THE EFFECT OF HOME ECONOMICS CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION ON DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES USED BY PARENTS OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

THESIS

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By

Helen Jean Parker, B.S.
Denton, Texas
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To determine if home economics child development education affected disciplinary techniques used by parents of kindergarten children, 298 parents of kindergarten children completed an eleven-part questionnaire. Comparisons were made of disciplinary techniques used, five categories of child development education, and five levels of education.

Educational level appeared to affect parental disciplinary techniques more than child development education. As educational level increased, the use of punitive and reasoning techniques, the use of sources for learned disciplinary techniques, and parental reaction to stress concerning discipline all increased.

It is suggested that parental expectations increased as educational level increased. Frustration with disciplining increased punitiveness and reaction to stress. Educational skills encouraged adoption of disciplinary sources.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In early civilization, tribal living was advantageous to survival. Tribal law dictated behavioral expectations (5, p. 56). In modern society, individual freedom and equality dictate that behavioral expectations are extremely complex. In modern times, as never before, parents must set these behavioral expectations, and to the best of their ability, guide their children to this goal (2, pp. 5-6).

Most parents are concerned occasionally about the effectiveness of child disciplinary techniques. To some parents, this is a major concern, as evidenced in the growing number of parenting classes instructing parents each year in the art of discipline. In most cases, the parents learn the disciplinary techniques they use from their own parents. Other sources for such knowledge include friends and relatives as well as the media, books, and articles. Many times the techniques are trial-and-error or merely guesswork. If these techniques are not appropriate for the family involved, the child as well as the parents will suffer (3, pp. 3-11).

A child's earliest experience with discipline of any type is generally in the home. This is, for the most part, in connection with the mother-child relationship in which the child is introduced to daily
routines (4). The mother, in most cases, remains the primary disciplinarian throughout the preschool and school years. This does not mean the father is insignificant in child discipline, but that the mother is more likely to be in the home and available to the children (1, p. 38).

Experts in child behavior do not always agree on the techniques most desirable to discipline a child. A technique which is effective for one family may not be for another. Even within a family, techniques may be appropriate for one child and not for another, or for one behavioral problem and not for another.

Common problems of parents with respect to discipline are hasty judgments, behavioral expectations, inconsistent discipline, lack of knowledge of various disciplinary techniques, and parents not agreeing on disciplinary techniques. With mounting frustration, more and more parents are turning to parenting classes (1).

Home economics child development students have the opportunity to become acquainted with many of these problems before the joy of parenthood turns to frustration. By learning the various techniques of discipline prescribed by the child behavior experts, learning more about themselves, and learning to understand children, teenagers are better equipped to make appropriate decisions regarding discipline for their own children when they, someday, become parents.
Statement of Problem

The problem of this study was to determine if home economics child development education has affected disciplinary techniques used by parents of kindergarten children. The study analyzed and compared parental disciplinary techniques of parents with home economics child development education and parents with no former home economics child development education.

Purpose of Study

The purposes of the study were to determine if:

1. Parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education
   a. defined "discipline" more as reasoning and less as punitive;
   b. reasoned more and punished less;
   c. were more consistent in the use of discipline with a behavioral problem each time it occurred;
   d. were more likely to vary disciplinary techniques.

2. Sources from which parents learned disciplinary techniques presently used in the family were different in families of parents with former home economics child development education as compared to parents with no former home economics child development education.

3. More mothers than fathers had taken home economics child development education.

4. Mothers were the primary disciplinarian in both groups.

5. Mothers and fathers with no home economics child development education disagreed on disciplinary techniques more than mothers and fathers with home economics child development education.

6. Low educational status was positively related to punitive forms of discipline.
Significance of the Study

Parental discipline aids children in the growth areas of self-esteem and internalization of moral values. Home economics child development education has the opportunity to educate future parents as to various disciplinary techniques, self-understanding, and understanding the personality of the child. This study focuses on discipline only in child development education to determine if students carried through what they learned and if they applied the knowledge. Educational level of parents is also explored to determine if education, in general, has an effect on the disciplinary techniques used by parents.

Need for the Study

The results of this study will be helpful in evaluating teaching methods and materials used in the instruction of disciplinary techniques in home economics child development programs and will aid in determining how successfully the students apply the knowledge gained. The results will be useful in planning future home economics child development programs.

Delimitations

The study was limited to questioning parents of children enrolled in kindergarten classes in the towns of Allen and McKinney, Texas.
Limitations

1. It is unknown what initially encouraged parents in the study to enroll in a home economics child development class during their school years.

2. It is unknown if teaching methods of the home economics teachers varied significantly so as to affect the outcome of the study.

3. The instrument may introduce a bias into the study.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that parents will answer questions as accurately as they are able.

2. It is assumed that with the sample being studied, there are enough older and younger children in the household to be representative of the total population.

3. It is assumed that child development is included in the home economics curriculum for junior high, middle school, or high school. College-level child development is assumed to be included in the home economics as well as early childhood curriculum.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

1. Authorities on child behavior—a recognized specialist in the field of child behavior who prescribes disciplinary techniques.
2. Behavioral problems--a child does not conform to a standard set forth by the child's parent or guardian.

3. Child discipline--training a child in self-control or obedience to a given standard (8, p. 236).

4. Father--father or male guardian.

5. Home economics child development education--having taken child development classes in junior high school, middle school, or high school.

6. Induction--parent or guardian focusing on the consequences of the child's action for others (5, p. 45).

7. Interagent inconsistent discipline--both parents or both guardians in disagreement as to the technique of discipline to be used with a behavioral problem (7, p. 526).

8. Intra-agent inconsistent discipline--each parent or each guardian is inconsistent in the use of discipline with a behavioral problem each time it occurs (7, p. 526).

9. Mother--mother or female guardian.

10. Parental weapon--any paraphernalia used to impart severe physical or psychological punishment.

11. Parents--mothers, fathers, and guardians.

12. Power assertion--parent or guardian capitalizes on his power and authority over the child (5, p. 45).
13. Primary disciplinarian--the parent or individual most responsible for administering discipline in the home.

14. Punitive techniques--a parent or guardian causing a child pain, loss, or discomfort as the result of a behavioral problem (9, p. 1689).

15. Techniques of discipline--the methods used to train the child to conform to a given standard.

16. Varied disciplinary techniques--the use of various prescribed techniques as opposed to the same technique for each behavioral problem.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History and Definition

In ancient times, the father was the ruler of his family. Child discipline was almost totally authoritarian. Margaret Mead (21, p. 56) discovered in New Guinea that child behavior was guided by generations of custom. Parents expected children to grow into a mold of the past. Children accepted this as fact and little conflict was experienced. This was assumed to be true of most forms of tribal living.

Dreikurs and Grey (13, pp. 5-6) explained that eight to ten thousand years ago man started breaking tribal chains and establishing modern civilization. Primitive society gave way to the caste and class system of society. Man became embroiled in revolt against all authority. deMause (20, p. 339) pointed out that as a part of our Anglo-American heritage, misbehavior or revolt by children was met by flogging. deMause wrote, "The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have just begun to awaken." Welsh (29) stated that floggings in home and school demanded the use of "weapons." Such weapons mentioned were birch rods used in ancient Greece and knitting needles used by Beethoven for spanking his pupils. The belt, extension cord, and fist are common parental weapons today. These examples are mentioned only to identify
what is meant by "parental weapons." The types are too numerous to mention.

The revolution of children has continued to grow. Today, open hostility is evident in all classes of young people (29). Some examples of hostility in young people today are rebellious behavior, lack of empathy, openly standing against the establishment, and delinquency. Dreikurs and Grey (13, p. 4) explained that in democratic societies, man is no longer willing to be "an insignificant particle of a mass." Almost all groups in our society are seeking equality and freedom and that children are no exception. The autocratic society of the past required a superior-inferior pattern of parent-child relationships inconsistent with the principles of democracy (9, p. 6).

A dictionary defines discipline as "training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects; to train in self-control or obedience to given standards." Dorothy Baruch (3, p. 5) noted that, in its derivation, the term "discipline" has to do with following a leader. Baruch further stated that this leadership could be "by the whip or by the word." Examples cited were Hitler, by the whip; and Jesus, by the word.

Difference of Opinion of Authorities

Dreikurs and Grey (13, p. 4) pointed out that with the changing society, the concept of discipline was defined differently than in the days of authoritarian rule. No longer is flogging an acceptable practice in society. Recent literature manifested the growing controversy as to the
most effective method of child discipline. Authorities do not always agree on the most effective techniques for training the mind and character of the child. Dobson (11, pp. 21-22) stated that the generation of children existing in the 1950 era of "permissive democracy" have grown to challenge every form of authority that confronts it. Welsh (29) contrasted this statement by asserting that the actual impact of the permissive movement of the 1950s was probably more illusion than substance, affecting only a limited number of families.

Clark-Stewart (8) pointed out that over 200 popular parenting books are on the market in the United States and that 23 million copies have been sold. Cagan (6) stated that most of the parenting books of today refer to the behavior-modification approach stemming from the works of B. F. Skinner (25), who maintained, by his theory, that punishment served no useful purpose because its inhibiting effects tend to wear off. With the behavior-modification method, desired behavior is to be strengthened, and undesired behavior is to be reduced, through the alteration of reinforcement contingencies. Krumboltz and Krumboltz (18, p. 27) supported the reinforcement method by stating that reinforcing parents teach their children reinforcing habits which leads to harmonious human relationships when each person reinforces the other.

Cagan (6) stated that the behavior-modification method deals only with what the child does and does not speculate about the child's thoughts, feelings, personality traits, developmental stages, or other "inner"
causes of his or her actions which cannot be observed directly. Parents do not engage with the child in any meaningful way. The parent is offering praise, disappointment, or silence, not as a reflection of how the parent feels, but as part of a prearranged program designed to achieve certain ends.

Gordon (15) stressed that parents should engage in active listening with their children. Active listening was accomplished by a parent mirroring a child's feelings as the child talked. Verbally the parent would state what the child had just said. This technique enabled the child to realize that he was being understood and was therefore able to reason a problem out without the parent becoming involved.

Dreikurs and Grey (13) found in studies of children that children best responded to logical consequences of a behavioral situation. A parent was urged to remove himself from the conflict with the child and let the consequences of the child's actions train the child's behavior. Dreikurs and Grey further stated that conflict with the child resulted in a power struggle. When the power struggle became evident, little progress was made in the resolution of the problem.

Dobson (11, pp. 12-13) disputed the two previous methods described. According to Dobson, experts who suggest that parents verbalize the child's feelings in a moment of conflict are wrong. No heart-to-heart talk would resolve a child's rejection of parental authority. Dobson rejected, also, the advocates of the "laissez-faire philosophy" that would
recommend "a child be allowed to fail in school if he chooses; or maintain his bedroom like the proverbial pigpen; or let his puppy go hungry." Dobson further stated that parents must not depend on hope and luck to fashion the critical attitudes desired for their children. Statements made by the aforementioned authorities on child behavior indicate the conflict of methodology facing parents today in the field of child discipline.

Various Ideologies and Findings

Baruch (4, pp. 240-241) stated that the ways in which a parent feels is more important than what is said or done by the parent. Children would understand the parent's feelings no matter how hard the parent tried to hide them. The child would react to the feelings more than to the words or actions of the parent.

Feelings of anger were explored in depth by Cahill (7). Anger was defined as aggression, and hostility as destructiveness. The aim of anger is mastery, driving a person to persist in the pursuit of an object. The aim of hostility is the destruction of the object, partial or complete. Cahill further stated that anger operates in the context of a relationship, while hostility is a manipulation rather than a relationship. With anger, the object is trusted and pursued, but hostility implies despair about the object, disappointment, and rejection. In child discipline, according to Cahill, if a parent momentarily feels the relationship is gone, anger gives way to hostility and the parent undertakes to attack and manipulate through hurt, pain, or intimidations such as spanking, screaming at the
child, depreciation or name-calling, neurotic or guilt provoking, or threats of abandonment. Hostility stimulates resistance in the child. Cahill further stated that anger is respectful of autonomy and of the free relationship between parent and child. The parent informs the child of the boundaries set and behavior expected. If the child does not comply, the parent is "angry" with the child. That is the only penalty for the misbehavior. The child will have to live with the anger, and this is an unpleasant situation for the child. The anger eventually encourages the child to investigate the parent's point of view and understand the terms. By distinguishing between anger and hostility and by picturing anger as a positive, structuring, caring drive, parents help lighten their taboo against feelings of anger at their children. Cahill (7, p. 11) stressed that by valuing anger we learn to

1. commit oneself to the relationship
2. tolerate the tense feelings
3. learn to think clearly when angry
4. confront the other in two or three sentences, before he gets too angry to hear, with our perception of the behavior and with our feelings
5. maintain a focus of anger on the behavior intermittently as it comes into consciousness, and exchange perceptions and feelings about the matter until it is received
6. avoid giving up and attacking the other with hostility, or at least apologize and clarify our intent following those occasions when we have lost our cool and attacked.

The "cooling-off period" is a method used during a feeling of anger by a parent at the actions of a child. Dodson (11, p. 226) explained this period as social isolation such as sending a child out of his social group or to his room. By making social isolation an open-ended affair, the
child is left to understand that when he is able to change his behavior, he may return to the group.

Swain and Parke (24) conducted two experiments designed to test aggressive behavior in young boys exposed to two different types of inconsistent discipline. The first was intra-agent inconsistency, in which a single agent treats violations in a different manner each time they occur. The second type was interagent inconsistency, which refers to differences between two agents in the treatment of the same violation on each occasion. Findings indicated that inconsistency in discipline of either of the two types increases aggressive behavior in children.

Gordon, Jones, and Nowicki (14) stated that inconsistency of parental punishment detracted from the information value of the punishment and thus reduced the child's ability to learn adaptive responses in the future. Inconsistency of interparental intensity scores resulted in children showing greater maladjustment and delinquent behavior.

No literature explored in this study condoned using any type of parental weapon when spanking a child. Dodson (12, p. 226) stated that a spanking needed no special paraphernalia. "Just the hand of the parent administered a few times on the kid's bottom." Welsh (29), a clinical psychologist, took time to question his delinquent patients and their parents regarding parental punishment practices. Welsh constructed what he calls his "belt theory." In tabulating the information gained from questioning patients and parents, Welsh discovered that the recidivist
male delinquent who has never been exposed to a belt, board, extension cord, or fist during his development years is virtually non-existent.

Data collected by Welsh indicated that authoritarian and punitive attitudes provide fuel that feeds antisocial conduct. Welsh maintained that it is unwise to use threats and physical punishment on aggressive children. Yet, in our society, this is the group of youngsters who receive the most punishment. Welsh determined that parents contribute to juvenile delinquency by hitting children or crushing their self-esteem.

Watson (27) discovered in a study measuring extreme strictness of parents and extreme permissiveness that strict, intense discipline was associated with more dependence and hostility and less cooperation, friendliness toward others, and spontaneity. A study done by Gordon, Jones, and Nowicki (14) found that intense punishment in general and for classes of child misbehavior in particular have children who are rated as overactive, uncooperative, cheerless, and withdrawn.

Welsh (29) determined that more minority subjects than white subjects were found to have been exposed to severe parental punishment. The measure of socio-economic status in this study was college attendance. More minority parents of high socio-economic status were likely to use a strap on their child than white parents with no college training. However, minority parents who had attended college were less likely to use the strap than those who had not attended college. Indications were that the use of the strap on a child is a cultural phenomenon which can be
weakened by high socio-economic status but not eliminated in one generation.

Gordon, Jones, and Nowicki (14) reported that the intensity of punishment by parents was related to lower parental education and socio-economic class. Mothers who used high-intensity punishment showed less warmth, more interfering, and more criticism of their children when not in a punishing interaction. These mothers were also less child-centered.

Rosen (23) discovered that lower-class parents were more likely to use physical punishment and less likely to use reasoning techniques. Waters and Crandall (26) found that high socio-economic mothers were less dictatorial in attempting to influence their children's behavior and less severe were their penalties for misbehavior.

Hoffman (16) stated that children of parents who maintained discipline through induction and reasoning tend to have children with more internalized moral values, while parents who used power assertion tended to have children who were motivated primarily by external rewards and punishments. Hoffman further stated that power assertion was not effective in promoting internalization of moral values because: it encourages hostility from children and provides them with a model for direct expression of anger; it fails to encourage internal motives for cooperation, such as the need for approval and empathy for others; and it focuses their attention on the punitive aspects of parental authority.
Induction, on the other hand, appeared to internalize moral values since: it provides children with a model for the control of anger; it focuses the child's attention on the consequences of their action for others; and it encourages their native tendencies to empathize with others' experience.

Loeb, Horst, and Horton (19) suggested that children identify with and imitate the behavior and attitudes of their parents, particularly the same-sex parent. Children, therefore, were expected to develop levels of self-esteem similar to that of their parents. Highly directive style of discipline expressed to the child a low parental expectation, while helpful, suggesting style improved the child's chances for success and engendered a feeling that the child himself is successful. The author further found that reward, contingent on appropriate behavior, as opposed to punishment for misbehavior, increased a child's self-esteem. Katz, Cole, and Baron (17) determined that high self-esteem in children was associated with such parental disciplinary techniques as low punitiveness, use of positive incentives and reinforcement, and supportiveness rather than either punitiveness or indifference.

Loeb, Horst, and Horton (19) found that physical directiveness was associated with low self-esteem in both girls and boys, but verbal directiveness by the mother was related to high self-esteem in boys. Directive behavior by the father, in contrast, resulted in low self-esteem in boys, possibly due to the more difficult, competitive relationship between father and son. A warm father-daughter relationship with reward
contingent upon appropriate behavior resulted in high self-esteem in girls. Loeb, Horst, and Horton generalized the characteristics of a family climate conducive to children having high self-esteem. This generalization indicated that parents are supportive of their children and of each other; parents do not practice highly directive disciplinary techniques, but the fathers are highly involved and particular about which of their daughter's behaviors they reward; for boys, fathers refrain from highly directive or intrusive behavior, while mothers play a relatively directive role.

A study was conducted by Adams (1) to determine if parent training helped parents to better understand and guide their child's behavior. Through a questionnaire, Adams determined the discipline problems the parents encountered at home. The study included planning, presenting, and evaluating a parent group program which emphasized understanding a child's behavior and the use of disciplinary techniques.

Adams determined that the mothers administered 60 per cent of the discipline as compared to 30 per cent for the fathers. The remaining 10 per cent was by other persons such as older brothers or sisters. Sixty-four per cent were concerned because fathers and mothers could not agree on disciplinary measures. After the training group was completed, mothers were still the primary disciplinarian due to the amount of time the child spent with the mother as compared to the father. However, the number of parents differing on disciplinary techniques had
dropped significantly. Recommendations made to parents were to avoid hasty judgments with respect to disciplinary action; vary disciplinary techniques; exercise more patience and understanding of young children; and when a child needs disciplinary action, it should be a joint decision of mother and father.

Crouse (9) conducted a similar study in 1954 and concluded that parent education was desirable with respect to disciplinary problems. Crouse further stated that, "Parents, had they been given knowledge of what to expect and what not to expect of a preschool child at different age levels, could and would have prevented many disciplinary problems."

One of the purposes of child development education, as sighted by Papalia and Olds (22, p. 1) is to help students learn more about themselves. The authors stated that only in knowing one’s self is that person capable of creating a better world for their own children.

Baruch (5, p. 33) explained that helping parents gain a greater measure of security is the primary aim of parent education. Parents are not only seeking a body of information, but how to apply the information. Baruch stressed that disciplinary techniques practical for one parent-child relationship might prove impractical for another. Adaptation to one’s situation is essential.

Almy (2, p. 228) explained, "The best guidance of children of this age [3 to 6] comes from adults who have learned to live with their own
childhood." She further stated, that a parent who is capable of experiencing empathy with their child is better able to guide the child wisely.

Parenting is one of the most important tasks facing an individual in his lifetime. Yet it is, unfortunately, a task which requires no previous training or experience. Dodson (12, p. 22) likened this to a secretary with no previous typing or shorthand training. It is highly unlikely such a secretary would easily find employment. The job of parent is given equally to the trained or the untrained. Data collected by Welsh (29) indicated that parents learn more about child rearing from their own parents than they do from child rearing authorities.

Summary

Child discipline means to train or teach a child to conform to given standards of parents, guardians, or others responsible for molding a child's character. Socially acceptable disciplinary techniques have gone from the superior-inferior parent-child relationship of ancient times to the democratic theory of parent-child equality. The modern techniques involve the parent more as a teacher and guide, and less as a dictator.

Although most of the authorities on child behavior today agree with the guiding theory, the techniques are varied and the authorities do not always agree on the most effective disciplinary method. The behaviorist theory is the most common theory, but the methodology varies from one authority to another. The behaviorist theory emphasizes appropriate
behavior by reinforcing the behavior and de-emphasizes inappropriate behavior by lack of reinforcement.

Feelings are very important in disciplinary techniques. As has been stated, the child's feelings are not always considered with the behaviorist theory. Parents often feel guilt about showing anger at their child for misbehavior. Exploration and proper use of feelings appears to be an important factor for both parent and child.

Internalizing moral values and creating high self-esteem are two of the primary goals of advocated disciplinary techniques. Inductive methods were associated with both the internalization of moral values and high self-esteem. Also, warm reinforcing fathers were associated with high self-esteem in daughters, while relatively directive mothers were associated with high self-esteem in sons.

Most studies indicated that intense, punitive, parental discipline led to hostility in children. Studies indicated that aggressive children are often the ones who receive the most severe parental punishment. Studies also indicated hostility was increased by the severe punishment and often led to habitual juvenile delinquency.

Most disciplinary techniques are passed from one generation to the next. Education in general and parent training in particular appeared to change parental disciplinary techniques. Dictatorial parents indicated a trend toward inductive reasoning, and disciplinary consistency was increased.
Generally, parents want what is best for their children. They do not intentionally cause problems for the child and frustration for themselves. Through education, parents may learn what is best, how to avoid problems, and create a better world for their children and for themselves.
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CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

Location of Study

The towns of Allen and McKinney, Texas, were the locations of the study. The current populations of the two towns as reported by the 1980 U.S. Census Bureau are as follows: Allen, 8,134; McKinney, 16,249. The 1970 census indicated the populations of the two towns were as follows: Allen, 1,900; McKinney, 15,200. The town of Allen changed significantly in the ten-year period from 1970 to 1980 with rapid growth and the influx of people from different educational environments.

Sample

The population was the parents of children attending kindergarten classes in the towns of Allen and McKinney, Texas. Allen had four kindergarten teachers with two half-day classes. There was a total of 158 kindergarten children, and they were all located at Roundtree Elementary School. McKinney had fourteen kindergarten teachers with full-day kindergarten classes. There was a total of 294 kindergarten children located in the four elementary schools in McKinney. Nell Burks Elementary had 84 kindergarten children; Fanny Finch Elementary had 72 kindergarten children; J. L. Greer had 75 kindergarten children; and J. W. Webb Elementary had 63 kindergarten children.
Instrumentation and Procedures

After examining instruments discovered during the review of literature, a questionnaire (see appendix A) was developed. The questionnaire was pretested by parents of kindergarten children at Lovejoy Independent School District. Permission was granted by Robert Puster, Superintendent of the Lovejoy Independent School District. After pretesting the questionnaire, changes were made as needed.

Permission was granted for completion of the study by Scott Johnson, Superintendent of McKinney Independent School District, and by Dr. John Horn, Superintendent of Allen Independent School District. Dr. Horn included a letter of explanation to the parents of the kindergarten children (see appendix B). Results of the study have been requested by all three of the superintendents.

The week prior to distribution of the questionnaire, a cover letter (see appendix C) was sent home by kindergarten children to be given to parents. The letter introduced the researcher and explained the need for the study. The questionnaire was distributed by the same method the following week. Two questionnaires were sent to each household. Mother and father or male and female guardian were each instructed to complete a questionnaire. A self-addressed envelope was included with the questionnaires. Parents were instructed to seal the completed questionnaires in the envelope and return by the kindergarten child to the child's classroom. A box was provided in each classroom for deposit
of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected one week after distribution, and a follow-up note (see appendix D) was sent to each parent. Anonymity of each respondent was assured.

Plan for Analysis of Data

The questionnaires were divided into two groups: those who had had home economics child development education and those who had had no home economics child development education. Using chi square, the data were tested and analyzed to prove or disprove the purposes stated in this study.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if home economics child development education in middle school or high school affected disciplinary techniques used by students when they became parents. A comparison was made of the disciplinary techniques of parents with no former middle school or high school child development education and disciplinary techniques of parents with former middle school or high school child development education. This study also was concerned with which parent was the primary disciplinarian in the family, and whether mothers were more likely to have taken home economics child development courses than fathers. Also examined was the educational level of parents in relation to disciplinary techniques used in the family.

The data from the questionnaires were transferred to computer cards. Frequency was calculated for each of the questions. Cross-tabulations were calculated to determine relationships between level of child development education and disciplinary techniques used. Cross-tabulations were also made to determine relationships between educational level and disciplinary techniques used. A comparison was made of the disciplinary techniques of mothers and of fathers. Chi square was
used to test significance. Chi square was calculated to 0.05 level.
Relationships of 0.05 level or below were considered significant for this study.

The subjects were the parents of kindergarten children in the towns of Allen and McKinney, Texas. Questionnaires (see appendix A) were sent to 452 parents in the two towns. Two hundred and ninety-eight of the questionnaires, or 66 per cent, were returned.

One hundred and eighty-eight mothers and 108 fathers returned the questionnaire. Two respondents did not indicate as to whether they were mother or father. The mean number of children per family of the parents participating in this study was 2.61. The mode for the number of children per family was two with 140 of the individual respondents indicating two children. The number of children per family ranged from one to fourteen, with twenty-six individual respondents having one child and two individual respondents having fourteen children.

Level of highest education ranged from elementary educated and less (sixth grade or less) to post graduate work. The high school level, grades ten through twelve, contained the greatest number of respondents with 133 people checking this category. Seven respondents completed an educational level of six years or less. Twenty-eight respondents indicated highest educational level as middle school (grades seven through nine). One hundred and twenty-seven respondents had attended college with thirty-one having five years or more of college. Three respondents did not indicate highest educational level.
One hundred and sixty respondents stated they had taken no child development, and four had experienced some child development in elementary school. Fifty-nine respondents indicated they had taken child development courses in middle school or high school. Fifty-three respondents stated they had taken child development courses in college. Nine of the college respondents also had child development in high school. Five of the respondents indicated they had taken adult parenting classes. Eight did not designate level of child development.

General Findings

In order to determine how parents defined "discipline," parents were asked to check one of five terms which they felt described their concept or what it was to discipline. The terms listed were: physical punishment, verbal punishment, loss of privileges, reinforcement, and reasoning. These terms were divided into two parts before tabulation of data. The two parts were punitive and reasoning, with the punitive terms being physical punishment, verbal punishment, and loss of privileges, and the reasoning terms being reinforcement and reasoning. Relationship of child development education to defining of "discipline" data are reported in Table I.
TABLE I

DEFINITION OF DISCIPLINE IN RELATION TO LEVEL OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Child Development</th>
<th>High School or Middle School Child Development</th>
<th>College Child Development Only</th>
<th>Both College and High School Child Development</th>
<th>Adult Parenting Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Punishment</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Punishment</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Privileges</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforcement</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punitive Average</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning Average</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child development education appeared to have no relationship to either a punitive or reasoning definition of "discipline." Parents with child development education in college and adult parenting classes defined "discipline" more as reasoning and less as punitive. Parents with no
child development education or with child development education in high
school or middle school defined "discipline" more as punitive and less
as reasoning.

High educational status appeared to be positively related to defining
"discipline" as reasoning. The number of parents defining "discipline"
as punitive decreased as educational level increased with the exception of
the category of elementary education and less. The relationship of
educational level to defining of "discipline" data are reported in Table II.

TABLE II

DEFINITION OF DISCIPLINE IN RELATION TO EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sixth Grade or Less</th>
<th>Seventh Through Ninth Grade</th>
<th>Tenth Through Twelfth Grade</th>
<th>College (Total)</th>
<th>Five or More Years College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Punishment</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Punishment</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Privileges</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforcement</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punitive Average</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning Average</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents with middle school or high school education were more likely to define "discipline" as punitive, while parents with college education or college educated with five years or more of college were likely to define "discipline" as reasoning. Data did not indicate that parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education, defined "discipline" more as reasoning and less as punitive. Fathers tended to define "discipline" as slightly more punitive than did mothers.

Parents were also asked to state in words what discipline meant. For comparison of responses, the questionnaires were divided into three groups: parents with college education, parents with child development in middle school or high school, and parents with no college or child development education. A list of terms describing the most common concepts was developed. Five of the most commonly used concepts were taken from each list and ranked in order of most used. In all three groups, the concept of teaching right from wrong was the most commonly used. Comparisons of these groups are listed in Table III.
The questionnaire listed twenty-one disciplinary techniques. The respondents checked one of three columns which designated how often they used the techniques: never, occasionally, or often. Before tabulation of the data, the list of twenty-one disciplinary techniques was divided into two parts. The techniques in one list were considered more punitive, or having the least input by the child. The techniques in the second list were considered least punitive, or having more reasoning and input by the child. The lists are shown in Table IV.

### TABLE III

RANK ORDER OF CONCEPTS OF DISCIPLINE IN RELATION TO EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>College Educated</th>
<th>Child Development in High School or Middle School</th>
<th>No Child Development or College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching right from wrong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child respecting others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for appropriate behavior</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To punish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make a child mind</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show a child love</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE IV

DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES DEFINED AS PUNITIVE OR REASONING

More Punitive and Least Reasoning

Spanking
Sending to Room for a Set Period of Time
Scolding
Slapping
Teasing
Comparing to Other Children
Ridiculing
Putting to Bed
Pinching
Frightening
Depriving of Something or Restricting Privileges

Least Punitive and More Reasoning

Reasoning
Diverting Attention
Sending to Room until agreeable to Change Behavior
Having Child Sit Quietly Anywhere and Think
Rewarding
Ignoring
Coaxing
Nagging
Negotiating to Reach Mutual Agreement
Bribing

No judgments were made as to the effectiveness or fairness of the techniques in either list. After examination of the data, acceptance and rejection of the techniques by the respondents were noted in the frequency with which the techniques were used. Techniques used by the respondents more than 50 per cent of the time are shown in Table V.

TABLE V

DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES USED BY RESPONDENTS MORE THAN FIFTY PER CENT OF THE TIME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanking</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverting Attention</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending Child to Room for a Set Period of Time</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending Child to Room until Agreeable to Change Behavior</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Child Sit Quietly Anywhere and Think</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scolding</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarding</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating to Reach Mutual Agreement</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting to Bed</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depriving of Something or Restricting Privileges</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ten of the disciplinary techniques were considered less desirable by the respondents. Parents indicated they used these techniques less than 50 per cent of the time. The techniques used by respondents less than 50 per cent of the time are shown in Table VI.

**TABLE VI**

**DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES USED BY RESPONDENTS LESS THAN FIFTY PER CENT OF THE TIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignoring</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaxing</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagging</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapping</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribing</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing to Other Children</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridiculing</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinching</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frightening</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mothers and fathers differed in the use of seven of the specific techniques listed. Mothers were more likely to divert attention, send child to room until agreeable to change behavior, have child sit quietly anywhere and think, and negotiate to reach mutual agreement. Fathers were more likely to tease, ridicule, and frighten. A difference of an average of six per cent or more in the use of these specific techniques was established. The greatest difference was in teasing, with an average difference of 25 per cent.

Only two of the techniques defined in the list of ten least punitive, more reasoning techniques listed in Table III were significantly below
the .05 level when analyzed, in relation to child development education. The two techniques proving to be significant were ignoring and coaxing. The data indicated that parents with child development education in high school or middle school were no more likely to ignore a disciplinary problem or coax than parents with no former child development education. Parents with college level child development education were significantly more likely to ignore a problem or coax than parents with child development in lower educational levels or with no child development education. Respondents having taken adult parenting classes were also significantly more likely to ignore and coax than parents with no former child development education, or parents with child development in high school or middle school.

No significant difference was noted in the techniques listed as more punitive and less reasoning in relation to the child development categories. The data did indicate, however, that parents with child development in both high school and college or in college alone were more likely to use punitive techniques as well as the reasoning techniques than parents with child development in high school or middle school or with no former child development education.

The data did not indicate that parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education, reasoned more and punished less. Data indicated that reasoning increased with the educational level of
the child development. However, punitive techniques also increased with the increased level of child development education. Use of punitive and reasoning techniques in relation to child development education is shown in Figure 1.

Level of Child Development

Fig. 1--Average use of punitive and reasoning techniques in relation to child development education.
Disciplinary consistency was determined by measuring parents' responses to questions concerning the relationship between feelings and disciplinary attitudes. One question asked parents was if their disciplinary techniques would change if they were under a feeling of stress. A second question asked was if parents were likely to ignore a disciplinary problem at times when they felt particularly good.

No significant difference was evident in any category of child development education in relation to disciplinary consistency. Parents with child development in both high school and college or in college alone appeared more likely to change disciplinary techniques when in a stressful situation than parents with no child development education or parents with child development in high school or college. Data indicated that stress more than feeling particularly good, affected parents' disciplinary techniques in all categories of child development education. The relationship of child development education and discipline under stress is shown in Table VII.

**TABLE VII**

LIKELIHOOD OF PARENTS CHANGING DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES WHEN UNDER STRESS IN RELATION TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Child Development</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Change</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Not Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Child Development Education</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development in High School or Middle School</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both High School and College Child Development</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Child Development Only</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Parenting Classes</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents in all categories of child development education were less likely to ignore a disciplinary problem when feeling particularly good than change disciplinary techniques when under stress. No significant difference was evident in any category of child development. However, parents with child development in both high school and college or in college only appeared less likely to ignore a problem than parents with no child development education or child development in high school or middle school. Parents with adult parenting were also less affected by stress and less likely to ignore a problem when feeling particularly good than the college child development categories. The likelihood of parents ignoring a disciplinary problem when feeling particularly good in relation to child development education is shown in Table VIII.

**TABLE VIII**

**LIKELIHOOD OF PARENTS IGNORING A DISCIPLINARY PROBLEM WHEN FEELING PARTICULARLY GOOD IN RELATION TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Child Development</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Ignore</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Not Ignore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Child Development Education</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development in High School or Middle School</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both High School and College Child Development</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Child Development Only</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Parenting Classes</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A significant difference below .05 level was evident in the educational level in relation to a feeling of stress. As the educational level increased, parents were more affected by stress. The relationship between the educational level and stress is shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX

LIKELIHOOD OF PARENTS CHANGING DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES WHEN UNDER STRESS IN RELATION TO EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Change</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Not Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Grade or Less</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Through Ninth Grade</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Through Twelfth Grade</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Educated (Total)</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Years or More College</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No significant difference appeared in the educational level in relation to feeling particularly good. Parents with six years or less education were least likely to ignore a disciplinary problem when feeling particularly good, while parents with middle school education were most likely to ignore a problem. No pattern developed in this category in relation to feeling particularly good. The relationship between educational level and feeling particularly good is shown in Table X.
TABLE X
LIKELIHOOD OF PARENTS IGNORING A DISCIPLINARY PROBLEM WHEN FEELING PARTICULARLY GOOD IN RELATION TO EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Ignore</th>
<th>Per Cent Would Not Ignore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Grade or Less</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Through Ninth Grade</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Through Twelfth Grade</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Educated (Total)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Years or More College</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data did not indicate that parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education, were more consistent in the use of discipline with a behavioral problem each time it occurred. Parents with child development education in both high school and college or in college alone appeared to be more affected by stress in relation to disciplinary attitudes, but less likely to have disciplinary techniques affected by feeling particularly good.

Parents with former child development education in high school or middle school used slightly more varied disciplinary techniques than parents with no former child development education. Parents with child development in both high school and college and college alone used significantly more varied techniques than parents with child development.
in lower levels. Parents with college educations were also more varied than parents with no college education. Disciplinary variation increased slightly as the college level increased. Varying of disciplinary techniques used by parents in child development and educational categories are shown in Table XI.

TABLE XI

VARYING OF DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES USED BY PARENTS IN SELECTED CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and Child Development Categories</th>
<th>Per Cent Use Punitive Techniques</th>
<th>Per Cent Use Reasoning Techniques</th>
<th>Per Cent Overall Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Child Development</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School or Middle School Child Development</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School and College Child Development</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Child Development Only</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Parenting Classes</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Grade or Less</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Through Ninth</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Through Twelfth</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Educated (Total)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Years College or More</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational level appeared to influence variation in use of disciplinary techniques more than child development education alone. However, parents with comparable educational levels and former child development
education appeared to vary techniques more than parents having the same educational level and no former child development education.

Data did not indicate that parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education, were more likely to vary disciplinary techniques. Parents with higher educational levels in combination with child development education appeared more likely to vary disciplinary techniques than parents comparably educated with no child development education.

In order to determine if parents learned disciplinary techniques used in their family from a specific source, they were asked to select from a list of six sources. Included in the list was a statement that no source was used, or that a source not mentioned was used. The six sources listed were spouse, parents, books or articles on child behavior, novels or stories, television, and friends or relatives. Parents were asked to check all sources from which they learned disciplinary techniques.

Child development education appeared to have no relationship to sources from which parents learned disciplinary techniques used in their family. Fifty-nine per cent of the parents with child development in high school or middle school indicated they had no sources from which they learned disciplinary techniques, but did what came naturally at the time a behavioral problem occurred. Sixty per cent of the parents with no child development education stated they had no source.
Parents with child development in college alone or in both high school and college were significantly more likely to claim a source from which they learned disciplinary techniques. Chi square test indicated a significance level of below .05. Sources from which parents learned disciplinary techniques are shown in Table XII.

**TABLE XII**

**SOURCES OF LEARNED DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES IN RELATION TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>No Child Development</th>
<th>High School or Middle School Child Development</th>
<th>College Child Development Only</th>
<th>Both College and High School Child Development</th>
<th>Adult Parenting Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Sources</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books on Child Behavior</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels or Stories</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or Relatives</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A higher educational level increased the likelihood of parents selecting one or more sources from which they learned disciplinary techniques. Chi square test indicated significance at below the .05 level. Two sources were significant below the .05 level for both the child development categories and the educational levels. Parents with child development in college levels, and parents with college educations were significantly more likely to indicate as sources parents and books on child behavior. More education also appeared to increase the likelihood of parents using friends or relatives as sources. One college respondent stated he drew from all of the sources in the list. Sources from which parents learned disciplinary techniques in relation to educational level are shown in Table XIII.

### Table XIII

| Sources of Learned Disciplin ary Techniques in Relation to Educational Level |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                             | Sixth Grade or Less | Seventh Through Ninth Grade | Tenth Through Twelfth Grade | College (Total) | Five or More Years College |
| No Sources                  | 57%                 | 50%                 | 65%                    | 40%               | 20%                           |
| Spouse                      | 14%                 | 11%                 | 8%                     | 13%               | 16%                           |
| Parents                     | ..                  | 36%                 | 35%                    | 53%               | 61%                           |
| Books on Child Behavior     | ..                  | 4%                  | 11%                    | 48%               | 65%                           |
| Novels or Stories           | ..                  | ..                  | 1%                     | 1%                | ..                            |
| Television                  | ..                  | 4%                  | ..                     | 1%                | ..                            |
| Friends or Relatives        | 14%                 | 11%                 | 8%                     | 18%               | 19%                           |
Data did not indicate that sources from which parents learned disciplinary techniques presently used in the family were different in families of parents with former home economics child development education. The higher the level at which parents took child development and the educational level in general appeared to affect parents' sources from which they learned disciplinary techniques. Sources used by mothers and fathers were very similar with the exception of fathers being more likely to indicate parents as a source and mothers more likely to indicate books on child behavior. Twenty-seven respondents, nine per cent of the total sample, indicated using a source other than the six listed. Seventeen, or 63 per cent, of those twenty-seven respondents stated using the Bible as a source.

Mothers were three times more likely than fathers to have taken child development in high school or middle school. Twenty-seven per cent of the 188 mothers had taken child development in middle school or high school. Eight per cent of the 108 fathers had taken child development in middle school or high school. On the college level, however, mothers and fathers were equal in their child development education. Twenty-one per cent of the mothers as well as 21 per cent of the fathers had taken college child development. Two per cent of the mothers and two per cent of the fathers had adult parenting classes.

The total percentage of mothers with child development education in one or more of the levels from middle school through college, including adult parenting classes, was 50 per cent. Forty-eight per cent of
the mothers had no former child development education, and two per cent did not indicate level of child development.

The total percentage of fathers with child development education in one or more of the levels from middle school through college, including adult parenting classes, was 32 per cent. Sixty-six percent had no former child development education, and two per cent did not indicate level of child development.

Data indicated that more mothers than fathers had taken home economics child development. Educational level increased the percentage of fathers that took child development and decreased the percentage of mothers that took child development. Overall, however, a larger percentage of mothers than fathers had child development education.

Mothers proved to be the primary disciplinarians. A greater percentage of mothers checked the mother as being primary disciplinarian than did fathers. Seventy-seven per cent of the mothers stated that mother was the primary disciplinarian, while only sixty-eight per cent of the fathers indicated mothers as the primary disciplinarian. Fourteen per cent of the mothers checked fathers as being primary disciplinarian, while twenty-one per cent of the fathers designated fathers as the primary disciplinarian. Eight per cent of the parents indicated that mothers and fathers were equal disciplinarians in the family.

The mother was selected as the primary disciplinarian in all categories of child development education. No significant difference was
noted in any one level of parents with child development education. One hundred per cent of the parents with adult parenting classes stated that the mother was primary disciplinarian. However, the significance level was greater than .05, and no pattern developed in the child development categories.

Data indicated the mother was primary disciplinarian of the family in all categories of child development education as well as the category of no former child development education. Neither child development education nor educational level had a significant bearing on the primary disciplinarian of the family.

Husband and wife agreement on disciplinary techniques used in the family was determined by a five-point scale question concerning how often husband and wife perceived they agreed on disciplinary techniques used in the family: always, most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or never. A significance level of .05 and below was established for both the child development categories and the educational categories.

Parents in the categories of no child development education and child development in high school or middle school perceived that they agreed always more than the college child development categories or adult parenting category. Thirteen per cent of the parents in the no child development category and 23 per cent of the parents in the high school or middle school category perceived they agree always. Only two per cent of the parents in the college child development and adult
parenting categories perceived they agree always. However, 86 per cent of the parents in the college child development categories stated they agreed most of the time or always as compared to 76 per cent of the parents in the no child development category and 79 per cent in the high school or middle school category.

Six per cent of the parents in the no child development category indicated they rarely or never agreed, and two per cent of the parents in the high school or middle school category stated they rarely or never agreed. No parents in the college child development categories stated they rarely or never agreed. Overall, in the categories from middle school through college child development, 85 per cent of the parents checked that they agreed most of the time or always as compared to 78 per cent of the parents in the no child development category.

Fifty-seven per cent of the parents in the elementary school or less educational category indicated they agreed always. Nineteen per cent of the middle school category indicated they always agreed, and 16 per cent of the parents in the high school educational category stated they agreed always. Only seven per cent of the parents in the college educational category indicated they always agreed. However, the college educational category was significantly more likely to agree most of the time or always. Ninety-three per cent of parents in college educational category stated they agreed most of the time or always, as compared to 71 per cent of the middle school parents, and 74 per cent
for the high school parents. Eighty-six per cent of the parents in the category of elementary school or less perceived they agreed most of the time or always. With the exception of the parents in the category of elementary school or less, increased educational level appeared to be positively related to increased agreement of husband and wife concerning disciplinary techniques most of the time or always.

In general, data indicated that both child development education and increased educational level were related to increased agreement most of the time or always of husband and wife concerning disciplinary techniques. No child development education and lower educational levels were related to parents rarely or never agreeing. Fathers perceived more agreement of husband and wife than did the mothers.

The educational category least likely to use punitive techniques is the elementary school educated and less. The educational category most likely to use punitive techniques is the college educated with five or more years of college. The rise in the use of punitive techniques is slight from middle school through college. The use of punitive techniques in relation to educational level is shown in Figure 2.

The category of college educated with five or more years of college was the group most likely to use reasoning techniques. As the educational level decreased, the use of reasoning techniques decreased. The use of reasoning techniques in relation to educational level is shown in Figure 2.
Five specific punitive techniques were significant below the .05 level in relation to educational level. Increased educational level was positively related to parents' use of the disciplinary techniques of sending to room for a set period of time, scolding, and depriving of something or restricting privileges. Low educational level was positively related to teasing and putting a child to bed.

Fig. 2.--Average use of punitive and reasoning techniques in relation to educational level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Grade or Less</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Through Ninth Grade</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Through Twelfth Grade</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College (Total)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or More Years College</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Punitive Technique

#### Reasoning Technique

---

- Punitive
- Reasoning
Four specific reasoning techniques were significant below the .05 level in relation to educational level. Increased educational level was positively related to sending a child to room until agreeable to change behavior, ignoring, coaxing, and nagging.

Data did not indicate that low educational status was positively related to punitive forms of discipline. The use of punitive techniques increased slightly as the educational level increased. High educational status was positively related to the use of reasoning techniques.

Summary

For this study, it appeared that educational level of child development and educational level alone affected disciplinary techniques more than home economics child development education in high school or middle school. Data did indicate that a larger percentage of mothers than fathers had taken home economics child development education. However, this also was affected by educational level. Fathers with child development education on the college level equalled mothers with child development education on the college level. The likelihood of parents agreeing on disciplinary techniques increased significantly on all levels of child development education as well as increased educational levels.
Summary

The problem of this study was to determine if home economics child development education affected disciplinary techniques used by parents of kindergarten children. The study analyzed and compared parently disciplinary techniques of parents with home economics child development education and parents with no former home economics child development education.

An eleven-part questionnaire was sent to 452 parents of kindergarten children in the towns of Allen and McKinney, Texas. Two hundred and ninety-eight questionnaires were completed and returned. One hundred and eighty-eight respondents were mothers and 108 were fathers. Two respondents did not indicate whether they were mother or father. The data were analyzed using chi square to test for significant differences between categorized groups of parents. The categories included: no child development education, child development in middle school or high school, child development in both high school and college, child development in college only, and adult parenting classes. Educational level categories were sixth grade or less, seventh through
ninth grade, tenth through twelfth grade, college, and college educated with five years or more of college.

A summary of the findings with respect to the purposes of this study is as follows:

1. Parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education did not define "discipline" more as reasoning and less as punitive. Child development taken on the college level, adult parenting, and high educational status in general were positively related to defining "discipline" as more reasoning and less punitive.

2. Parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education, did not reason more and punish less. Parents with child development in college and college educated were slightly more punitive and significantly more reasoning. Punitiveness and reasoning increased as education increased.

3. Parents with home economics child development education were not more consistent in the use of discipline with a behavioral problem. Parents with child development on the college level were more affected by stress, and were slightly less affected by feeling particularly good than parents in other child development categories. Parents with college educations were significantly more affected by stress than parents with no college education.
4. Parents with home economics child development education, as compared to parents with no home economics child development education, were not significantly more likely to vary disciplinary techniques. However, as the level at which child development was taken increased, and with higher education in general, disciplinary techniques became more varied.

5. Sources from which parents learned disciplinary techniques presently used in the family were no different in families of parents with former home economics child development education as compared to parents with no former home economics child development education. Parents with child development in college, college educated parents in general, and parents with adult parenting classes were significantly more likely to indicate that they learned disciplinary techniques from a source. Parents in these categories were significantly more likely to use as sources books and articles specifically on child behavior, or parents. Parents in these categories were also more likely to use friends and relatives as sources.

6. More mothers than fathers had taken home economics child development. Three times as many mothers as fathers had child development in high school or middle school. However, on the college level, the percentage of mothers and fathers with child development education was equal.
7. Mothers were the primary disciplinarian in all categories. More mothers checked that the mother was the primary disciplinarian than did fathers. However, more fathers indicated the mother as primary disciplinarian within their own group.

8. More mothers and fathers with no home economics child development education disagreed on disciplinary techniques than mothers and fathers with home economics child development education. Data indicated that both child development and increased educational level were positively related to agreement of husband and wife concerning disciplinary techniques most of the time or always.

9. Low educational status was not positively related to punitive forms of discipline. On the contrary, punitiveness increased slightly as the educational level increased.

Conclusions

Home economics child development education in high school or middle school has not significantly affected disciplinary techniques used by parents of kindergarten children. Increased educational status in general significantly affected disciplinary techniques used by parents of kindergarten children.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:
1. As parental education increases, it is suggested that parental expectation of children increases. As expectations increase, frustration with disciplining could increase. Therefore, punitiveness and parental reaction to stress also could increase.

2. Terminology concerning disciplinary techniques may better be understood by parents with increased educational status. Therefore, the terms on the questionnaire would be understood more.

3. Parents with increased educational status possibly had parents with high expectations also, thus encouraging the adoption of many disciplinary techniques used upon themselves. It is further suggested that the higher the educational status, the more likely a person is to read or engage in discussion. This may account for the use of books and articles or friends and relatives as sources of disciplinary techniques.

4. Home economics child development, in the past, has been a sex stereotyped course. For this reason, fewer males have enrolled in this course. Thus, fewer men would be exposed to child development in high school or middle school.

5. It is suggested that certain specific disciplinary techniques are sex stereotyped. Teasing, ridiculing, and frightening are characteristic of little boys more than of little girls. The tendency to use these techniques may continue into fatherhood where they are employed as disciplinary techniques.
6. More fathers than mothers are employed full time. Fathers may work late or commute long distances and have very little time to spend with his children. Many fathers travel and may be gone overnight or longer. Mothers are more likely to be home with the children during the day than the father. For this reason, possibly, the mother is the primary disciplinarian of the family.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that in order to help parents cope with disciplinary problems, additional research should be conducted with the following changes:
   a. Have respondents specify the area of the curriculum that they were exposed to child development education.
   b. Include brief case studies of no more than three lines to determine techniques employed in specific situations.
   c. Include more parents with adult parenting education.
   d. Include category to determine the employment status of parents and to what degree employment keeps them away from home.

2. It is recommended that discipline be emphasized more in home economics child development classes by:
   a. Teaching more about the techniques prescribed by the various authorities on child behavior.
   b. Encourage more discussions of techniques used by the students' parents.
c. Include video tapes of disciplinary situations with students solving the situations.

d. Include pre and post, or more frequent, visits to child care facilities.

3. It is recommended that home economics teachers should recruit more males to study child development and home economics.

4. It is recommended that parenting courses be adopted at the secondary level.
APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES

A questionnaire is included for each parent or guardian. Please check the blank which most closely agrees with your answer. Upon completion of the questionnaire by, preferably, both parents or guardians, return the questionnaires to the envelope, seal, and return to your child's classroom. It would be very helpful if the questionnaires could be completed and returned by the end of this week. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Responses to this questionnaire will be completely anonymous.

1. Check if you are:

   ______ Mother or female guardian   ______ Number of children in family
   ______ Father or male guardian

2. Check your level of highest education:

   ______ 6th grade or less   ______ 10th-12th grade
   ______ 7th-9th grade   ______ College (no. of yrs.___)

3. Check level in which you took child development courses:

   ______ None   ______ High school
   ______ Elementary   ______ College
   ______ Jr. high or middle school   ______ Adult parenting class

4. Check the sources from which you learned the disciplinary techniques you presently use in your family:

   ______ None, what comes naturally at the time behavioral problem occurs.
   ______ Imitate techniques employed by spouse.
   ______ Imitate techniques used by parents.
   ______ Imitate techniques used in books or articles specifically on child behavior.
Imitate techniques used in novels, autobiographies, biographies, or stories (fictional or non-fictional).

Imitate techniques seen on television.

Imitate techniques used by friends or relatives other than parents.

Other, explain: ____________________________

5. Check who disciplines the child most:

   _______ Mother or female guardian.

   _______ Father or male guardian.

   _______ Other.

6. Check the appropriate blank describing how often husband and wife agree on disciplinary techniques used with children:

   _______ Always

   _______ Most of the time

   _______ Some of the time

   _______ Rarely

   _______ Never

7. Check only one of the following terms which you feel describes your concept of what it is to discipline:

   _______ Physical punishment (spanking, etc.)

   _______ Verbal punishment (teasing, scolding, etc.)

   _______ Loss of privileges (grounding, depriving of playthings, etc.)

   _______ Reinforcement (rewarding good behavior, ignoring inappropriate behavior, etc.)

   _______ Reasoning (explaining, cooling-off periods, etc.)
8. Check whether your disciplinary techniques would change if you were under a feeling of stress (tired, rushed, irritable, etc.):

______ Yes

______ No

9. Check whether you might be likely to ignore a disciplinary problem at times when you feel particularly good:

______ Yes

______ No

10. To me, "discipline" means: ________________________________________________

11. Please check the disciplinary techniques described below under the column which denotes how often you use them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Techniques</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverting attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending child to room for a set period of time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending child to room until agreeable to change behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having child sit quietly anywhere and think</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scolding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaxing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating to reach mutual agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing to other children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridiculing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting to bed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frightening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depriving of something or restricting privileges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other, explain: ________________________________


HELEN PARKER
APPENDIX B
Dr. John Horn, Superintendent

ALLEN
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

March 11, 1981

TO: Parents of Kindergarten Students

This is to advise you that Mrs. Helen Parker has our approval to conduct this study. However, your participation is strictly voluntary. Should you agree to return the questionnaire, your response will be anonymous.

Your consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

/s/
John Horn, Ed.D.
Superintendent

JH:pc

AISD, 700 East Main Street, P.O. Box 13, Allen, Texas 75002
(214) 727-5611·248-0313 (metro)
APPENDIX C
Dear Parents:

I am Helen Parker, a home economics graduate student of North Texas State University. My family and I have lived in Allen, Texas, for the past six years. I am trying to complete my graduate work and, in so doing, have been studying disciplinary techniques parents use with their children.

Within the next week, you will be receiving a questionnaire that will ask you to respond to a brief check list pertaining to disciplinary techniques used in your family. The questionnaire is being sent to parents of kindergarten children in the cities of Allen and McKinney, Texas, and will be completely anonymous. We only wish to find out what techniques are being used. A self-addressed envelope will be enclosed for the return of the questionnaire by your child to the classroom where a box will be provided for deposit of the sealed envelope.

The purpose of this study will be to identify the disciplinary techniques used most often with children. These results will be used to design a curriculum for teaching home economics child development courses.

I would appreciate the responses of preferably both parents or guardians. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours very truly,

Helen Parker

P.S. As a graduate student of Dr. Lana Mangold, Helen Parker has the approval from the School of Home Economics at North Texas State University to complete this study.

/s/
Dr. Lana Mangold
I would like to thank the parents of the kindergarten children for so generously sharing their knowledge and ideas for the study on disciplinary techniques. Your response has been tremendous for which I am very grateful. Parents who have not as yet turned in their questionnaires may do so this week. Respectfully yours,

Helen Parker
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Books


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**Articles**


Watson, Goodwin, "Some Personality Differences in Children Related to Strict or Permissive Parental Discipline," *Journal of Psychology* (June 1957), 227-249.


Encyclopedia Articles


Unpublished Materials

