm not there to do
every little thing like before. Now Michael goes along and he’s fine as long as I go with him somewhere every once in a while. Juanita, I have to drag her down the hall in the mornings, and when I spend time with her, she’s all happy. But in the mornings when I drop her off, I dread it. They’ve had to drag her down the hall screaming and kicking. I don’t know if it’s the fact that I leave, then when she gets there she realizes she has to be there. And over there at the YMCA where she goes in the afternoon, they said she doesn’t have any problems. She gets off the bus and starts playing. But by then, I guess, she figures she’s not coming back anyway for a while.

When asked to describe the predominant behavior of each of her children, Trudy anxiously obliged. Once again, the problem of separating from Juanita at school entered the dialogue.

Tina, I’d say, [is] kind of hostile sometimes. Or rebellious is her attitude because she’s getting older. She’s into more things. She’s in band and meeting new people. I think it’s her changes, her situation with her lifestyle. Juanita, I don’t know what to say about her. I guess I’m a little disappointed that she’d act like that in school. I guess her behavior is disappointing to me. I mean, you don’t want to stand there in the door while her teacher has to drag her down the hall to get her to go to class. And Mike, I don’t know, he’s quiet. I don’t have as much problem with Mike as I do with Tina and Juanita with the school.
He's just a quiet average little boy. We've had a window broken that we've had to pay for from a football, baseball accident. But, other than that, we haven't had any major problems.

Because of the differences in the ages of her children, Trudy realized that different discipline methods for Tina, Mike, and Juanita worked best. With Tina, punishing her with the radio and stuff like that makes her more mad. Mike, it's the TV privileges being taken away. And with Juanita, we make her sit down a little bit. With Tina, we say she can't watch TV. She doesn't watch TV that much so that doesn't bother her. She likes listening to music, that bothers her more. And he [Mike] does like TV, so I guess it does vary. Juanita really can't do too much. We just make her sit down.

When asked how she kept informed about happenings at school, at first Trudy replied, "I'm here [at school] a lot." Later, she expressed concern over not having the time to stay more informed.

I used to come up and talk to the counselor even when I didn't have a [counseling] class scheduled that day for them. And I would occasionally see the principal and he'd tell me if Tina had a problem or something. And this year, I don't have the time. It's not that I don't want to make the time, I just don't have the time. And I guess they [Trudy's children] resent it.

Trudy expressed frustration over her efforts to listen to her children:
Tina and Mike call and talk to me. It’ll be the middle of the afternoon and they’ll call me and want to tell me something or want me to listen to something. And this is the part I hate. It’s like you’re at work trying to concentrate and do your job and all of a sudden you’re getting this phone call. “Mama, did you see my paper last night?” I’ll tell them yes, and that I’m really busy right now and this is not a good time. During lunch rush, they don’t like for you to get on the phone, so I have to cut my conversation short with them. Then later, I’ll ask them about it. And they might tell me later on or they might not. It depends. I guess my work’s having a big effect on them.

Now, Juanita will show me at the YMCA when I pick her up. She’ll show me if they’ve done something, like the spider. She showed me that. They had a purple McGruff. It was purple, and at first, I thought it was Barney. But it was McGruff. She’ll show me right then. Trudy’s expectations for Juanita’s prekindergarten experience regarded academics. Her ABCs. I’d like for her to learn how to write her name. Do her numbers and her colors. They’ve been a lot into colors. One week they learned black, and they wore all black and brought something black. Next week is orange. She wears something orange and brings something. It’s always on Tuesday for show and tell. So I like that. She’ll learn her colors.
"Listening and understanding" were Trudy's greatest parental challenges. Trudy's greatest joy as a parent was "when they [Tina, Mike, and Juanita] do something really good and they come home and we'll talk about it."

When asked to describe her favorite parent and child activities Trudy digressed and again expressed concerns over her busy schedule and the lack of time she spent with her children.

Juanita likes to go to the park. Tina, right now, is happy if she can get 5 minutes with me. And that's bad, I know. But I told her right now I have to work these hours so I can get to that position where I can work maybe 7:00 [a.m.] until 2:00 [p.m.]. I've only been there 3 months and like I told her, everybody has to start at the bottom. Usually you start at nights, so I'm very lucky where I've got a lot of days, with occasionally nights. To get those special hours and certain days off, you have to prove to them that you can do anything they ask. I think that's a little wrong of people to ask because you have kids. I tried to explain to her [Tina] that if you don't do what they want of you at first, they're going to figure you don't care enough or you're not what they're looking for. So why don't we give it to somebody who'll work any of those hours. Then, later on, maybe when they've been here 6 or 7 months, we'll give them 7:00 to 2:00. Because there are plenty of people there that have 7:00 to 2:00 and two of them are leaving in
January. So, I'm hoping if I prove myself to them now, maybe when these people leave, I'll get their position. But if you don't prove to them now and work a little harder and a little longer, they'll just say "We have two or three other people that are doing the same thing." I know it's kind of sacrificing my time with them, and I know that's not exactly right. But, I told her, if you want me to get where I can be meeting you at home at 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoons, you'll have to be a little patient now. And with Juanita, she really doesn't understand. Mike doesn't seem to be bothered as much. There's times like Friday, he'll want to go the [football] game up at the high school and I'm working that Friday, so I can't go.

**Information from Mrs. Haas**

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas provided information on her perceptions of Juanita's classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Mrs. Haas considered Juanita to be a bright and resilient child who needed the structure and variety of learning experiences that prekindergarten provided.

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas perceived Juanita's behavior as "outgoing." She described Juanita as a child who was "blossoming like a flower." Mrs. Haas also predicted that Juanita would "come far by the end of the year."
"Resilient, happy, and outgoing" were the words Mrs. Haas used to describe Juanita’s behavior during Week 2 of the program. Mrs. Haas recalled a recent incident that she perceived as providing an example of Juanita’s resiliency.

Yesterday, the YMCA daycare forgot to bring her to morning prekindergarten. They sent her to afternoon prekindergarten. This didn’t bother Juanita. She got in line for lunch when she got here; she smiled and said "Hi," to me and told me the YMCA had goofed.

In contrast, however, Mrs. Haas offered a contradictory perception when she shared another recent incident that depicted a less resilient Juanita.

I just feel mad! It’s taken about 3 weeks to acclimate Juanita to school, especially about setting limits. Mrs. Sanchez told me that she had spoiled Juanita and that she had trouble getting her to mind. Now, she brings Juanita to school at 8:40 [school started at 8:00 a.m.] and told me that Juanita probably wouldn’t be coming to school anymore because she refused to. Juanita was okay when she came into class, but when her mother said, “You didn’t tell me goodbye,” Juanita latched onto her and wouldn’t let go. I had to pull her off, but she screamed and cried. After her mother left, it took Juanita 30 minutes to calm down.

By Week 3 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas had arrived
at the conclusion that "Juanita does fine; it's her mother that has problems."

Mrs. Haas continued to explain:

Juanita never knows from one day to the next if she is to go to daycare or home. Her mother doesn’t write a note to let the school know. It’s upsetting to Juanita not to know where to go after school.

During Week 4 of the program, Mrs. Haas’ perception of Juanita was positive once again. She stated that "Juanita is well-liked by the other children." Mrs. Haas also stated, "Her mother brought her to the room the other day, and she did just fine."

During Week 5 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas reported that the incidents of separation anxiety had stopped.

Her mother brought her to the room this morning, but didn’t come in. As she was walking down the hall, Juanita went to the door and watched her, but didn’t cry or run. Then she went back into the room and joined her friends coloring at the table.

By the last week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas had come to another conclusion regarding Juanita’s behavior.

The Juanita I see at school is very different from the Juanita I see with her mother. In class, she is cooperative and friendly; with her mother, she rules the roost. She knows if she cries long enough, she’ll get her way.

Mrs. Haas’ perceptions of Juanita’s overall behavior were charted on
the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Mrs. Haas perceived Juanita’s primary goal of behavior as seeking power in a positive way through independence. At the end, however, Mrs. Haas perceived Gina’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition. Ten weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Haas once again perceived Gina’s primary goal of behavior as seeking power in a positive way through independence.

When interviewed, Mrs. Haas indicated that she perceived Juanita as a "spoiled child" who needed "structure and discipline. . . she needs someone in control or she will try to control you," Mrs. Haas explained.

Later, however, Mrs. Haas’ description of Juanita was positive. Juanita is happy and has a lot of self-confidence. She enjoys being around people and enjoys friendships. She’s smart! She likes books. She will repeat the words, "Brown bear, brown bear." She will read that book to anyone who will listen. She will always get a book and just tell them [other children] a story she’s heard many times.

Mrs. Haas’ favorite teacher and student activity with Juanita was a field trip to Casa Mañana theater. "She was just thrilled with the whole thing. It was an experience she might not have had otherwise," Mrs. Haas
"The best time to listen to Juanita is at the teacher table," Mrs. Haas reported. She had also mentioned earlier that this was the best time to listen to all of her students. Each child in class would come to the teacher table once a week, and Mrs. Haas would engage them in conversation.

### Information from Ms. Babs

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings, Ms. Babs provided information on her perceptions of Juanita’s classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Ms. Babs perceived Juanita to be a bright young girl who would test limits at times and who had difficulty at times separating from her mother.

During Week 1 of the program, Ms. Babs described Juanita’s behavior as "just fine." She perceived Juanita as a "bright and smart" child who "gets along well with other children."

Ms. Babs observed the second week of the parenting education meetings that "the transition to getting from home to school is difficult." Ms. Babs also stated that several family behavior patterns contributed to this tenuous transition process. "The things that make the transition difficult for Juanita is that they oversleep, are disorganized, and have no routine," she explained.

The process of separation from school to home was again the topic of
concern during Week 3.

I’ve had to pull her off mom a couple of times this year. She does better when she comes in on her own. Like this morning, she came in fine. She’s late a lot, and I think things must be disorganized at home, but she’s a tough little cookie.

Ms. Babs reported an incident of limit-testing behavior during the fourth week of the parenting education meetings. “She usually tests her limits gently. Today, during a movie, I told her to scoot back, but she said, ‘No.’”

During the fifth week of the parent education class, Ms. Babs reported more limit-testing behaviors.

She wants adult attention. Sometimes she’ll misbehave just a little to get attention. She was mad at me because she had to leave the group for talking. But I walked her down the hall with me, told her what she could do when we got back, and she was fine. Juanita does good with positive encouragement. If you’re negative, she’s negative. It only makes it worse. The trick is to get her to focus on the positive.

Ms. Babs’ perceptions of Juanita’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Ms. Babs perceived Juanita’s primary goal of behavior as seeking power in a positive way through independence. By the program’s end, Ms. Babs perceived Juanita’s primary
goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

Ten weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Babs perceived Juanita’s primary goal of behavior as seeking protection in a positive way through assertiveness.

When interviewed, Ms. Babs indicated that she perceived Juanita as an affectionate child who frequently sought adult attention. “Juanita is a very loving child. She is a very demanding child. She does want attention; whether it’s positive or negative, she wants the attention. She does very well on her work,” Ms. Babs explained.

Like Mrs. Haas, Ms. Babs’ expectation of Mrs. Sanchez in regard to parenting was to provide Juanita with “discipline and just seeing that she has a more structured lifestyle.”

Ms. Babs perceived her relationship with Juanita as challenging.

Juanita will intentionally not mind me at times. If she doesn’t want to do it, she will move herself to the floor. I feel that Juanita is used to doing it [not following rules] at home and it’s like a challenge to see what we’ll do if she doesn’t mind.

When asked what activities may have been encouraged at school that were not encouraged at home, Ms. Babs’ reply was similar to Mrs. Haas’.

I feel her mother should stick by what she says. I feel that guidelines--more structure--and that Juanita should know that if her mother says it, her mother’s going to stick by it. I think that since Juanita is the
youngest . . . they feel that she's the baby of the family and they may allow her to get away with more than we ever could at school because we can't with 16 or 17 kids.

When asked what activities Juanita was interested in, Ms. Babs described social activities: "She does well with the other children. She interacts well with the other children. She likes it when we go to centers. She enjoys everything that's going on around her."

When asked to share the favorite adult and student activity in which she enjoyed engaging Juanita, Ms. Babs was nonspecific. "As the year has progressed, just watching Juanita progress."

Ms. Babs indicated that her best way to listen to Juanita was through observation. "I'll monitor her and go to her when she needs assistance," she explained.

Nathaniel Chavez

Introduction

Nathaniel, or Nat, as he was called by people at home and school, was a friendly and outgoing 4-year-old boy with short dark hair and dark brown eyes. Nat lived in a single-parent home with his mother and his two half-brothers. Alice Salas was his mother's name. Nat's oldest half-brother, Ricardo Salas, was 8. His other half-brother, James Salas, was 5.

Ms. Salas was divorced from Nat's father, who lived close by. She
### Perceptions of Adults Involved with the Parenting Education Program and Juanita Sanchez

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was also divorced from Ricardo and James' father. All of her sons saw their fathers, but not regularly.

Ms. Salas was employed as a receptionist in a medical office. English was the primary language spoken in the home. However, Ms. Salas did report that she sometimes spoke Spanish when conversing with her ex-husbands.

Alice, Nat's mother, was administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Alice scored in the democratic parenting style range on each of the three administrations of the Parenting Style Questionnaire. Alice's attendance at the parent education meetings was perfect. She attended each of the six sessions.

The following data in this section on Nathaniel Chavez contain the abundance of detailed description necessary for qualitative analysis. For a concise listing of the data findings on Nathaniel Chavez, see Table 6 on page 206.

Interview with Alice Salas

Alice arrived at my office at 8:00 a.m. on a Thursday for the personal interview. (Alice had attended 5 of the 6 parenting education classes at the time of the interview.) Alice was a 28-year-old woman with inquisitive eyes. She spoke articulately throughout the interview.

Alice was born in Abilene, Texas. She recalled her family as
supportive, and she recalled her growing-up years fondly.

I lived there [Abilene] until I was in the third grade, then we moved to Fort Worth. I lived with my mom and dad, and I have two brothers. I had an older brother when we moved here, and when I was 13, my mom had my youngest brother. He is now 15. I had a good childhood. I never was in trouble or anything like that. I had good parents. I went to B. G. Thornton Elementary [pseudonym], then went to Goodside Middle school [pseudonym], and I graduated from Hillwell High School [pseudonym]. My school years were real good. After I graduated, I went to Beeland Marine College [pseudonym] for about a year and a half. I’ve gone to junior college some. I’ve never completed a 4-year course [of study]. I got pregnant with Ricardo. Things change drastically.

As the custodial parent of three boys under 10 years of age, Ms. Salas was glad her parents lived close by. She stated that Ricardo and James had both been diagnosed with attention deficit disorders. She felt fortunate that her parents were helpful in assisting with the care of her sons.

When asked what expectations she had of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Salas stated that she did not have expectations. However, she did explain that she was “real open minded and eager to learn new things about parenting kids.” She added, “It’s taken a lot [of effort to attend] sometimes, but I’ve learned a lot in the classes.”
Ms. Salas described the impact a prekindergarten teacher can have on a child’s early school experiences when she was asked to share her expectations of the adults at school who came in contact with her sons.

I just expect them to treat my child as a good human being, to treat them equally and fairly. I know that some made the kids feel really special, and I appreciate that. There’s another teacher, and I don’t know what happened to her, that Ricardo had, and even to this day he asks if I remember her and says she just loved us to death. I feel she really made an impact on his life because he talks about her even to this day and he had her in prekindergarten.

Ms. Salas stayed informed about school by staying “in close contact with the teachers.” However, she also mentioned that it was difficult to stay in close contact with adults at school.

I usually try to stay in close contact with the teachers. This year I haven’t done it as much as I’d like to. Last year, I was in the position where I could go visit with Ricardo’s teacher every day after school. Nat is so far away from me that I can’t come up here every day. [prekindergarten students throughout the school district were bused to one elementary school; thus, older siblings often went to the elementary school closer to home]. We do have a time when we get home where we discuss what they did that day. I usually try to stay in tune with them that way. I am not as involved as I’d like to be.
Ricardo’s first year I was room mom. With three of them, it’s a lot harder. I think one year I was room mom for Ricardo and James. I thought this year I would just work and take a break [from being a room mom], but still I’m busy always.

Although Ms. Salas explained that she had “learned a lot [of parenting skills]” from her parents, and that she had attended other parenting classes. The reason she gave for attendance at other parenting classes was to search for assistance when her sons were diagnosed with attention deficit disorder.

When Ricardo was first diagnosed with ADHD [attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder] I started taking parenting classes. Then, after James [was diagnosed], I took more. I think those helped. I think it was two every month. It was just different parenting skills.

When asked what she remembered most from her experiences in other parenting classes, Ms. Salas stated, “Discipline.”

I’m a firm believer in trying not to spank.. Every now and then I’ll spank. Nowadays, a lot of people joke at you if you don’t spank. But it’s my way of thinking to have alternatives to spanking. It’s just what I’ve learned over 5 or 6 years. I’ve been to so many of these meetings and heard people say that spanking just doesn’t work. It’s true. It doesn’t.

Ms. Salas’ mother, a special education teacher, had also been helpful in
teaching her alternatives to spanking.

My mother sees children from severely mentally retarded to regular prekindergarten programs. She has done it all. She doesn’t believe in spanking either, but she believes in being real strict and calm. I’ve learned a lot from her, also, because she’s done it so long. She sees children like this [with attention deficit disorders] all the time.

When asked specifically to explain what she had found helpful in the current program, she eagerly obliged.

I really enjoyed this class. I’ve gotten a lot out of it as far as different techniques on the different behaviors, like insuring you’re aware of your childrens feelings. I’ve really enjoyed it. I thought the role playing was excellent because it makes you realize how the child felt. On the way up here I was thinking how comfortable I felt in this class. She [presenter] made us feel really welcome and talked to everybody.

When she takes the time to talk to everyone as an individual, it makes you think that she’s glad you came. I’ve really liked that. Sometimes the classes I’ve been to have had so many people. This has been a smaller version, and it’s been wonderful.

When asked what other types of services schools could provide to help families, Ms. Salas made several suggestions.

Definitely parenting programs. The opportunity to see what’s going on in your children’s classes. I know that you can do that, and in my
experiences the teachers have always been available. That's never
been a problem for me. I know that some parents just won’t make the
time.

The daily schedule at Nat’s house was hectic. Ms. Salas depended
upon her father to help her with transportation.

I didn’t work for 2 years. I had more time on my hands. And now I
get up at 5:00. I get home and round up all the kids and we were
doing football. That was taking up 2 hours in the afternoon. Then
come home, dinner, bed. It’s just real hectic. Right now I’m at a
period where I don’t have too much to do in the afternoon, so we’re
just now getting caught up on a lot of things I haven’t been able to get
done. I’m trying to make the time, but I am very, very busy. I like to
keep my kids active. It’ll hopefully keep them out of trouble when
they’re older. Ricardo is ready to start playing basketball. I just feel
like if he wants to, I need to give him the opportunity.

My father picks up Nat in the afternoon. I get home in time to
pick up James and am home when Ricardo gets home. I’m fortunate
that my boss lets me go on field trips and the like. I told him when I
first started working that my kids come first. I’m not going to feel
guilty if my kids are sick or if I need to go on a field trip or something.

Ms. Salas explained that she would ask probing questions if her sons
said they did nothing when she asked them about school.
They will always wait for me to ask. Sometimes when I first see Nat, he’s pulling stuff out of his backpack. They’ll usually wait for me to ask, and then they tell me. Nat talked about spiders and he pulled out this spider and said, “This is the egg sac.” They must plan ahead because they always have something to tell me about their day. Some days when I ask what they did, they’ll say, “Nothing.” Then I may ask about different subject areas.

When asked what types of activities her sons engage in at home that they did not engage in at school, Ms. Salas provided some examples of intellectually enriching activities.

One of the things they don’t get to do at school is we’ll sit and tell each other stories. We sit and watch movies together. I try to get them in the kitchen with me. Sometimes it’s hard because we’re so short on time. Last night, I let them make their own chocolate milk, and they just loved it. Things like that. Nothing really, probably things they could not do in school.

Ms. Salas indicated she felt some guilt regarding not reading enough to her sons when she was asked what types of activities they engaged in at school that they did not engage in at home.

Probably painting and things like that. Another thing that I’ve gotten really bad about is last year, I used to read to my kids every single night. I did it every day like clockwork, and I have not done it this
year. I feel guilty because I know they need that, and I can just hear it when the teacher asks if their parents read to them, they say, "No, my mother never reads to me." I tell myself that I've got to start doing that. It's important to me, and I know they enjoyed it when I did it.

The health challenges that Ricardo and James had seemed to take up a lot of Ms. Salas' physical and emotional energy. The energy and concern that Ms. Salas expended on Nat as compared to Ricardo and James did not appear to be equitable.

Ricardo is in the third grade now. In first grade, he had a teacher--we got to know each other really well--and she started telling me that Ricardo couldn't sit still, his mind wanders off and I thought I needed to do something about that. I told my mother who had worked with special education children for 20 years. Someone at the school she works with knew a psychologist who was working on his doctorate and needed children to test. That's how we got Ricardo tested. He tested him and diagnosed him and he was put on medication and it has been positive. Ricardo has done really well on the medication.

James goes to the Child Study Center. He had a stroke when I was still pregnant. He was about 6 months old, and my mother, who notices things that I wouldn't, noticed he always kept his little hand in a fist and one day she asked had I noticed that his hand is always closed? I said, "No, I hadn't." I started noticing it more and more, so
we took him to the pediatrician. His doctor said he was probably a slow learner and what you probably need to do is give him some more time. Another month went by, and it looked like it was getting worse, so we took him back and his doctor sent us to a neurologist and they did a CAT scan and they could tell that it was pre-birth from the markings on his hands. I had never heard of it before, so we decided to take him to the Child Study Center for therapy, and that's when I met a lot more parents of children who had the exact same thing. It happens a lot, and we aren't aware of it. Physical, occupational, and speech therapy is what he takes. He has been at the Child Study Center since he was 9 months old. His teacher noticed that he's not hyper, just ADD [attention deficit disorder]. Ricardo, on the other hand, has no control over himself.

Although her older sons presented her with many parenting challenges, Ms. Salas perceived her relationship with each son as good.

With Ricardo, it’s good. I expect a lot of him because he’s the oldest. It's real open, and I try to communicate with him. He’s 8, and I want him to feel like he can come talk to me. When I was growing up, we had a good relationship with our parents and we always knew that they loved us, but they never told us that they loved us. I never felt like if I had a problem, I could really go and talk to my mother about it. They just weren’t open people. I feel like they were the best parents they
knew how to be. I try to let my kids know I’m there for them. James is real strong-willed, and he’s always trying to take advantage of everybody. I think that James is probably a little more spoiled than the other children due to the fact that he’s had a lot of medical problems and has seen doctor after doctor. I tend to spoil him; My mother does it and it’s not where he gets things and the others don’t. It’s not even paying more attention to him. I don’t know how to explain it. Maybe it’s because he’s so trying. Sometimes I just give up. He’s a very strong-willed boy. Over the summer he had a seizure, and they diagnosed him with epilepsy. I was real fortunate because that’s one of the first questions they ask everytime we go the to the doctor’s office. Nat is real shy. This year has really been great for him because he talks a lot more. He comes home, and I make a big deal out of everything he brings home. He’s starting to open up more and tell me about what’s going on with everything he does at school. I think I have a pretty good relationship with my children. At least I hope I do.

When asked to describe her parenting style, Ms. Salas shared a wish to be more consistent in her discipline methods.

My biggest problem is that I’m not consistent. At times I can be like a doormat, and at times I try to be real firm and stick to what I said. I know that that’s a bad feature, that consistency is the best thing, but it’s hard sometimes. I try to stay firm, but James is so trying. Ricardo
is so agreeable. James is just the opposite. Nat is just kind of there and does whatever we ask him to do.

Ms. Salas next expressed concern about her oldest son, Ricardo, because he sought her approval so often.

He's like, "Whatever makes you happy, Mommy." This morning we were talking, and he's been saving up his money. I asked him what he was planning to do with his money. He said, "What do you want me to do, Mommy?" I told him it was his to spend however he wanted. He asked what I thought he should do with it. I said if it were my money, I would probably save a little bit more and open up a bank account. He said he wanted to start saving for college. I told him that was a really good idea. He asked if I thought that was okay. He's always making sure it's okay with me and that worries me. At times, I think maybe I've done something wrong. Maybe I haven't encouraged him the way I should. I've really been trying to encourage him to state his opinion and how he feels and what he thinks he should do. Yesterday, I tried that about his feelings. He came home and said, "I'm really mad because we're having a play at school and I know that I'm a good actor. I've been taking acting classes." I said, "I guess that really makes you mad." He said, "Yes, it does. Mrs. Harrigan [pseudonym] said that some little girl could have two acting parts and I could only
have one little one." I asked him why he thought she said that. He said, "Because she said I can’t act." I said, "Ricardo, I don’t think she would have said that." He said, "No, she did. I told her that I took acting classes at Casa Mañana and I know how to act." I said, "What do you think we ought to do to fix the situation?" He said, "Nothing. There’s nothing we can do." I was like, okay, what’s next? I told him to maybe think about it a day or so. Today I figured I would go back and ask him, but it’s like sometimes he gives me no answer.

Even with the family’s busy schedule, Ms. Salas was able to find advantageous times to listen to her sons individually.

I always use eye contact, definitely. I usually have a few minutes while driving home with James and have time for just me and Ricardo, because at one point in the day I have one child and not the other two. If we’re all together and Ricardo is talking and James starts to say something, I tell James to wait and respect Ricardo for talking. It’s his time. You’ll have a turn. I always make sure that if he’s talking, I listen. But when I ask what they’ve done, we’re all together because I want everybody to hear about what everybody has done. With Nat, it’s [listening time] usually in the evening.

When asked to describe her sons’ personalities and favorite activities, Ms. Salas did not hesitate.
Ricardo is real passive. James is real stubborn. Nat is so different from any of my other kids. I have to beg him for a kiss. He’s very independent. He will get up in the morning, and before Ricardo and James are even dressed, he’s ready. He gets up, brushes his teeth, gets his socks, clothes, shoes, and that is such a help because here I am still dressing James at 5 [years old].

Ricardo’s [favorite activity] is learning. He loves to learn. He’s real interested in learning. James’ is making friends. He loves to make friends. Nat’s is cars and fixing things. You wouldn’t believe the things he’s taken apart! He totally took out every screw from my mother’s TV table and left it all wobbly. He’s got tool boxes, and they’re all organized. He said when he grow up, he’s either going to build buildings or something else. He is so eager to want to learn how to do stuff. My dad works on a car, and he’s [Nat] just watching.

Mrs. Salas’ expectations for Nat’s prekindergarten experience was growth in the area of social skills. “I want him to realize that he can express himself. I want him to learn to get along with others, which I think he does okay. I was told he was real shy, and he’s come out of that,” Ms. Salas explained.

Although Ms. Salas had support from her parents, the frustrations of single-parenthood sometimes took a toll on her emotionally. Balancing what was best for her sons and the amount of frustration she could handle as a
single parent was an ongoing battle for her.

I don't give Ricardo his medication on weekends. I really try not to.

About 2 weeks ago, I had to. It was like he had no control. The older he gets it seems like it [ADHD] gets worse. Instead of his body maturing and his mind maturing and thinking I need to calm myself down, it's just not happening. I really don't know where to go with that. I explain to him how as he gets older, we try to have more self-control. Maybe in a year or so, his maturity level will kick in. God love him, he just bounces off the walls. He can sit and watch TV and jump from sofa to sofa to sofa. That's the way he is. When he was in Pre-K, I never had any problems, so I'm hoping that Nat isn't diagnosed with it.

I tell them, "Don't ya'll ever get tired?" And they say, "No." At times, my mother watches my three kids and my brother's kids. Jimmy [nephew] is even more hyper than Ricardo! I ask my poor mother why she does that to herself and she said she feels like their daughter [Ms. Salas] needs to be on medication.

As indicated earlier during the interview, discipline was the area Ms. Salas perceived as her greatest parental challenge. She recalled a time she chose an ineffective discipline because her frustration level had become unmanageable.

Discipline, it's hard. I don't know if it's because I have three boys and
they’re always fighting. That is the worst thing. I was telling Linda [Stillwell] in [the parenting education meetings] that we were in the car and fighting and no one had their seat belt on. I asked them to please behave and they wouldn’t. I told them that I had had it. One of these days I was going to run away. Oh, my God, I never should have said that. They started bawling. All of them except for James. Ricardo started bawling. Nat was crying. I was just kidding. Ricardo said, “Oh, mommy, you can’t leave.” (They call my mom, “Mom.”) James said, “You can leave. Mom will be nice to me. You can go.” Ricardo and Nat were just bawling. I felt so bad. I told them I was sorry. I was just playing. Sometimes you say things just out of frustration, and you don’t realize it really affects them. They’re probably thinking one of these days I’m not going to be there when they come home.

“Watching my kids grow up and develop and learning” were Ms. Salas’ greatest joys as a mother. She enjoyed engaging in quiet activities with her sons. “I like to color with the kids. We’ll sit down and we’ll color. But I think the most favorite one is just talking to them, listening to what they have to tell me.”

Information from Mrs. Morris

Throughout the duration of the 6-week parenting education meetings, Mrs. Morris provided information on her perceptions of Nat’s classroom behaviors on a weekly basis. Mrs. Morris perceived Nat as a caring child
who was initially shy, but also friendly.

During the first week of the program, Mrs. Morris described Nat as "a great kid" who was "still slow to warm up to new situations." She reported that Nat was "a bit shy at first" and "wouldn’t talk, but does now."

By Week 2 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Morris' concerns for Nat were academic. "We’ve been working on colors and numbers since the first of the [school] year. He still doesn’t know his colors or his numbers, 1 to 10," she explained.

Mrs. Morris reported that Nat came to school with a Band-aid® under his left eye during Week 3 of the parenting education meetings. Ms. Salas had written a note explaining that Nat and one of his brothers had had a fight. Regarding Nat’s classroom behavior, Mrs. Morris stated, "Nat likes to answer first." She also said, “He likes to help others even when they don’t want help."

Nat was proud of a thumbprint spider he had made, Mrs. Morris also reported. "We made spider webs out of blue and orange glue and thumbprint spiders with eight legs," she explained.

By Week 4 of the parenting education class, Mrs. Morris perceived that Nat’s self-confidence had increased dramatically.

I have seen more growth in him in taking healthy risks [during] the first two six-weeks of school [grade report periods are 6 weeks] than any
other student I’ve ever had. He’s gone from clenching his fists and no eye contact to raising his hand and enthusiastically participating in our large-group time.

During the fifth week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Morris observed that Nat had a “high tolerance for frustration.” She recalled an incident from which she had formed this opinion.

We made Indian necklaces with beads and feathers. It was not an easy job for the children. Nat calmly went about making his necklace. He was the only child who could stack the beads before he put them on. He has good fine motor skills.

Mrs. Morris recalled an incident during the last week of the parenting education meetings that portrayed Nat as a caring child.

Nat showed empathy to a little friend (classmate) who was carrying a pan of water for a floating activity. He spilt it once and cleaned it up. Then, as he carried it again, he spilt it a second time and started to cry! Nat came over and said, “It’s all right. I’ll help you. We can clean it up. It’ll be okay.”

Mrs. Morris’ perceptions of Nat’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning and at the end of the program, Mrs. Morris perceived Nat’s primary goal of behavior as seeking protection in a positive way through
assertiveness. Ten weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Morris perceived Nat’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

During the interview, Mrs. Morris stated that she perceived Nat as a “very conscientious” child.

I have a lot of kids in the class who are the motherly type, but he seems to really be concerned about other kids’ feelings and interests. He’ll take the time to say something really sweet. He strikes me as a nurturer. He wants to help.

Mrs. Morris perceived her relationship with Nat to be “very good . . . he’s very sweet. He’s real open with me. He’s not afraid of exchanges with me as a rule. He’s not scared to talk to me. It’s a real good relationship. I really like him,” she explained.

As Mrs. Morris had observed over the duration of the parenting education meetings, she perceived that Nat had grown in self-confidence.

He has grown to take a lot more risks than he did before. At the beginning of school, he was always afraid to say anything or look at anybody. Now he’s one of the bolder ones in the classroom. He takes more risks. He does get a little nervous if you pin him down if he’s doing something. He’ll think about denying it, but he’s never actually denied it. He accepts his responsibility.

When asked what might be encouraged at home for Nat that was not
encouraged at school, Mrs. Morris' reply was odd. "Probably just to be more independent," she said.

However, when asked what might be encouraged at school that might not be encouraged at home, Mrs. Morris' opinion was more elaborate. "His mom seems really good, involved, and really intent with what's going on. At school, of course, he gets to deal with groups, and he also has to wait his turn a lot more. His wait time is a lot more at school, I'm sure," she explained.

Mrs. Morris observed that Nat found times to engage her in conversation. Whenever this occurred, Mrs. Morris stated that she always made an effort to listen attentively.

Nat will come up to me and want to sit beside me and talk to me. He likes to spend time with me, but not all the time. He has his time when he goes off and plays. He'll kind of come over there every now and then, and just talk to me by himself, which is neat. At the bus, he always has to hug me good-bye and wants to kiss me. He always has to make sure he gets the hug and he's three people back and he makes sure he gets up to the front.

Information from Ms. Pat

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Pat observed Nat as "quiet and well-behaved." She also observed that he was "skeptical
Ms. Pat stated, during Week 2 of the program, that "Nat likes to play with the little girls' hair." Again, her perceptions of Nat were positive. She perceived him as a responsible and cooperative child.

Once again, during Week 3 of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Pat perceived Nat as a cooperative child who "gets along well with other children." She recalled a recent class activity when Nat made a paper placemat for a breakfast guest. "Nat was proud of the placemat he made," she stated.

During Week 4 of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Pat perceived Nat to be hesitant in regard to beginning individual activities. He asks a lot of questions about how to do it before he does something. He’s afraid he’ll goof up. They [class] made an egg carton spider and legs. Nat asked several times how to cut it up and if it was okay. He needed step-by-step reassurance. He has a lot of questions before he tries something new or different.

Ms. Pat, like Mrs. Morris, also perceived Nat to have a high tolerance for frustration. During the fifth week of the program, Ms. Pat recalled that Nat had constructed an Indian bead necklace. "He stays on-task well and he completes tasks," she said.

During the last week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Pat
stated that Nat was proud of the recent art activities he had completed along with his classmates.

He is so proud of what he made! His Indian bead necklace with feathers and the painted paper sack vest and head band. He asked all morning if he could take them home. Then he kept telling his friends, “Hey guys, we can take these home!”

Ms. Pat’s perceptions of Nat’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Ms. Pat perceived Nat’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition. At the end of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Pat perceived Nat’s primary goal of behavior as seeking protection in a positive way through assertiveness. Once again, 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Pat perceived Nat’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

Overall, Ms. Pat’s perceptions of Nat as expressed during the interview were positive.

Nat is very polite and is always a joy to have in class. He never hesitates to help his classmates or the teacher. He doesn’t talk much about his family life, but he does like hearing his friends’ stories about their brothers and sisters. He’s a very sweet, gentle, polite little boy.
I enjoy being around him.

However, she expressed concern that some adults who did not know Nat well may perceive him as a “tooter” [a difficult student].

Understanding Nat, you have to be patient with him. He’ll hurry to get things done, and if you’re not with him every day and don’t know that’s what he’s trying to do, he’ll get it done eventually. I would like other teachers and people who come in to be understanding and patient with him instead of thinking this kid looks like a pain because he’s going to ask every minute how to do this and how to do that. With all the children sometimes teachers will come in our class and pick out kids who are not problem kids but those you have to have more patience with and not just say, “Oh, this one must be a tooter and that one must be a tooter.” Maybe they are tooters, but if you don’t know the story behind them, don’t put judgment on them.

When asked to share her expectations of Nat’s mother in regard to Nat’s optimum development, Ms. Pat recalled a recent incident that could have ended in miscommunication between home and school.

Cooperation and support is what we [adults at school] expect from parents. Like parents who say, “I didn’t know about this or I was not informed about that or so-and-so said you’re not going to do this, you’re going to do that.” First of all, the teacher and I are here every
day if you could cooperate with us. If you have a problem, call us if you’re not able to come up and find out what’s going on instead of blaming it on someone . . . then your child picks up on this. Then they come to school with two stories and don’t know what to believe and can either make the teacher look bad or the parent look bad. This morning Nat was crying. I asked him what was the matter. Come to find out, Chance [a student] had gotten up and gone in the cafeteria to eat breakfast. I asked him if he wanted to go eat breakfast and he said, “No.” I asked him why he was crying and it turned out that Chance had left him sitting in the hallway and he and Chance are real close. If he goes home and says something, we need to support his mother and father, too. Have his mother come up and talk and ask how things are done at home and how to solve this.

Ms. Pat also perceived Nat as a “real smart boy” who had increased in independence since starting prekindergarten.

I’ll go over and talk to him and if he’s done something, he’ll show me and I’ll give him praise and tell him, “That’s real good, Nat.” Sometimes he comes and asks me—he tries to do it himself first, and then he asks how to do this and once he sees it, like if I bend over the table showing somebody how to do it, he’ll try it himself. But if I go over and sit down, he’ll say, “Oh, is this how I do it?” Then he’ll do one step and
then the next step and say, "is this right, Ms. Pat?" So I try to move from table to table, but he trusts me, and if he has a problem, he comes and tells me or Mrs. Morris. He gets along with the other kids. At the beginning of the year if someone hit him, he would say, "So-and-so hit me." Now he’s matured in only 2 or 3 months, and he knows if he has a problem, come to us and don’t tattle. He’s seen kids go to Stop and Think [time-out discipline area in the classroom] and he’s been to Stop and Think before if he’s doing something wrong. He’s matured, and now if someone hits him, he’ll try and work it out. One time, I noticed somebody hit him, and he just ignored them. I asked him why they hit him, and told him I saw them and “I know you didn’t do anything.” So, sometimes maybe he feels, “If I tell, I’ll get in trouble, too, even if I didn’t see what was happening.” But he trusts us and will come to us, and if it’s a real bad problem that he knows he didn’t have anything to do with, he’ll come to us. Like if somebody breaks something and they’re still trying to fix it, he’ll come to us and tell that that person’s doing something wrong. I don’t know if he thinks if he doesn’t tell someone, we’ll say he did it. He doesn’t tattle though. He’s real good and he’s friendly. He smiles quite a bit and all that, but I still think he’s shy. I don’t know if he’s thinking a lot or what he’s got up there. He’ll get into a conversation with them. Like
this morning, he was talking to Chance and Chance got up and said he wanted to eat and left Nat alone. When Manuel [student] came up, Nat got upset because he [Manuel] had nothing to say to him [Nat].

When asked what may be encouraged at home with Nat that would not be encouraged at school, Ms. Pat explored the probability of different perceptions at home and school regarding tattling.

I thought maybe he does something here that his mother would allow him to do at home, like tattling, which we tell him not to do at school. Maybe at home, he’s told to tell when someone does something wrong even if he’s not in the middle of it. I don’t know how tattling would go at home or maybe with older brothers at home, she [Nat’s mother] needs to know and he gets a wrong version of tattling. “What is tattling? I’m told not to tattle at school, but when I go home, mama wants to know what my brother’s doing. Is that tattling? Am I going to get in trouble?” he thinks. And like when he does his work, he’s not afraid to say he did something wrong--if he puts too much glue or something. I think by seeing that maybe at home mama says that’s okay and works with him.

Ms. Pat observed that Nat enjoyed different block-building activities. He’s into blocks. He likes to play with the animals and the blocks. We have plastic animals, and I sat down and told him to see if we could build a barn. He said, “Okay.” He built it and marched the animals in and out. He
started opening it up and saying, "Put them in there, put them in here." He
doesn't say too much, but when you get him going, he does.

When asked in what ways she listened to Nat, Ms. Pat described how she engaged him in conversation and then attempted to extend the conversation.

During show-and-tell, look at him and maybe, if you have the same experience, identify with him perhaps, saying, "My little boy has that and he told me something about it . . . is that true, Nat?" And he'll say, "Yes." Or something like Power Rangers. He likes Power Rangers. "Yeah, I've heard about Power Rangers at my house [Ms. Pat will say]."

One day, he wore a suit that had Power Rangers on it. I said, "Nat, where did mama get that?" He said, "At the store." I said, "What store?" And he said, "I think Wal-Mart." I said, "I've been to Wal-Mart, too, and I've seen the Power Rangers stuff they have." Not just say, "Oh, okay" and go on, but to extend it [sic]. When I did say that, he said, "I've got the Green Ranger man." I said, "Is that the flip kind? I'm just learning about the flip kind." He said, "Yeah, that's the change man." He does real good when we listen one-on-one and extend the conversation. If you just stop it, he just gets quiet again.
Table 6

Perceptions of Adults Involved with the Parenting Education Program and Nat Salas

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<td>Home health concerns with older sons</td>
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Introduction

P. J. was an active, energetic 4-year-old boy. P. J. had short light brown hair and large chocolate brown eyes. P. J.'s height and weight were proportionate and average for his age.

P. J. lived in an extended family household: his paternal grandparents; his mother and father; his 5-year-old brother, Kenny; his 2-year-old sister, Marie; and his two male cousins, Jay, age 9 and Tony, age 10.

The house was owned by P. J.'s grandparents. Extra room had been made by converting the two-car garage into a bedroom for P. J.'s parents.

P. J.'s father, Donny, held a blue-collar job in a local factory. His grandmother worked in a discount store close to the home, and his grandfather held a blue-collar job in a machine shop. P. J.'s mother, Linda, stayed home and ran the household. She was also active in the family's church and volunteered her services there.

English was the primary language in the home. P. J. attended Mrs. Rossio's afternoon prekindergarten class. The classroom educational aide for Mrs. Rossio was Ms. Emma.

P. J.'s mother, Linda, was administered the Parenting Styles Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Linda scored in the democratic parenting style range on each of the three administrations of the
Parenting Style Questionnaire.

Overall, Lisa attended all but the second of the six parenting education meetings. The following data in this section on P. J. Stillwell contain the abundance of detailed description necessary for qualitative analysis. For a concise listing of the data findings on P. J. Stillwell, see Table 7, on page 228.

Interview with Linda Stillwell

Linda arrived at my office on a Wednesday evening at 6:00 for the personal interview. Linda had attended 4 of the 6 parenting education meetings at the time of the interview.

Linda was an attractive, athletic 24-year-old woman, with long, curly brown hair and large chocolate brown eyes. Linda’s husband was Caucasian, and Linda, as her son P. J., was Hispanic.

Linda spoke some Spanish from time to time in conversing with her parents. However, she used English as her daily language. She was the only person in the extended family who was bilingual.

Linda was born in the immediate area. As a child and adolescent, she vacationed in Mexico where her grandmother lived. Linda had a stable upbringing and a positive school experience as a child and adolescent. She began grade school and graduated from high school in the same school district. Linda and her husband were high school sweethearts and married shortly after they graduated.
When asked what her expectations were of the parenting education meetings, Linda replied, "Mainly getting them [her children] to mind." Her overall opinion of the program was "great!"

I would have to say it was great because just your wording could be so much. I didn't know that and now I know it. It's so different and it works. Bonnie [meeting leader] said, "Just tell them you have a choice." I went home and tried it and it worked! Two words and that worked!

However, Linda did have a suggestion for improving the parenting education meetings. "Probably, if I was to make any changes, it would be [to] have classes for parents and children together to help them learn to mind and enjoy one another," she recommended.

Linda's expectations for the adults who worked at school were "to care and to teach" children. "I expect them [children] to be comfortable with you, to be able to come to you. Basically, a compatible relationship," she said. She also thought that school personnel were generally "responsive," but noted that because "some kids need so much more than others," equity was not always possible or advisable.

When asked if her children's teachers communicated effectively with her, Linda replied, "They're pretty good." Her favorite method of initiating contact with adults at school was to "go visit . . . usually, when there's a
birthday, I take cupcakes or whatever so I can see what’s going on. Or, I’ll go to activities whenever they have them.”

“A close relationship” was Linda’s parenting goal.

I just want a close relationship with them. I want them to be able to come to me when something is going on. That’s why I want to build togetherness, friendly-like, because if they ever get ready for sex, I want them to be able to tell me. I wasn’t able to do that with my mom. And that’s what I want. I work on it.

Another parenting goal of Linda’s was for her parenting skills “to be the opposite” of her mother’s parenting skills.

I think that what I’ve probably learned is that I don’t want to be like my mom was. I can kind of relate to what some people say. They’ll do things the way they were brought up. I want to be the opposite. I work so harder [sic] to be the opposite.

Linda perceived her relationship with each of her three children differently.

Kenny is my oldest, and we are real close because he can tell me anything. We talk a lot, and if I tell one of my kids I love them, he’ll say, “Don’t you love me?” “Of course I love you, Kenny.” Kenny is also the authoritative [sic-i.e., assertive] when it comes to what he wants to do. P. J. is my middle one, and we don’t click real, real
good. When he was smaller, he whined a lot and still does whine a lot. I just go berserk! The first thing I do is spank him. I feel like he was growing apart from me at one point, so I stopped spanking and I would do time-out or send him to his room to lay down. I started talking a lot and hugging him and letting him know I love him because I could feel him doing that [pulling away]. Now, P. J. tells me he loves me without me having to tell him. Maria is real attached to me because she’s my only one at home and we do everything together. We have a close relationship. Of course, we have to play babies and all this during the day.

Linda recognized that, as the middle child in the family, P. J. was often caught between Kenny and Maria.

Kenny is authoritative [sic], but he knows how far to go. I don’t really have to be yelling at him a lot. P. J. is the one who is maturing. He’s kind of caught because Kenny is so much older and does so much more. Maria’s the baby. She’s so happy-go-lucky. I know he’s [P. J.] caught. They’re all good, though. I don’t have to constantly get after them.

Linda perceived P. J.’s eagerness to talk at school during large-group time as another indication of maturation. “He’s matured a lot. P. J.’s never been talkative like that [in a group setting]. I can tell he has [matured],” she commented. It is unusual that Linda would consider Kenny as “so much
older and more mature than P. J., since they were less than 2 years apart in age.

The best way to listen to P. J. and Kenny discuss their school day was different for each son.

I’ll ask Kenny every day what he did. For the first week he went to kindergarten, he said, “Mom!” like he didn’t want to tell me. I said I just wanted to know. “Well, Mom, you went to kindergarten, didn’t you?” He’s so busy doing stuff, he doesn’t really want to have time. If we’re on the road or something, that’s the best time to ask because they’re not really occupied with nothing. He says we did this and we did that. P. J. tells me right off when I ask him. He’s just ready to tell you.

However, there were special times and places that Linda found conducive to listening. She also recognized that listening was a reciprocal and active process that required interaction.

At night, whenever they have a story, they have to be in bed by 9:00, so I won’t read a story if we’re running late. At night and in the car. On Sunday night they have a program at church that I help with. There, the kids help the other kids. I’m not the teacher. I’m the song leader and help with puppets. Kenny and P. J. are like, “That’s my mom–Mom, we want to lead this song.” They’re more active with me and want to do what I want [at that time] than at any other time.
It was important to Linda to see that her children received what they wanted materially as often as possible.

They are into Power Rangers. Kenny is into the style of clothes. he wants expensive stuff. For Christmas, he wants a gold chain and stuff like that. I’m thinking to myself, “Aren’t you too little for this?” I’m thinking, “I’m going to do it [get what he wants] till he gets to the point that it’s out of control.” I go from store to store trying to track down Power Rangers. I know one time I was at Wal-Mart at 1:00 in the morning because I had heard they had some. You see their face and it’s worth it. They don’t know the trouble I went through. Then you want to get those Power Rangers and lock them in a safe because you don’t want to lose them after everything you’ve gone through.

She [Maria] likes to do a lot of going. She’s into babies and Beauty and the Beast and Lion King and stuff like that. Her birthday is Friday, so we’re having a birthday party Saturday. I asked her everything she wants and she changes it daily, but I’m already buying stuff. She told me she wanted a Lion King birthday party, so I got gold plates, cups, and napkins of Lion King. Then she said she wanted a Beauty and the Beast party. I had all this stuff in the trunk. I decided to buy her a Beauty and the Beast doll. Today we were looking at cakes and I mentioned how pretty the Lion King was and she said she wanted a Beauty and the Beast cake. Then she’s still looking through
the book and sees Snow White. I asked which she wanted, and she said Beauty and the Beast. The lady was writing up the ticket and asking her name and she decided she wanted Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs! I asked the lady to change it and asked her [Maria] if she was sure and she said she was. So we have Lion King stuff and a Snow White cake!

Linda worked hard to maintain a daily schedule.

I get up before any of them [family members]. I’ll straighten up stuff while they’re getting up. Then, I’ll start breakfast because if I don’t start breakfast early, we’ll run into lunch. They [P. J. and Kenny] have to eat lunch [at home] because they don’t eat lunch at school. I start breakfast and we’ll eat breakfast. From there, they [P. J., Kenny, and Maria] play with color books, Crayolas, cars, toys, anything. Then, I make lunch and they’ll eat lunch. Then, it’s time for Kenny and P. J. to take a bath. They have to get ready for school and I have to iron their clothes. It’s busy, busy. By that time, they get dressed and the bus comes at 11:30. They get on the bus and they go to school. From 11:30 to 3:00, it’s just me and Maria. We’ll clean up and go shopping, or get things for snack or mess around. When they come home at 3:00, it’s snack time. Then I clean up and they’re playing. Then, it’s suppertime. I’m constantly cooking and then I’ve got to get laundry done. I don’t take a bath until Donny gets home. That’s just what I
have to do.

Occasional evenings out were Linda's method for combating the frustration and exhaustion that accumulated from her busy schedule. I’ll tell Mimi [mother-in-law] that Donny and I are going somewhere. We’re going out to eat or whatever, and of course she keeps mine, because when she goes to work, I take care of my nephews. She’ll say it’s okay and it’s "Phew, we’re out of here!" Then you feel a lot better, but you come home to more mess and it’s all over again. I’m telling you, everyday! But those breaks mean a lot. They can help immensely.

When asked what she wanted for P. J. to get out of his time in prekindergarten, Linda expressed concern over behavior she perceived as “lazy.”

I want P. J. to mainly be with other kids. He’s real lazy at home, or he’ll play a game and he’ll quit and he won’t go all the way through the game. When it’s his turn to do hard work, he’s ready to quit. At school, he knows he can’t quit, so he’ll get in that cycle of finishing something. P. J. whines, and the kids are constantly asking, “Why are you crying? Why are you doing this?” They’re all constantly on him so if he learns to interact, he’ll be much better when he comes home. I have this rule now: if you’re going to play a game, you’re going to finish the game. If he’s playing tag and he’s it, when he tags someone
he wants to quit, but not while he’s supposed to be the one tagging.

Linda also reported that P. J. was a hearty eater.

I asked P. J. one day, “What’s your favorite thing in school?” and he said, “Lunch.” He eats a lot. I make them breakfast at home and then Kenny goes to school half a day, too, but they [Kenny’s class] don’t eat lunch at school, but P. J.’s does. So I’ll make breakfast and then I’ll make lunch and P. J. will eat breakfast and he’ll eat lunch at home and at school. After school they have a snack. That’s all he does all day is eat! He just eats and eats and eats.

“Timid” was the word Linda chose to describe P. J.’s personality.

When Linda compared her two sons, she perceived Kenny favorably and seemed ambiguous in her perceptions of P. J.

I don’t know that timid is the word. He’s just now coming into wanting to do something. He’s mainly to himself, but with one of my nephews, he’s really close so they do a lot together. With a group he really won’t. I don’t know if they [peers] may be more advanced than him [sic] and he’s afraid to be a failure. Tony may be afraid of the same thing so they [P. J. and Tony] do that [what they are afraid of] together. He’ll stick with Tony. He’s [P. J.’s] ready, but he’s not ready. I don’t know how to explain his personality. Kenny is outgoing. He’ll try anything.

Once again, when asked to describe some of her favorite mother and
child activities, Linda referred to P. J. as lazy. She expected that P. J.'s involvement in sports would be a good experience for him, as it was for his brother, Kenny. In regard to Maria, Linda recalled an incident that depicted the reciprocal mother-daughter play that was reported on earlier.

Kenny is into a lot of sports, so we play a lot of sports. Of course, when he was playing T-ball, we went to every game and I was Team Mom. I really enjoyed that and he did too, of course. He likes to be recognized a lot. P. J. is so lazy. He's going to be playing sports this coming year, so I know P. J.'s really excited about that. He's going to be real excited for us to go see him. When he does something good, I always give him this look. He knows what kind of look it is. I know when sports come, he's going to be ready for us to get his uniform and get new shoes. It's time to be on the spotlight. Maria with dolls and me rocking them and playing. I have a gate at the stairs. The gate was up and I was on the stairs and Maria was on the other side playing. She said, "The baby wants you [Linda] to walk her . . . here's the stroller. She wants you to push her." She's trying to work with me because I didn't want her over the gate. I got the stroller and was pushing the baby on the stairs where she could see me and she said, "Now the mama want over." She's talking about her[s]elf.

When asked what types of activities her sons engaged in at school that they did not engage in at home, Linda mentioned varied learning
They have occasionally painted, but they do a lot of painting in school. Painting and field trips. I take them places, but nothing like that. Probably when you’re at home, you don’t have time for counting and learning. I’m constantly on the move because I have other kids [Linda’s nephews] I’m watching. Learning is what they get there, but bonding is what they get at home.

Linda recognized the importance of parent and child activities as a bonding experience.

We do a lot of extra sports. I do a lot of that outside. We do kickball, volleyball, baseball, jumprope. They might could do all that at school, but not with you [the parent]. It’s more important with you. We do a lot of that. Football throwing, tag, everything. I guess mainly something with you. And we make cookies and all that, too.

“Getting them to open up” was Linda’s greatest parental challenge. “Once you get that [open communication], things go much better,” she explained. Linda’s greatest joy as a parent was to “see them healthy.”

Information from Mrs. Rossio

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Rossio reported that P. J. especially enjoyed large-group circle time. Mrs. Rossio reported that P. J. enjoyed listening and talking to other children.

During Week 2 of the program, Mrs. Rossio reported that P. J. “loves
large-group [time]." His "eyes light up and you can see the wheels turning when questions are asked and discussion is going on," she said.

Mrs. Rossio also stated that P. J. did not like to be singled out during small-group times or in one-to-one situations. "He freezes up and often can't answer," she explained.

During Week 3 of the parenting education class, Mrs. Rossio shared that P. J. was one of her youngest students. She noted that he often had difficulty with buckling his belt and snapping his pants. She also reported that, because of this difficulty, P. J. was often the last child out of the bathroom.

Mrs. Rossio stated that P. J. "participates in everything and likes everybody." However, she also shared that P. J. worried about making mistakes.

Because P. J. enjoyed large-group time so much, Mrs. Rossio would not start large-group discussions or activities until P. J. arrived. She reported that P. J. usually arrived to school 5 to 10 minutes later than the other students because his commute on the bus was longer for him than for the other students.

During the fourth week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Rossio expressed frustration over waiting for P. J. to arrive late because of the bus. "By the time P. J.'s bus gets here and he's had lunch, he's missed
30 minutes of class time," she explained. Mrs. Rossio decided to have recess for the first 30 minutes of afternoon prekindergarten so that P. J. would not miss any class time.

Again, Mrs. Rossio mentioned the importance of large-group time to P. J. "He loves to answer and be called on and bounce ideas off other children," she stated.

Mrs. Rossio reported during the fifth week of the program that changing the schedule had worked well for P. J. and the class. However, she stated that "there is still a problem with his bus being late."

During the last week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Rossio described P. J. as a boy who was "well-behaved, followed rules, and enjoys school . . . sometimes he likes to play by himself and sometimes he likes to play with others," she said. She added that P. J. "has a best friend, J. R."

Mrs. Rossio's perceptions of P. J.'s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child's Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Mrs. Rossio perceived P. J.'s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

When interviewed, Mrs. Rossio described P. J. as a "responsible child" who "tries to take care of others." She perceived P. J. as "extroverted" but
"not independent."

**Information from Ms. Emma**

Ms. Emma described P. J. as a "cute" boy who "gets along well with others" during the first week of the parenting education meetings. She also perceived P. J. to be a "cooperative" child.

During the second week of the program, Ms. Emma reported that P. J. "enjoys all group activities." Ms. Emma again stated that P. J. got along well with his classmates.

However, during the third week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma commented that P. J. "worries about everything" and "wants to be perfect." Ms. Emma attributed this behavior to the possibility that P. J. may not have been feeling well. "He whined because he wanted a ball at recess," she said. "The whole class has been sickly and whiny," she explained.

Ms. Emma stated that P. J. was "so excited about school" during the fourth week of the program. She also said that P. J. "gets upset because he comes in late [arriving to school]." Ms. Emma explained that P. J. was upset because "he’s afraid he’s missed his large group time."

By the fifth week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma stated that the class schedule had been changed to provide recess first. She said that the schedule change was "going great . . . P. J. knows he’s
not going to miss out [on large group time]," she explained.

During the final week of the program, Ms. Emma stated that P. J. had "Loosened up a lot . . . he doesn’t get so upset if he doesn’t know exactly what to do or how to do it."

When interviewed, Ms. Emma perceived P. J. as a boy who was afraid of making a mistake.

P. J. seemed afraid of doing anything wrong. He seemed to want to do right and get everybody’s approval and not get in any trouble.

And now he’s willing to take a few more chances with things. He’ll do it along with the rest of the class. You don’t hear too much, "But I can’t do it, I can’t do it."

"Timid" was the word Ms. Emma used to describe P. J.

Ms. Emma perceived her relationship with P. J. to be "very good . . . P. J. Looks for Mrs. Rossio’s approval and mine as well when he does something right."

Ms. Emma’s perceptions of P. J.’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma perceived P. J.’s primary goal of behavior as seeking protection in a positive way through assertiveness. At the end of the parenting education meetings,
Ms. Emma perceived P. J.'s primary goal of behavior as seeking withdrawal in a positive way through centering. Ten weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma perceived P. J.'s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition.

When interviewed, Ms. Emma described P. J. as "warm, adorable and just a little timid or frightened of things." However, she indicated that P. J. was not as timid as when he began prekindergarten. "He does seem to get upset about certain things. I think much improvement, though [sig]," she indicated.

Ms. Emma stated that she "would like to see a little more work on P. J.'s self-esteem" when asked what expectations she had of P. J.'s mother. She thought an increase in self-esteem would create a decrease in P. J.'s timidity. Ms. Emma recalled a recent incident which she perceived as an example of P. J.'s lack of self-esteem.

I still see in him a little bit of that timidity. He was upset today when his mom left him and he was told to go home on the bus and she ignored him and he got really upset. So I think probably a little more work there on self-esteem to make him feel good about himself.

When asked what types of activities were encouraged at school that might not be encouraged at home, Ms. Emma could not think of any. She stated that, if informed, P. J.'s mother would support efforts to help P. J. at
school by providing similar help at home.

After seeing his mom, she’s a very loving mom, concerned about him. I think she would say “go for it” if it was going to help him pick up on some things to be learned in class. She wouldn’t hold him back, certainly.

When asked what types of activities were encouraged at home that might not be encouraged at school, Ms. Emma focused her response on behavioral concerns. “He would certainly be encouraged to behave well and perhaps in his case not to carry on and worry so much about things. He really is the worrier of the bunch.”

Ms. Emma reported that P. J. enjoyed engaging in fine-motor activities. "P. J. loves to play with Play-doh®. I think he shows a creativity there. He likes to do arts and crafts, cutting. He’s really gotten into that."

Ms. Emma described as her favorite activities in which to engage with P. J. as art activities that provided him an opportunity to explore his creativity.

P. J. takes his time. I think it’s that inner thing with him, that “I’ve got to do this just right.” Even if he doesn’t show, he expects so much more, he still thinks that way. When he shows a little bit of his creativity in the artistic things in class and you can see the look on his face when he knows that he’s done a good job, he’s so proud!
Ms. Emma watched for facial expressions as a cue for the best times to listen to P. J.

With P. J., I can just see his face right now. When he's happy or proud about something, he has a big grin on his face. His eyes tell it all. You can tell he's bursting. In a case like that, you just have to pay attention and give him a hug, and tell him he's great and that's wonderful!

Lauren Walker

Introduction

Lauren was a shy yet affectionate 4-year-old girl with medium-length blonde hair, crystal blue eyes, and a sprinkling of freckles. Lauren was larger than most of her peers. She lived with her mother, Melanie, her father, Tim, and her 6-year-old sister, Cathy.

Lauren's mother and father were both employed. Tim held a blue-collar job as a traveling repairman for a construction company. Melanie was a bookkeeper for a financial firm.

All family members were Caucasian. English was the only language spoken in the home.

Lauren attended Mrs. Rossio's afternoon prekindergarten. The educational classroom aide for Mrs. Rossio was Ms. Emma.

Lauren's mother, Melanie, was administered the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks following the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. Melanie scored in the
Table 7

Perceptions of Adults Involved with the Parenting Education Program and P.J. Stillwell

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autocratic parenting style range on the first administration. She scored in
the democratic parenting style ranges on the second and the third
administrations of the Parenting Style Questionnaire.

Overall, Melanie attended 4 of the 6 parenting education meetings.
She attended sessions 1, 3, 4, and 6. The following data in this section on
Lauren Walker contain the abundance of detailed description necessary for
qualitative analysis. For a concise listing of the data findings on Lauren
Walker, see Table 8 on page 244.

Interview with Melanie Walker

Melanie arrived at my office 20 minutes late for her 9:00 appointment
on a Saturday morning for the personal interview. Melanie brought Lauren
and Cathy with her to the interview. The girls played with toys in an
adjoining room during the interview. Melanie had attended 4 of the 6
parenting education meetings at the time of the interview. Melanie was an
attractive 25-year-old woman with medium-length blonde hair and the same
crystal blue eyes as both of her daughters.

Melanie explained that she was late for the interview due to some
unexpected excitement at home. Lauren and Cathy were awake and
dressed before Melanie awoke. While Melanie was getting ready, Lauren
and Cathy dialed 911 and a policeman was dispatched to their home to
check out the call.

Melanie was born and grew up in the immediate area. She and her
husband maintained a close relationship with both sets of their parents.

My school years were good. I was always a bit shy until high school.

I had some trouble with being rebellious when I was a teenager. My husband and I went to school together. We graduated from high school together and he entered the military. We got married and moved to Oklahoma. Later, we moved back here where both of our parents live. We wanted the girls to be close to them and to know them. Plus, a built-in babysitter certainly doesn’t hurt!

Several sources were mentioned when Melanie was asked other ways through which she had learned parenting skills. "I took child development classes in high school. I also learned from my parents and my husband’s parents. My father-in-law is the Baptist preacher here in town."

When asked for her expectations of the parenting education meetings, Melanie was specific. "I was expecting to learn different ways to discipline besides spanking," she stated.

Melanie’s opinion of the program was "great!" However, she did have one suggestion for improvement.

I would make it for 12 sessions instead of 6. No one wanted it to end because we were just getting to know each other. Also, if it could be started later or support provided for the kids because my kids are starving when we leave. I barely have time to pick them up
from daycare and get them here.

School services and school involvement were synonymous in Melanie’s opinion. “Anything that will get parents up to school and involved. You know I work and it’s not easy being involved, but if we’re going to make a difference, we need to put forth the effort.”

Melanie though that the school staff was “very responsive” to students’ needs. Yet she recognized that the degree of responsiveness was dependent upon the individual school employee involved. “I think the school is very responsive, but it really depends on the individual. The girls’ teachers this year are great. Cathy’s teacher last year was not responsive to my questions or requests. I won’t go into that, though,” Melanie stated.

Reciprocal involvement between home and school was mentioned again in regard to Melanie’s expectations of the adults who came in contact with her children at school. “I expect them to let me know what’s going on and to let me be involved. I’m Laura’s room mother [parent in charge of parties] this year,” Melanie explained.

This reciprocal involvement was apparent in Melanie’s response to the question concerning how she found out what was going on at school. “I receive notes from the teacher in a daily folder. We also use phone calls back and forth.”

Melanie perceived her parenting style as improving. “I’m getting better,
but I’ll go along and try to keep peace and then I’ll get stressed out and blow up.”

“It’s real good,” was Melanie’s description of her relationship with her daughters. “Their dad was off in Desert Storm, and it was just me and the girls at home. They depend on me a lot. They also compete for my attention.”

“Mischievous, but sweet” were the words Melanie chose to describe the behaviors of her daughters. Melanie again referred to the incident that occurred before she arrived for her interview that morning. “I’m stressed because Cathy and Lauren were playing around on the phone this morning and evidently called 911. The police and an ambulance came to our house.”

Melanie also described Lauren as a “quiet and headstrong” girl who “likes coloring and painting . . . she especially likes finger painting and making things with her hands.”

Melanie described Cathy as an “outgoing and easygoing” girl who “likes animals . . . she is also learning to ride a bike and roller blade.”

A fast-paced daily schedule did not provide much relief from stress. “Hectic” was the word Melanie used to describe her family’s daily schedule.

I get the girls up at 6:00. They get dressed and ready to go to daycare. They eat breakfast there. The daycare takes Cathy to school and later takes Lauren. They pick them up after school, and I
pick them up from daycare around 5:30. That’s when I listen to their
day in the car. We get home and I fix supper. Then we have a bit of
time together before it’s time to get them to bed.

With such a busy schedule, Melanie found that the best time to listen
to Lauren and Cathy was in the car.

Mainly in the car—and we’re in the car a lot! I make sure that each
girl gets a lot of small turns, or else they will run out of patience
waiting on each other. If that happens, then they start to argue. Oh,
my! The minute I pick them up, they both talk and talk and talk about
what they did. I make them each take a turn so I can hear each one.
But it’s so hard for them to wait their turn.

Melanie had learned to take advantage of everyday opportunities in her
family’s daily schedule as times for mother and daughter activities.

I bring my computer home from work sometimes to catch up on work.
I let Cathy sit with me, and I show her how it works. With Lauren,
we sit in church and listen to the sermon and I will write down letters
and she’ll trace them. With both girls, I’ve learned from class that I
can make anything fun and inviting. Sometimes I’ll think negatively
about putting up dishes from the dishwasher. They’ll come to get my
attention and I’ll gripe at them for interrupting me. Now I know that I
can get them to help me unload the washer. They get attention and I
get help. It’s better all the way around.
"Having patience" was Melanie's greatest parental challenge. "The girls are so close in age that they compete a lot," Melanie explained. Melanie's greatest joy as a parent was "the expressions on their faces when they do something they know I'm proud of. And of course, their love, hugs, and kisses."

**Information from Mrs. Rossio**

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Rossio reported that Lauren was a "precious" yet "quiet and introverted young girl." Mrs. Rossio also reported that she would not ask Lauren to participate in large-group activities because "she [Lauren] would be too embarrassed."

During Week 2 of the program, Mrs. Rossio stated that she "wouldn't dare ask her [to speak during large-group time]" because it would embarrass her. However, Mrs. Rossio stated that "one-on-one she will answer any question you ask . . . she is comfortable in one-on-one and small-group situations."

"Stand-offish" was the word Mrs. Rossio used to describe Lauren's behavior during the third week of the parenting education meetings. However, Mrs. Rossio attributed Lauren's behavior to the fact that she had been sick. She reported that several students in her class had been sick during that week. "You'd never know she was here [because Lauren was so quiet]," Mrs. Rossio said.
Mrs. Rossio perceived Lauren as a child with "good academic skills" who "fears rejection . . . she can’t handle it if someone is mad."

During the fourth week of the program, Mrs. Rossio recalled two recent incidents that portrayed two opposite sides of Lauren's social behavior.

When Jill [student] came up to Lauren and said, "Hi," she ignored her and walked right past her. But one day, the class overall was more talkative than usual. One day, when they were especially talkative, Lauren and Cammie [student] were giggling and laughing and having a great time. When I said, "It’s time to be quiet," they kept on, and I gave them each a behavior check.

During the fifth week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Rossio again reported two incidents that showed two opposite sides of Lauren’s social behavior. "She has been branching out and playing with Cindy and Amy [students], two very outgoing little girls," said Mrs. Rossio. "Today we did the twist as a large-group activity. Lauren wouldn’t do it. She was too embarrassed," Mrs. Rossio explained.

By the last week of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Rossio’s general assessment of Lauren’s behavior had changed. "Lauren has really blossomed. She is more independent than shy. Her best friend is Cammie."

Mrs. Rossio’s perceptions of Lauren’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the
end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning and at the end of the program, Mrs. Rossio perceived Lauren’s primary goals of behavior as seeking power in a positive way through independence. Ten weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Mrs. Rossio perceived Lauren’s primary goal of behavior as seeking protection in a positive way through assertiveness.

When interviewed, Mrs. Rossio described Lauren as “introverted and independent.” She explained, “Lauren will join in when she wants to, but if she doesn’t, she doesn’t.” Mrs. Rossio also stated that “she will come to you when she wants you, but she likes to be left alone.”

Mrs. Rossio reported that Lauren’s favorite school activity was any activity involving “letters and writing.” She said, “Lauren is so proud because she has learned to write her name. She writes every day.”

When asked what her favorite activity was in which to engage with Lauren, Mrs. Rossio stated, “We do so much, it’s hard to say.”

However, she did mention a recent activity involving the senses which Lauren enjoyed. “We passed around a feeling box and Lauren reached in. We are using a senses book and doing senses activities.”

Mrs. Rossio stated that the best way to listen to Lauren was one-to-one. “Lauren does not talk in a group, but will talk a lot one-to-one.”
Information from Ms. Emma

During Week 1 of the parenting education meetings Ms. Emma referred to Lauren as "a little waif." She described Lauren’s mother as "involved and helpful" and reported that Mrs. Walker was the "room mother."

"Very unsure of herself and shy" was the description Ms. Emma gave of Lauren’s behavior during the second week of the parenting education meetings. "She chews on her clothes and puts her hands and fingers close to her mouth when she talks," Mrs. Emma explained.

During the third week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma described Lauren as "very quiet . . . I find myself looking around for her. She is so quiet. She even whispers when she tattles."

However, by the fourth week of the program, Ms. Emma had observed positive changes in Lauren’s behavior.

She is coming out of her shell more because of her new friend, Cammie, who is more outgoing. This gives Lauren the courage to talk more. She has been talking and laughing more not in [large] group, but in recess, centers, and workjobs.

During the fifth week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma again perceived Lauren’s behavior to be more extroverted. "She is blossoming socially. They [Lauren and Cammie] had fun at recess today. They had some little pink Dracula teeth that they put on and then took turns
chasing other children. They were very giggly," Ms. Emma elaborated.

During the final week of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma reported that Lauren continued to “branch out more.” She continued:

She is playing with different girls and not always following every rule. Sometimes she’ll lay down, when she knows she’s supposed to sit up at circle time. But she’s not getting upset when she’s called on to correct her behavior.

Ms. Emma’s perceptions of Lauren’s overall behavior were charted through the use of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings. At the beginning of the program, Ms. Emma perceived Lauren’s primary goal of behavior as seeking withdrawal in a negative way through avoidance. At the end of the program, Ms. Emma perceived Lauren’s primary goal of behavior as seeking contact in a positive way through recognition. Ten weeks after the conclusion of the parenting education meetings, Ms. Emma perceived Lauren’s primary goal of behavior as seeking protection in a positive way through assertiveness.

When interviewed, Ms. Emma described her relationship with Lauren as “very good.”

Of course, if she misbehaves, I have to reprimand her but that’s as far as it goes. You have to do it with a stern look on your face, but you give her a smile a few minutes later. She seems to warm to me.
I've never had her pull away or push me away.

Ms. Emma perceived Lauren’s behavior as becoming more extroverted.

In the beginning, Lauren was a loner. She would play on her own.

Her speech was very quiet. I could hardly hear her. It was like she was afraid of the world! Lauren is now adorable, happy, active, and devilish, a little bit of devil in there. Lately, she is more talkative, a little louder. She seems to enjoy herself more in class.

When asked what her expectations were of Lauren’s mother in regard to supporting Lauren’s optimum development, Ms. Emma again spoke of Lauren’s becoming more extroverted.

I don’t believe I’ve ever seen Lauren’s mom. I would hope she would work with her [Lauren] maybe on her self-esteem. Lauren seems to have broken out . . . she’s out of her shell a little bit. She’s getting a little more active, animated, and getting together with other kids more. She’s not a loner anymore.

When asked what kinds of things Lauren did at school that might not be encouraged at home, the focus of Ms. Emma’s response was behavioral.

For instance, Lauren lately, in coming out of her shell, has been doing certain little things like not listening. You’ll tell her something and she’ll continue on with her work. I think perhaps just by the fact that her mom is involved in this research and parenting program, she probably wouldn’t put up with that. She’s going to say something to
her [about not listening]. In the other sense, I really can’t think of anything her mom wouldn’t encourage her in. If she’s willing to take the parenting class, I think she would be willing to do anything to help Lauren.

When asked what kinds of things Lauren did at home that might not be encouraged at school, Ms. Emma again brought up the topic of not listening.

I would have to go back to Lauren on the behavior aspect. If she did do that [not listen] at home, I’m sure her mom would say, “We don’t do those things here and I don’t expect you to do them at school.” I don’t think she would encourage her not to listen and not give her full attention to the teacher and the work.

According to Ms. Emma, looking at books was one of Lauren’s favorite activities. “Laura likes to be around books a lot lately. She goes over by herself or with Cammie or somebody and they just look through the books. She doesn’t read or anything, they’re just learning how,” Ms. Emma explained.

Helping Lauren make things was the activity that Ms. Emma enjoyed engaging in with Lauren the most.

We’re having a really good time with our little books that we’re making. Every day, we do a page. It just covers everything you could think of. Lauren starts off with things real carefully and
everything has to be just so. Then she might get carried away and get messy with it.

Ms. Emma’s efforts to listen to Lauren changed as Lauren became more outgoing.

When they do want to tell you something, unless they’re interrupting you, take the time to listen, to share in their happiness. When she was quieter and a little shy, you tended to feel sorry for her and you wanted to hug her and ask what she said and tell her to speak up a little bit. Now she’s a little more outgoing. She’ll come over and ask questions more. That’s the best thing about her breaking out of her shell. She does talk to you more, so you want to listen to her. Just give them that time. I think it helps. I really do.

Summary

In this chapter, the parenting education meetings were discussed, including a description of the facility and format as well as an overview of the six meetings themselves. Also provided was the background information taken from interviews with the prekindergarten teachers and the classroom educational aides involved in the study. The analysis of data and findings according to the three research questions as they pertain to each target child were also provided in this chapter.

The first research question was: How do parents who have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program perceive their own
Table 8
Perceptions of Adults Involved with the Parenting Education Program and Lauren Walker

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parenting styles? This question was explored through information shared in the parent interviews. The question was also explored through the administration of the Parenting Style Questionnaire at the beginning of the parenting education meetings, at the end of the sixth and final meeting, and again at 10 weeks after the conclusion of the six meetings.

The second research question was: How do parents who have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program perceive their 4-year-old children’s behaviors in the home environment? This question was explored through information shared during the parent interviews.

The third research question was: How do prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides perceive the behaviors of 4-year-old students whose parents have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program? This question was explored through the weekly gathering of anecdotal information from the prekindergarten teachers and the classroom educational aides. The question was also explored through information shared by the prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides during the interview process. Finally, this question was again explored through the use of a Children’s Goals of Behavior form that was completed by the prekindergarten teacher and the classroom educational aide for each student at the beginning, the conclusion, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today program.
Information compiled around each target child was presented in the following order: background information; interview with the parent; information from the prekindergarten teacher; and information from the classroom educational aide. Table summaries of the findings were also provided.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purposes of this study were (a) to examine parents' perceptions of their parenting styles, as the parents participated in, and completed the Active Parenting Today program (Popkin, 1987, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1993d); (b) to examine parents' perceptions of behaviors of their 4-year-old children in the home environment as the parents participated in, and complete, the Active Parenting Today program; and (c) to examine teachers' perceptions and classroom educational aides' perceptions of behaviors of 4-year-old children in the public prekindergarten school environment when their parents have participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program.

The sample for the study was derived through parental choice from a volunteer population of parents. Parents chose to sign up for the study when they enrolled their children in the prekindergarten program in the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw I. S. D., in the North Texas area.

Recruitment of volunteers procedures included informational sign-up
notices in three languages, English, Spanish, and Laotian. These languages were chosen because they best represented languages spoken by children in the prekindergarten population and their family members.

The prekindergarten population was chosen for this study because they best represented the languages spoken by the children in the prekindergarten population and their family members.

The prekindergarten population was chosen for this study because it comprised a homogeneous population as compared to other prekindergarten programs in Texas. Children in the state of Texas can be enrolled in prekindergarten by meeting one of two criteria (Texas Law School Bulletin, 1990). The first criterion is that the dominant language of the child is a language other than English. The second criterion is that the family must meet state guidelines for financial need. Thus it was hoped that the information derived from this study would be helpful to educators involved in Texas prekindergarten programs or similar programs in other states.

To ensure sound qualitative methodology in this investigation, a variety of data collection devices was used. The variety of data collection devices provided the means for triangulation and included (a) audiotaped and transcribed interviews with parent participants in the Active Parenting Today program; (b) audiotaped and transcribed interviews with prekindergarten teachers whose students had parents who had participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program; (c) audiotaped and
transcribed interviews with classroom and educational aides who were the assistants of prekindergarten teachers whose students had parents who had completed the Active Parenting Today program; (d) parenting style questionnaires administered to parent participants at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today program; (e) child's goals of behavior forms administered to prekindergarten and classroom educational aides at the beginning, the end, and 10 weeks after the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today program; (f) anecdotal records transcribed from visits with prekindergarten teachers once a week throughout the duration of the Active Parenting Today program; and (g) anecdotal records transcribed from visits with classroom educational aides once a week throughout the duration of the Active Parenting Today program.

Parent participants had to attend a minimum of four out of the six Active Parenting Today classes to be included in the study. Nine parents met this criterion. The parent population included two sets of spousal pairs. The other 5 parents were mothers. All parents involved were the birth parents of the 7 target children.

To enhance the uniqueness of this qualitative study and to ensure sound methodology, the data were organized around the 7 target children whose parents participated in the Active Parenting Today program. The population of target children was derived from the parent participants who
had attended a minimum of four out of the six Active Parenting Today meetings. Because the investigation focused on various adults’ perceptions of each of the 7 target children, this organization of data provided the best way to provide the rich description needed for this study.

Time in the field was divided into three distinct increments. The first increment spanned 6 weeks, from the middle of October through the latter portion of November. During that time (a) the six Active Parenting Today meetings were in progress and were closely monitored and general observations were recorded by hand; (b) parent interviews were conducted and audiotaped; (c) weekly visits were conducted with prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides to hand record anecdotal information; (d) administration to parent participants of the parenting styles questionnaire at the beginning and the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today meetings was conducted; and (e) administration to prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form at the beginning and the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today meetings was conducted.

The second increment of field time occurred from the latter portion of November to the middle of December. During that time, all prekindergarten teacher and classroom educational aide interviews were conducted and audiotaped.

The third increment of time in the field was during the last week of
January, 10 weeks after the conclusion of the Active Parenting Today meetings. During that time, parent participants completed the third administration of the parenting style questionnaire, and prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides complete the third administration of the Child's Goals of Behavior form.

Findings

The focus of this study was on (a) examining parents' perceptions of their parenting styles, as the parents participated in, and complete, the Active Parenting Today program (Popkin, 1987, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1993d); (b) examining parents' perceptions of behaviors of their 4-year-old children in the home environment as the parents participated in, and complete, the Active Parenting Today program; and (c) examining teachers' perceptions and classroom educational aides' perceptions of behaviors of 4-year-old children in the public prekindergarten school environment when their parents have participate in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program.

Three research questions were investigated. The following findings resulted from the study:

1. Congruency between parents' perceptions of their parenting styles as expressed during the interviews and parents' results on the parenting style questionnaire varied for individual parents. Congruency ranged from complete congruency to no congruency. A description of the comparisons
between parents' perceptions of their parenting styles as expressed during the interviews and parents' results on the parenting style questionnaire follows.

Some congruency was noted between Sandra Ramone’s perceptions of her parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. Mrs. Ramone had completed the parenting meetings at the time of the interview. During the interview, she gave examples of both permissive and democratic parenting styles. Her parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples she gave were somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire, which were permissive, permissive, and democratic, respectively.

No congruency was noted between Juan Muñoz’s perceptions of his parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. The parenting meetings had been in progress for 5 weeks at the time of the interview. During the interview, he gave examples of both permissive and autocratic parenting styles. His parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples he gave were not congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results of the parenting style questionnaire. The results on each administration of the parenting style questionnaire were democratic.

Some congruency was noted between Inez Muñoz’s perceptions of her
parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. The parenting classes had been in progress for 5 weeks at the time of the interview. During the interview, she gave examples of both democratic and autocratic parenting styles. Her parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples she gave were somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire, which were permissive, democratic, and democratic/autocratic, respectively.

Minimum congruency was noted between Roger Cushman’s perceptions of his parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. The parenting meetings had been in progress for 5 weeks at the time of the interview. During the interview, he gave examples of both democratic and autocratic parenting styles. His parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples he gave were minimally congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire, which were permissive, democratic, and permissive, respectively.

Complete congruency was noted between Sarah Cushman’s perceptions of her parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. The parenting meetings had been in progress for 5 weeks at the time of the interview. During the interview, she gave examples of the democratic parenting style.
Her parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples she gave were completely congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire. The results on each administration of the parenting style questionnaire were democratic.

Some congruency was noted between Trudy Sanchez's perceptions of her parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. Mrs. Sanchez had completed the parenting meetings at the time of the interview. During the interview, she gave examples of the permissive parenting style. Her parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples she gave were somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire, which were democratic, permissive, and permissive, respectively.

Some congruency was noted between Alice Salas' perceptions of her parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. The parenting meetings had been in progress for 5 weeks at the time of the interview. During the interview, she gave examples of democratic and autocratic parenting styles. Her parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples she gave were somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire. The results on each administration of the parenting style questionnaire were democratic.
Minimum congruency was noted between Linda Stillwell's perceptions of her parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. The parenting meetings had been in progress for 5 weeks at the time of the interview. During the interview, she gave examples of democratic, permissive, and autocratic parenting styles. Her parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples she gave were minimally congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire. The results on each administration of the parenting style questionnaire were democratic.

Complete yet mixed-congruency was noted between Melanie Walker's perceptions of her parenting style as expressed during the interview and as depicted on the results of the parenting style questionnaire. The parenting meetings had been in progress for 5 weeks at the time of the interview. During the interview, she gave examples of democratic and autocratic parenting styles. Her parenting style perceptions as expressed through the examples she gave were completely congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the parenting style questionnaire, which were autocratic, democratic, and democratic, respectively.

2. Parents' core perceptions of their children's behaviors in the home environment were congruent with teachers' core perceptions of the children's (children whose parents participated in, and completed, the Active
Parenting Today program) behaviors in the school environment. The amount of congruency ranged from complete congruency to related congruency.

3. Parent’s core perceptions of their children’s behaviors in the home environment were congruent with educational classroom aides’ core perceptions of the children’s (children whose parents participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program) behaviors in the school environment. The amount of congruency ranged from complete congruency to related congruency.

4. Fathers’ and mothers’ core perceptions of their children’s behaviors in the home environment were congruent with one another. The amount of congruency ranged from complete congruency to related congruency.

5. Prekindergarten teachers’ and classroom educational aides’ core perceptions of the children’s (children whose parents participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program) behaviors in the school environment were congruent with one another. The amount of congruency ranged from complete congruency to related congruency.

6. Congruency between prekindergarten teachers’ perceptions of the children’s (children whose parents participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program) behaviors as expressed during the teacher interviews and as recorded on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form varied for individual prekindergarten teachers. Congruency ranged from somewhat congruent to no congruency. A description of the comparisons between
prekindergarten teachers’ perceptions of the children’s behaviors as expressed in the aforementioned two ways (interviews and Child’s Goals of Behavior form) follows.

No congruency was noted between Mrs. Mays’ core perception of Jeannie’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Mrs. Mays’ perceptions of Jeannie’s behaviors as expressed on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Jeannie’s behavior as manipulative was not congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were power through independence, power through independence, and contact through recognition, respectively.

Some congruency was noted between Mrs. Mays’ core perception of Carlos’ behaviors as expressed during the interview and Mrs. Mays’ perceptions of Carlos’ behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Carlos’ behavior as rebellious was somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were contact through recognition, power through rebellion, and power through rebellion, respectively.

Some congruency was noted between Mrs. Haas’ core perception of Gina’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Mrs. Haas’ perceptions of Gina’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of
Behavior form. Her core perception of Gina’s behavior as playful and affectionate was somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were contact through recognition, protection through assertiveness, and contact through recognition, respectively.

Some congruency was noted between Mrs. Haas’ core perception of Juanita’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Mrs. Haas’ perceptions of Juanita’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Juanita’s behavior as resilient yet controlling was somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were power through independence, contact through recognition, and power through independence, respectively.

Minimum congruency was noted between Mrs. Morris’ core perception of Nat’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Mrs. Morris’ perceptions of Nat’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Nat’s behavior as empathic was minimally congruent with the beginning, ending, and follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were protection through assertiveness, protection through assertiveness, and contact through recognition, respectively.

No congruency was noted between Mrs. Rossio’s core perception of
P. J.'s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Mrs. Rossio’s perceptions of P. J.'s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of P. J.’s behavior as a worrier was not congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were contact through recognition, withdrawal through centering, and contact through recognition, respectively.

No congruency was noted between Mrs. Rossio’s core perception of Lauren’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Mrs. Rossio’s perceptions of Lauren’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Lauren’s behavior as shy was not congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were power through independence, power through independence, and protection through assertiveness, respectively.

7. Congruency between educational classroom aides’ perceptions of the children’s (children whose parents participated in, and completed, the Active Parenting Today program) behaviors as expressed during the interviews and educational classroom aides’ perceptions as recorded on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form varied for individual educational classroom aides. Congruency ranged from complete congruency to no congruency. A description of the comparisons between educational classroom aides’ perceptions of the children’s (children whose parents participated in, and
completed, the Active Parenting Today program) behaviors as expressed
during the interviews and educational classroom aides’ perceptions as
indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form follows:

Minimum congruency was noted between Miss Janese’s core
perception of Jeannie’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and
Miss Janese’s perceptions of Jeannie’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s
Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Jeannie’s behavior as
manipulative was minimally congruent with the beginning, the ending, and
the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were
contact through recognition, power through rebellion, and contact through
recognition, respectively.

Some congruency was noted between Miss Janese’s core perception of
Carlos’ behaviors as expressed during the interview and Miss Janese’s
perceptions of Carlos’ behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of
Behavior form. Her core perception of Carlos’ behavior as rebellious was
somewhat congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up
results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were withdrawal
through avoidance, power through rebellion, and power through rebellion,
respectively.

Complete congruency was noted between Ms. Babs’ core perception of
Gina’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Ms. Babs’
perceptions of Gina’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of
Behavior form. Her core perception of Gina’s behavior as playful and affectionate were congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. The results on each administration of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form were contact through recognition.

Minimum congruency was noted between Ms. Babs’ core perception of Juanita’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Ms. Babs’ perceptions of Juanita’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Juanita’s behavior as demanding yet loving was minimally congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. The results on each administration of the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were power through independence, contact through recognition, and protection through assertiveness.

Some congruency was noted between Ms. Pat’s core perception of Nat’s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Ms. Pat’s perceptions of Nat’s behaviors as indicated on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Nat’s behavior as helpful was minimally congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child’s Goals of Behavior form, which were contact through recognition, protection through assertiveness, and contact through rebellion, respectively.

No congruency was noted between Ms. Emma’s core perception of
P. J.'s behaviors as expressed during the interview and Ms. Emma's perceptions of P. J.'s behaviors as indicated on the Child's Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of P. J.'s behavior as timid was not congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child's Goals of Behavior form, which were protection through assertiveness, withdrawal through centering, and contact through recognition, respectively.

Minimum congruency was noted between Ms. Emma's core perception of Lauren's behaviors as expressed during the interview and Ms. Emma's perceptions of Lauren's behaviors as indicated on the Child's Goals of Behavior form. Her core perception of Lauren's behavior as shy was minimally congruent with the beginning, the ending, and the follow-up results on the Child's Goals of Behavior form, which were withdrawal through avoidance, contact through recognition, and protection through assertiveness, respectively.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based upon the findings of this study:

1. The amount of congruency among parents', teachers', and classroom educational aides' perceptions of the children's core behaviors supported the existence of reciprocal transitional relationships as referred to in the theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979b).

2. Parents' unanimously positive perceptions of the parenting
education meetings supported Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) supposition of the importance of strengthening the connections existing between home and school.

3. Parents’ unanimously positive perceptions of the parenting education meetings supported Coleman’s (1988) supposition of utilizing parenting education programs to increase our society’s declining social capital.

4. The disparity between the number of support systems that were available to the parents who attended the parenting education meetings was related to the amount of confidence the parents expressed in handling child rearing difficulties. This disparity was especially apparent when comparing the two single mothers in attendance, Trudy Sanchez (marital status, separated) and Alice Salas (marital status, divorced). Mrs. Sanchez expressed concern regarding her ability to handle the stress of parenting challenges and her lack of support systems throughout her interview. Ms. Salas expressed confidence in her ability to handle the stress of parenting challenges and her reliance on support systems throughout her interview. Lack of confidence in her parenting skills and the lack of support systems available to Mrs. Sanchez were indicative of variables related to Belsky’s (1980) etiology of child maltreatment. This suggested that programs for at-risk children can be interventive for parents, as well as children, by providing ongoing parenting education assistance for parents.
lacking support systems.

5. Both fathers who attended the parenting education meetings, Juan Muñoz and Roger Cushman, favorably described engaging in large-muscle activities with their children as a favorite father-child behavior. This supported research findings (Bentley & Fox, 1991; Fagot & Hagan, 1991) that fathers are more likely to use large-muscle activities as a nurturant strategy.

6. Ms. Salas’ favorable perception of the role-playing activities in which the participants of the parenting education meetings engaged supported Deluty and Knapp’s (1989) findings that role playing was helpful in teaching parenting skills.

7. The lack of agreement between spouse’s perceived roles in child-rearing practices was a source of marital discord. This was apparent when comparing the interviews of the 2 spousal pairs, Sarah and Roger Cushman, and Juan and Inez Muñoz. Sarah and Roger Cushman indicated no areas of conflict between their perceived parental roles during their interviews and indicated no sources of marital discord. Juan and Inez Muñoz indicated areas of conflict between their perceived parental roles during their interviews and indicated that the conflicts were a source of marital discord. This suggested that the amount of perceived incongruency in parental roles can impact levels of marital discord.
8. Challenges to optimum home-school relationships that could negatively impact the reciprocal transitional relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979b) related to each of the target children were noted. Misconceptions and lack of awareness in these areas as evidenced by the information adults shared during their interviews could erode the optimum social distance that existed between home and school (Stowers, 1992). These challenges to optimum social distance suggested that early childhood educators need to be aware of possible problem areas and work to alleviate them before the misconceptions and areas in which they are lacking awareness become the foundation of the home-school relationship.

9. It is easier to gain parent participation when a positively perceived connection between home and school exists. Most parent participants who continued to attend the parenting education classes were Hispanic, as was the presenter. This suggests that cultural continuity between school and home facilitates optimum social distance (Stowers, 1992).

10. During the parent interviews, parents who referred to spanking indicated that they had learned through practice that it was an ineffective discipline technique. This suggests that parents also learn through natural consequences (Dreikurs, 1964) to use less autocratic discipline techniques to gain their children’s cooperation.

11. During parent interviews, 6 out of 9 parents stated that a good time to listen to their children was while commuting by car. Bedtime was
also mentioned by 3 out of 9 parents as a good time to listen to their children. This suggests that parents and/or children take advantage of close, stationary physical quarters to facilitate listening to each other.

12. References to discipline concerns as the greatest personal parental challenge were made by 5 out of 9 parents during parent interviews. This suggested that ongoing assistance to parents for discipline concerns could be used as a means to enhance optimum social distance (Stowers, 1992) by positively impacting reciprocal transitional relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979b) as ecological osmosis (© Redwine, 1997).

13. Every mother, with the exception of Sarah Cushman, expressed frustration regarding their family’s daily schedule during the parent interviews. This included both mothers employed outside of the home and mothers not employed outside of the home. Neither father expressed frustration regarding their family’s daily schedule. This finding suggested that the majority of the family’s everyday functioning is the responsibility of the mother.

14. Mrs. Haas’ interventive efforts to assist Gina Cushman, a student with possible developmental difficulties, reinforced the need for a multidisciplinary component to the early childhood programs for at-risk students (Fuerst & Petty, 1996). Coordinating efforts among a variety of educational professionals such as an educational diagnostician, a school counselor, and a special therapist can heighten the probability of succeeding
with intervention efforts.

16. Three out of 4 educational classroom aides indicated that they deferred to the prekindergarten teachers in the area of home-school communication during interviews. This finding suggested that the initiation of home-school communication is the domain of the prekindergarten teacher.

17. Areas for improvement in prekindergarten stated more than once during interviews with prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides were to extend the school day and to excuse prekindergarten classes from developmentally inappropriate schoolwide activities. This conclusion suggested that prekindergarten teachers and classroom educational aides were aware of general program changes that could benefit all prekindergarten students.

18. During her interview, Ms Pat indicated that she was a communication link between home and school for the Laotian community. The existence of a perceived communication link suggested that cultural continuity between school and home is an important, albeit overlooked component in good home-school communication.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for prekindergarten programs for at-risk students are based on the results of this study:

1. Ongoing parenting education resources are an important component
of prekindergarten programs for at-risk students.

2. Parenting education resources need to be available to all parents, including parents with schedules that cause time constraints.

3. Cultural continuity between adults employed by the school and by families represented in the geographic area of school attendance will enhance parent participation and positive home-school relationships.

4. Scheduling and organizing parenting education meetings to encourage the attendance of spousal pairs can help mothers and fathers build congruency between their perceived parental roles.

5. Role playing is an important component to include in parenting education meetings.

6. Addressing particular attention toward parental discipline concerns is an important component of ongoing parenting education resources.

7. Prekindergarten teachers' efforts at one-way, written communication should be continued as an effective means of informing parents of classroom and school events and general information.

8. Excusing prekindergarten classrooms from developmentally inappropriate schoolwide activities of modifying schoolwide activities to facilitate developmental appropriateness would be beneficial for prekindergarten students.

9. Schools should be assertive in assisting parents who exhibit at-risk behaviors.
10. Multidisciplinary services at preventive, interventive, and remedial levels are important components in at-risk programs for preschool students.

The following recommendations for further research are based on the results of this study:

1. Further research is recommended to substantiate the phenomenon of ecological osmosis (Redwine, 1997), the enhancement of optimum social distance (Stowers, 1992), through the strengthening of weak links in reciprocal transitional relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979b).

2. Further research is recommended to investigate how natural consequences of discipline practices impact parents’ parenting styles.

3. Further research is recommended to explore whether or not close, stationary physical quarters are an impetus for listening.

4. Further research is recommended to explore the value of role playing as a component of parenting education meetings that can effect positive change in parenting behaviors.

5. Further research is recommended to study the impact of cultural continuity on home-school relationships.

6. Further qualitative investigation is recommended in terms of exploring parents’ perceptions and educators’ perceptions of children’s behaviors to address congruency among perceptions as a means to facilitate home and school practices that benefit children.

7. Future longitudinal studies should be conducted to describe changes
in parents' and educators' perceptions of young children's behaviors through the primary grades.
APPENDIX A

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FORMS
ATTENTION

PARENTS OF PRE-KINDERGARTNERS

ELKINS ELEMENTARY WILL BE OFFERING AN EVENING CLASS ON PARENTING SKILLS IN THE FALL. THE CLASS WILL ONLY BE FOR PARENTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN ENROLLED IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN. THE CLASS WILL MEET ONCE A WEEK FOR SIX WEEKS.

FREE BABYSITTING AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED. ALSO, IF NEEDED, IT IS A POSSIBILITY THAT AN INTERPRETER MAY BE PRESENT FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PARTICIPANTS.

PLEASE SIGN BELOW TO INDICATE IF YOU ARE, OR ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THIS FREE SERVICE. PARENTS SIGNING UNDER THE YES COLUMN WILL BE CONTACTED IN THE FALL ABOUT THE CLASS IN MORE DETAIL.
YES

I AM INTERESTED

<table>
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<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>PHONE NUMBER</th>
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NO

I AM NOT INTERESTED

PARENT AND CHILD'S NAMES
ATENCION

PADRES de NINOS en PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Elkins Elementary ofrecera una clase en la tarde sobre destrezas en parentaje. La clase sera solamente para padres que tienen hijos/hijas ingresados en el programa de pre-kindergarten. La clase se junta una vez por semana para sies semanas.

Habra ninera gratis y refrescos. Tambien, si es necesario, hay la posibilidad de tener un interprete para participantes que no hablan ingles.

Por favor firmen debajo para indicar que si van a participar, o que no estan interesados en este servicio gratis. Padres que si estan interesados recibiran mas informacion sobre la clase en el otono.
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NO

No Estoy Interesado(a)

Nombre de Padre e Hijo(a)
Parent letter written in Laotian
Parent response written in Laotian
Parent response written in Laotian
APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS
IDENTIFYING YOUR PARENTING STYLE

The following questionnaire is divided into two parts with fifteen statements each. Part I is designed to help you identify your beliefs about being a parent. Part II focuses on your current home situation. As you read each statement, decide how much you agree with it. Then write, in the blank provided or on a separate sheet of paper, the number from 1 to 5 that corresponds to your level of agreement:

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 agree
- 5 strongly agree

PART I: BELIEFS

1. It is better to give a little ground and protect the peace than to stand firm and provoke a fight.

2. Children need discipline that hurts a little so that they will remember the lesson later.

3. Children shouldn't always get their way, but usually we ought to learn to listen to what they have to say.

4. The parent-child relationship is like a war in which if the parent wins, both sides lose, but if the parent loses, both sides lose.

5. If parents provide a good environment, children will pretty well raise themselves.

6. The parent's role is like that of a teacher who is preparing the child for a final exam called life.

7. Childhood is so short that parents should do everything to make it a happy time.

8. Spare the rod and spoil the child is still the best policy.

9. Children need to learn what they may or may not do, but we don't have to use punishment to teach.

10. Whether we like it or not, children have the last word about what they will or won't do.

11. If you let children have a pretty free reign, they will eventually learn from the consequences of their behavior what is appropriate.

12. Children first have to learn that the parent is boss.

13. Too many children today talk back to their parents when they should just quietly obey them.

14. If we want children to respect us, we must first treat them with respect.

15. You can never do too much for your child if it comes from genuine love.

PART II: ACTIONS

16. I often have to call my child more than once to get him or her out of bed in the morning.

17. I have to constantly stay on top of my child to get things done.

18. When my child misbehaves, he or she usually knows what the consequences will be.

19. I often get angry and yell at my child.
20. I often feel that my child is taking advantage of my good nature.

21. We have discussed chores at our home and everybody takes part.

22. My child gets a spanking on the average of at least once a month.

23. My child has no regular chores around the home, but will occasionally pitch in when asked.

24. I usually give my child clear instructions as to how I want something done.

25. My child is a finicky eater, so I have to try various combinations to make sure he or she gets the proper nutrition.

26. I don’t call my child names, and I don’t expect to be called names by my child, and I don’t expect to be called names by my child.

27. I usually give my child two appropriate alternatives rather than demand my child do what I want.

28. I have to threaten punishment at least once a week.

29. I wish my child would help in the morning.

To determine your style as a parent, first transfer your score for each item to the blanks beside the item numbers listed in parentheses. (Put your score for item #1 in the first blank, item #2 in the second blank, and so on). Then add your scores in each row across, and put the sum in the blank labeled Total.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Autocratic belief score</th>
<th>Permissive belief score</th>
<th>Democratic belief score</th>
<th>Total</th>
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To get a clearer look at how your scores on the three styles compare, transfer each of the six totals to the appropriate blank in the table below. To get the score for each item, sum the scores in the same row. Then add your scores in each row across, and put the sum in the blank labeled Combined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting Style</th>
<th>Action score</th>
<th>Belief score</th>
<th>Combined score</th>
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<td>Democratic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To get your overall score, add your belief score and your action score for each of the three styles. Put these numbers in the blanks labeled Combined in the table.

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<thead>
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<th>Parenting Style</th>
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<td>Permissive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Goal of Child's Action</td>
<td>Child's Positive or Negative Approach to Goal</td>
<td>Child's Belief</td>
<td>Parent's Typical Feeling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Recognition ©</td>
<td>My contributions are recognized. I belong by cooperating. I enjoy human contact.</td>
<td>Cooperation and contribution.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annoyance</td>
<td>I belong only when I'm noticed or served. The world must revolve around me.</td>
<td>Irritation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence ©</td>
<td>I am able to influence what happens in life. I am responsible for my life.</td>
<td>Admiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abandonation ©</td>
<td>I belong only when I'm showing you that you can't be with me.</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rejection ©</td>
<td>I'm attacked or treated unfairly. I can stand up for myself and those I love. I am able to forgive and even contribute to those who have wronged me.</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harassment ©</td>
<td>I've been hurt and will get even by hurting back. They may even learn they can't get away with hurting me!</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harassment ©</td>
<td>I'm a failure at everything! Leave me alone. Expect nothing from me.</td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child's Basic Goals of Behavior form
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF PARENTING STYLES AND
BEHAVIORS OF FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN
WHEN PARENTS PARTICIPATE IN A
PARENTING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Parents (Williams, 1990; Heath, 1985)

I. Background Characteristics (Because these questions may be perceived as overly intrusive to this particular parent population, the following information will be derived as much as possible from student enrollment cards. Any item requiring a verbal response will be translated as necessary in the respondent's primary language.)

1. Sex: F___ M___
2. Age: ______
3. Ethnic identity: ____________________________
4. Address: ___________________________________
5. Phone number: _____________________________
6. Names, ages and relations of family members living in the home: ___________________________________


7. Names and ages of any of your children not currently living with you:

8. Marital status:

9. Occupation:

10. Dominant language spoken within the home:

(The following items will be rephrased as necessary. Also, if necessary these items will be translated in the respondent's primary language.)

11. What expectations do you have of the Active Parenting Today program?
III. What expectations do you have of the adults who work in this school with regard to your child(ren)?

IV. Describe your relationship with your child(ren).

V. Describe the behaviors of your child(ren):

VI. Describe your behaviors as a parent:

NOTE: As additional questions emerge, unique to each participant, they will be recorded. Additional paper with the handwritten additional questions, quotes and any other pertinent information will be recorded.

POSSIBLE PROBE QUESTIONS:
How do you know what is going on at school?

From what sources have you learned your skills as a parent?

What do you think about the parenting class that was offered? What changes would you make?

What other kinds of services do you think schools could offer that could benefit families?

How responsive is the school staff to the needs of students' families?

What types of things does your child do at home that is not encouraged at school, and vice versa?

Tell me about the ways you listen to your child.

What kinds of things do you think your child should get out of the time spent in prekindergarten?

Tell me about your family's schedule.

What have been the greatest challenges to parenting? Joys?

Describe your child's personality... interests.

Tell me about some favorite parent-child activities.
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF PARENTING STYLES AND BEHAVIORS OF FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN WHEN PARENTS PARTICIPATE IN A PARENTING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers and Classroom Educational Aides (Williams; Heath, 1985)

I. Background Characteristics

1. Sex: F___ M___

2. Age: ______

3. Ethnic identity: ____________________________

4. Previous grades taught: ____________________________

5. Total years of teaching experience: _________

6. Years of experience teaching pre-kindergarten: _______

7. Ages of your children at home: ____________________________

8. Marital status: ____________________________
(These are generic questions that will be rephrased as necessary.)

II. What expectations do you have of the adults who work in this school with regard to your students (students of parents who attend the parenting class)?

III. What expectations do you have of your students' parents (parents who attend the parenting class)?

IV. Describe your relationship with your students (students of parents who attend the parenting class):

V. Describe the behaviors of your students (students of parents who attend the parenting class):

VI. Describe your behaviors as an educator:
NOTE: As additional questions emerge, unique to each participant, they will be recorded. Additional paper with the handwritten additional questions, quotes and any other pertinent information will be recorded.

POSSIBLE PROBE QUESTIONS:

How do you inform parents about what is going on at school?

From what sources have you learned your skills as an educator?

What do you think about the parenting class that was offered?

What other kinds of services do you think schools could offer that could benefit families?

How responsive is the school staff to the needs of students' families?

What types of things do your students (students of parents who attend the parenting class) do at school that is not encouraged at home, and vice versa?

If you could change prekindergarten, what would you change? Why?
What kinds of things do you think your child should get out of the time spent in prekindergarten?

Tell me about the class schedule.

What have been the greatest challenges to educating children? Joys?

Describe your students' (students of parents who attend the parenting class) personalities. . . interests.

Tell me about some favorite teacher-student (students of parents who attend the parenting class) activities.

Tell me about the ways you listen to your students (students of parents who attend parenting meetings).
|                           | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | AA | BB | CC |
| Interest                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Aggressive Statements     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Confidence                |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Confusion                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Exploring Limits          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Active Listening          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Friendly                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Negative Comments (Self)  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Positive Comments (Self)  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Negative Comments (General)|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Positive Comments (General)|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Shares Information        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Asks for Information      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Time Questions            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Exclamations              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Restlessness              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Insightful Statements     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Ambivalent Statements     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Whispering                |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

(over)
Topics to Reinforce:

How to avoid power struggles

Advantage of democratic parenting style over permissive and dictator parenting styles

Allowing children to make choices

Discipline technique of re-directing

Family Enrichment Activity:

Take time for fun by choosing a special activity your child enjoys and set aside a time to engage in the activity.
ACTIVE PARENTING TODAY
Parent Meeting Two
Video-Instilling Courage and Self-Esteem

Coding: 1=low frequency  2=average frequency  3=high frequency

| Interest | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | AA | BB | CC |
| Aggressive Statements |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Confidence |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Confusion |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Exploring Limits |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Active Listening |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Friendly |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Negative Comments (Self) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Positive Comments (Self) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Negative Comments (General) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Positive Comments (General) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Shares Information |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Asks for Information |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Time Questions |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Exclamations |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Restlessness |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Insightful Statements |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Ambivalent Statements |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Whispering |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

(over)
Topics to Reinforce:

Behavior cycle of event--think--feel--do

Success and failure cycles

Difference between encouragement and praise

Fostering independence

Family Enrichment Activity:

Write a letter of encouragement to your child.
## ACTIVE PARENTING TODAY

Parent Meeting Three

Video: Understanding Your Child

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<tr>
<th>Coding: 1=low frequency</th>
<th>2=average frequency</th>
<th>3=high frequency</th>
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<td>Interest</td>
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<td>Aggressive Statements</td>
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(over)
Topics to Reinforce:

Goals of behavior (power, contact, protection, and withdrawal)

How to recognize a child's behavior goal

Family Enrichment Activity:

Assist your child in learning a skill. It must be something your child is interested in.

Practice motivating and encouraging your child. Spend some play time together afterwards to reinforce the learning of the skill.
### Active Parenting Today

**Parent Meeting Four**

**Video: Developing Responsibility**

#### Coding:
- 1 = low frequency
- 2 = average frequency
- 3 = high frequency

| Interest | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | AA | BB | CC |
| Aggressive Statements | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Confident | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Confusion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Exploring Limits | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Active Listening | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Friendly | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Negative Comments (Self) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Positive Comments (Self) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Negative Comments (General) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Positive Comments (General) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Shares Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ask for Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Time Questions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Explanations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Restlessness | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Insightful Statements | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ambivalent Statements | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Whispering | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

(over)
Topics to Reinforce:

- Mistakes are opportunities to learn
- The true definition of discipline is "to teach"
- Use natural and logical consequences to discipline your child
- Use "I" messages to reinforce discipline

Family Enrichment Activity:

- Practice using "I" messages with your child.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding: 1=low frequency</th>
<th>2=average frequency</th>
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<td>Interest</td>
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<td>Exploring Limits</td>
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<td>Negative Comments (General)</td>
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<td>Insightful Statements</td>
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<td>Ambivalent Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whispering</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(over)
Topics to Reinforce:

Child-owned problems are opportunities to teach your child and win cooperation

The importance of word choice, tone and body language

Active listening

Family Enrichment Activity:

Establish a special bedtime routine. Express your love for your child, to your child.
### Active Parenting Today

**Parent Meeting Six**

**Video-Active Parenting in a Democratic Society**

Coding: 1-low frequency  2-average frequency  3-high frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Aggressive Statements</th>
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<th>Insightful Statements</th>
<th>Ambivalent Statements</th>
<th>Whispering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Topics to Reinforce:

Hold family meetings to solve family problems

Family Enrichment Activity:

Emphasize the importance of your family and your child's special place within the family unit.
APPENDIX C

PERMISSION FORMS
February 7, 1994

Michelle Redwine
703 S. Opelousas Ct.
Keller, TX 76248

Dear Ms. Redwine:

Suzanne DeGalan has requested that I respond to your letter of January 26th regarding your research project. This letter grants you permission to use Active Parenting Today to assist in the project, which will address the theoretical basis for promoting optimum social distance between home and school. I understand you will explore the effects of Active Parenting Today parent education groups as a research tool, and that you will send a copy of your completed dissertation to Active Parenting Publishers.

Good luck. I look forward to seeing the results of your research. Let me know if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ballance
Product Development

NB:nb
Applicant fill out:
Person requesting reprint: Michele Redwine
Organization/publication: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS, DALLAS, TX
Address: 2103 Wildflower Cir., Keller, TX 76268
Telephone: 817.411.0985 (Home) Fax:
Item to be reprinted: Parenting Styles Questionnaire from Active Parenting
Purpose for reprint: use in Ph.D. dissertation

Active Parenting fill out:
Reprint requested: Video Book Audio
Title: Active Parenting: Teaching Cooperation, Courage, and Responsibility
Author: Michael Popkin Publication date: 1987
What to reprint specifically: Parenting Styles Questionnaire

Location: p.9-10

☐ Your request to reprint the above referenced material has been granted. There is no fee for the use of this material.
☐ Your request to reprint the above referenced material has been granted. The fee for the use of this material is _____________.
☐ Your request to reprint the above referenced material has been denied.
☐ We do not have the rights to the above referenced material. For more information, contact:

Special conditions:

You must refer to copyright ownership when reprinting materials, as follows:
Taken from Active Parenting by Michael Popkin, Ph.D. Copyright 1987 by Active Parenting Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with permission of the publisher.

Please sign below to signify your acceptance of these terms and return this form to the attention of Michele Cox.

Accepted by: Michele Redwine
(Applicant)
Date: 6-1-96

Michele Cox
(Date)

Please sign below:
Eagle Mt.-Saginaw I.S.D.
Elkins Elementary School
P.O. Box 79160
Ft. Worth, TX 76179

September ____, 1994

Dear Family Member,

Your permission is kindly requested for you and your child to participate in a district funded, doctoral dissertation study. The study will involve your participation in the *Active Parenting Today* program once a week, for six weeks. Each session will last approximately two hours. Babysitting and a meal will be provided at no charge to you.

The study will also involve an audiotaped interview that will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Your child's teacher and the teacher's classroom aide will also participate in a similar interview regarding your child's behavior at school. All identities will be held in strict confidence. Also, this study adheres to the guidelines as set by the University of North Texas Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (817-565-3940).

By making a commitment to take part in this study, you will be contributing to educational research, as well as ensuring the continuation of parenting education program services that will benefit our district's families and children. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Michelle Redwine, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Early Childhood Education
College of Education
University of North Texas
Denton, TX 76203-3857
Family Member's Permission

I will permit myself and my child to participate in the study to be conducted by Michelle Redwine. I understand that this study has been approved by the University of North Texas.

I also understand that participation is voluntary and that all identities will remain completely confidential.

Date

Signature of Participating Family Member
Prekindergarten Teacher or Educational Classroom Aide Permission Form

I will permit myself to participate in the study to be conducted by Michelle Redwine. I understand that this study has been approved by the University of North Texas. I also understand that participation is voluntary and that all identities will remain completely confidential. I also understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without penalty or prejudice.

Date: ____________________________

Signature of Participating Prekindergarten Teacher or Educational Classroom Aide:

I indicate my willingness to be audiotaped in order that the accuracy of Michelle Redwine’s notes may be confirmed. Mrs. Redwine will secure these tapes under lock and key until the end of the study. At that time they will be destroyed.

Date: ____________________________

Signature of Participating Prekindergarten Teacher or Educational Classroom Aide:
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