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# Determining the effects on parental attitudes and parenting styles towards child rearing after participation in a rural parenting program

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# DETERMINING THE EFFECTS ON PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND PARENTING STYLES TOWARDS CHILD REARING AFTER PARTICIPATION IN A RURAL PARENTING PROGRAM

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Thesis submitted to the

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**ABSTRACT**

**Determining the Effects on Parental Attitudes and Parenting Styles Towards Child Rearing After Participation in a Rural Parenting Program**

**Kathryn A. Canter**

The intent of this study was to examine parental attitudes toward parenting and parenting styles before and after participation in a rural parent education program. The parental attitudes toward parenting were measured by the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI). The three parenting styles; authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive, were measured by the Parenting Style Dimension (PSD). The participants in this study were six mothers of children who attended either the Starting Points Center Happy School or who visited the Food Pantry at Scott's Run Settlement House in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Cronbach's alphas were run on all measures with high reliability found on all except the program content measure. Cronbach's alpha for the attitudes reflecting authoritarianism and warmth ranged from .76 to .79. Cronbach's alphas for the three styles of parenting from the Parental Styles and Dimensions (PSD) ranged from .79 to .92. The Cronbach's alpha for the program content measure was .43.

An alpha level of .05 was used in all statistical analysis. According to the results of the paired-sampled $t$-tests, there were no significant pre-to-posttest changes on the measures. The hypotheses were not supported. The mean scores did decrease slightly for the attitudes reflecting authoritarianism from 29.33 to 28.33 (5.05 to 2.42). There were also some differences in the mean scores for the authoritarian parenting style from 39.17 to 35.33 (7.14 to 2.42).

None of the hypothesis were proven as result of the smaller sample size and short program length. It is suggested that more research needs to be done with a larger sample and longer parent education program.

Dedicated to:

My Husband

Jim Canter

I have enjoyed this journey through the West Virginia University Master's

Program and whatever the future holds for me, I will never forget all of you.  Again, I

thank you all so very much.  You have touched my life forever.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**Introduction**

Parental attitudes, beliefs, and parenting styles have an impact on the development of their children.  It is through the parent-child interaction that a child learns to survive in society.  Parents have been implicated as the principal causal agents in their child's behavioral, personality, emotional, and cognitive development (Holden & Edwards, 1989).  A child develops a personality and value system based on these learned attitudes and behaviors.  These elements of parenting are intertwined and affect the child through their interactions with their parents.  It is the complexity of these interactions that mold and assist the child in personality development and self-esteem (Anderson & Hughes, 1957).  It is through the process of growing and learning that a child gains and maintains his/her own value system.

Parents teach beliefs and attitudes through both direct and indirect methods.  A child discovers these attitudes by observing the parent's actions and behaviors.  It is not uncommon to acquire parental attitudes through an indirect activity of the parent (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1985).  The stronger the parent-child relationship, the more uneventful this process becomes.  Parental attitudes are derived from many sources and are maintained through experience.  Attitudes are learned behaviors and are formed on the basis of parental beliefs.  People's belief system develops throughout their lifetimes.  Beliefs are individual and internal.  They are based on the personal views and values of the individual holding them.

Attitudes are not directly observable or measurable.  They are inferred by one's reaction to stimuli (Dawes, 1972).  Attitudes are simply responses and are formed by environmental interactions (Goodnow, 1985).  Some have described attitudes as being the end product of

socialization (Shaw & Wright, 1967).   They can be formed, changed, or retained according to each individual's preference.

Parental beliefs are the knowledge a person has about the object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).  This knowledge can be acquired through many avenues (teachers, parents, and church organizations), experiences, and observations.  Segal (1985) claimed that beliefs are based on convictions *and* knowledge.  Beliefs are held as absolute truths and can be organized, evaluated, and shared (Miller, Manhal, & Mee, 1991).  Some believe there is a direct link between parental beliefs and parental behaviors (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982).

People maintain their beliefs because they feel comfortable within their own group or community (Goodnow, 1985).  Children acquire these beliefs from the onset of life.  They learn the beliefs of their parents through observing and modeling their parents. Some beliefs are global.  We all understand that children learn by exploration, acquiring knowledge, and their parent's interpretations of the environment.  Beliefs about parenting are not static.  They change throughout the life stages of development (Sigel, 1985).

Children discover their parent's beliefs through the behaviors of their parents.  Simons, Beaman, Conger, & Wei (1992) believed that parents somehow transmit their personal beliefs to their children.  This results in the child acquiring a similar set of beliefs to be handed down to their own children later in life.

Parents display parenting styles in various forms of behaviors.  Child rearing attitudes and parenting styles are a result of the parent-child interactions (Baumrind, 1971).   Through positive interaction the child can develop positive self-esteem and self-concept.  This interaction is also responsible for the optimal development of the child--emotionally, socially, and even physically.

Three basic parenting styles are authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative (Baumrind, 1973). Each of these parenting styles is relayed to the child in different manners. Each style focuses on different values and behaviors to be adopted by the child. Parenting styles can influence a child's development in both positive and negative ways.

*Authoritarian* parenting is based on strict rule enforcement and obedience. Parents practicing this style are very controlling (Baumrind & Black, 1967). Authoritarian families have very little, if any give and take between the child and the parent. Rigid rules are maintained and never challenged. *Permissive* parenting is represented by quite the opposite behavior. Permissive parents are very tolerant and understanding. Punishment is seldom used. Society views these parents as "not caring" and uninvolved (Baumrind, 1971). The child is permitted to make the decisions and the parent enforces few rules. *Authoritative* parenting is a compromise between the previously discussed styles of parenting. Open communication and reasonable demands on the child are made (Coopersmith, 1967). This method of parenting is considered the best solution to child rearing. All of the family members experience open communication and encourage the child's individuality and independence (Baumrind, 1971).

Parent education concerning child rearing is a necessary component of rearing socially acceptable children. There are so many different family issues present today that it is impossible to address all of them. Children are exposed to many different personalities and beliefs so that forming their own values and attitudes is a major endeavor. Parents play an important role in the formation of these beliefs and the developmental growth of their children (Baumrind, 1980).

Rural parents face more challenges concerning child rearing. Rural communities maintain high levels of family values and community interaction. They are viewed as conservative and hold more traditional male and female gender roles (Belscher-Donnelly &

Smith, 1981).  Today's society maintains that many families have two incomes.  This situation is more difficult for rural parents to overcome.  Proximity and availability of parenting and child rearing resources are two key issues concerning parents working outside the home.

**Purpose of this Study**

The purpose of this study was to implement a rural parenting program.  Another purpose was to improve the parental beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (parenting styles) concerning child rearing through parent's participation in a parenting class.  The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) (Schaeffer & Bell, 1958) measured parental attitudes concerning child rearing.  An attitude, which is theoretically relevant to personality development in children, is a factor in forming beliefs and behaviors.  The specific parenting styles were measured by the Parenting Style Dimension measure (Robinson, 1995).  The Program Content Questionnaire measured the content of the pilot-parenting program for content retention and validity.  The interrelatedness of the three variables of parental beliefs, parental attitudes, and parental behaviors (parenting styles) were examined in this study.

## **Hypotheses**

This study included the following hypotheses:

1.    a. Attitudes toward parenting reflecting warmth will show significant improvement after participation in a parent education class.

      b. Attitudes toward parenting reflecting authoritarianism will show significant reduction after participation in a parent education class.

2.    a. Authoritative parenting styles will show significant improvement after participation in a parent education class.

      b. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles will show a significant reduction after participation in a parent education class.

3.  There will be an improvement in the program content scores concerning developmental aspects of children and other parenting issues after participation in a parent education class.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Literature Review

The literature review in this study focused on the nature of parental beliefs, parental attitudes, and parenting styles and behaviors in regard to parenting and child rearing issues. The interrelatedness of these areas is discussed thoroughly. The discussion of parental beliefs included factors that affect the content of belief systems. Parental attitudes have an impact on a child's concept of personal self-esteem and their goal setting initiatives. The parenting styles concerning childrearing are discussed focusing on the development of the child's self-esteem, self-worth, goal attainment, and self-efficacy. The parenting styles discussed are authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive.

The focus of this research is the psychology of attitudes concerning parenting. Three main variables discussed are parental attitudes, parental beliefs, and parental behaviors. It is believed that these three elements of parenting are intertwined and, in essence, do influence and affect the others through a large variety of factors. Beliefs are an important building block of attitude theory. Beliefs may take several forms, including images and representations of one's behaviors or experiences in relation to the belief (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). It is these corresponding variables that have been associated with stereotyping and prejudices. The formation and effects of parental beliefs in relation to parental attitudes and behaviors are influenced by personality factors, family experience, environment, society, and culture (see Figure 1). These interactions were the primary focus of this study.

Personality
   Factors

Family
   Experience

Environment

Society

Culture

Parental
Beliefs

Parenting
Styles

Attitudes

Child
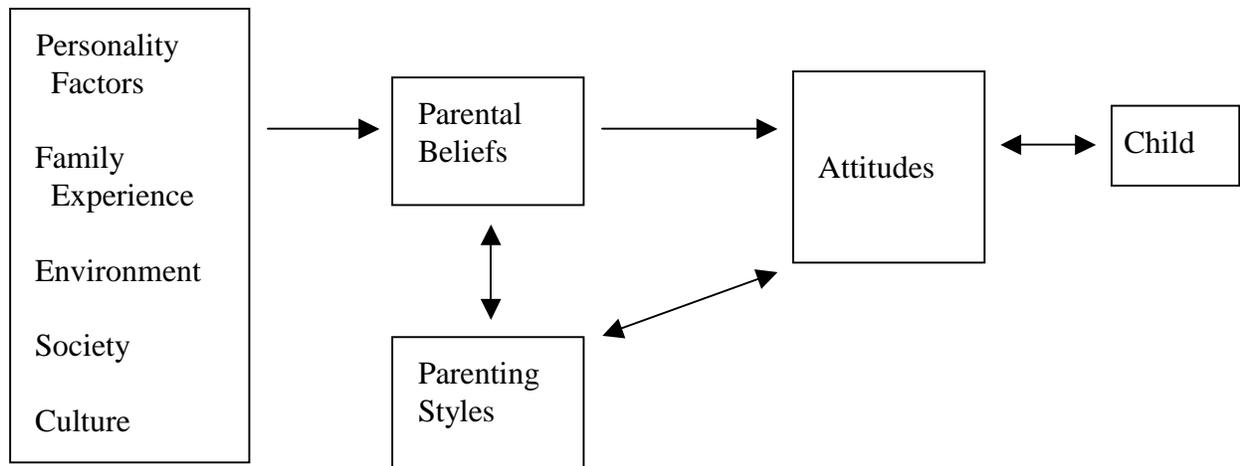
Figure 1. The Formation and Effects of Parental Attitudes and Styles

**Parental Beliefs and Attitudes**

**Beliefs - defined.** The term *belief* expresses a contradiction. Beliefs are distinct from

such cognitions as goals, wishes, values, although, of course, the latter may influence them.  In

the dictionary, belief is defined as faith, but faith is nonconforming acceptance of some idea.

This definition in itself causes some confusion on the term.  t is defined in the *American

Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as:

> (1)  The mental act, condition, or habit of placing trust or confidence in a
>       person or a thing; faith.
> (1)  Mental acceptance or conviction in truth or actuality of something.
> (2)  Something believed or accepted as true, especially, a particular tenet, or a
>       body of tenets, accepted by a group of persons (Morris, 1970, p. 121).

Beliefs refer to "the knowledge a person has about the object" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 191-

192).  Knowledge has two distinct parts.  There is the "knowing that" and "knowing how"

(O'Conner & Carr, 1982).  This can be explained as knowing that something is true and knowing

how to perform some type of action.  Knowledge can be acquired through many avenues

(teachers, parents, and church associations), experiences, and observations, just to name a few.

Beliefs are based on convictions *and* knowledge (Sigel 1985).

Sigel (1985) defined *beliefs* as:

> … knowledge in the sense that the individual knows that what he/she
> espouses is true or probably true, and evidence may or not be deemed necessary;
> or if evidence is used, it forms a basis for the belief but is not the belief itself
> (Sigel, 1985, p. 347).

Beliefs are made up from experiences and are maintained as absolute truths.  They are

constructions of reality (Sigel, 1985).  Individuals know *what* and *that* they have beliefs.  Beliefs

can be categorically defined.  They can be organized, evaluated, and shared.  Beliefs can be a

representation of reality aspects.  Beliefs are distinct from wishes, goals, and values, but they

may be influenced by the latter (Miller et al., 1991).  Some believe there is a direct correlation

between parental beliefs and parental behaviors (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982).

Some studies have focused on the general beliefs systems about the nature of

development.  How do children get the way they are?  What abilities of children are inborn, and

which are learned through experience?  Are children passive to their environment or are they

contributors?  Once these abilities are developed, do they remain stable or are they capable of

changing as the child matures?  Other research studies have focused on the parent's specific

beliefs about children's abilities.  Beliefs investigated in this area are usually concerning the

developmental timing of these abilities (Goodnow, 1985).  Some wonder about the individual

abilities of one's own child.  The interest here is usually how children get to be the way they are.

Concerning accuracy of these parental beliefs, there are no right or wrong answers.  Every

individual develops at his/her own pace and each parent observes these abilities through a familial bias (Miller, 1988).

Some beliefs are globally known. Examples of these are: (a) children learn through exploration, (b) children learn through accumulations of knowledge, and (c) children learn through parental modifications of the environment. Beliefs are not static, but they tend to change through the life cycle due to education and knowledge (Sigel, 1985). Sigel (1985) believed that beliefs are interactional and they influence many areas of our lives. They refer not only to child development, but also link to politics and religion. The sources for these beliefs are personal experiences. This model is a bi-directional feedback model. The child's performance does influence the parents' beliefs and behaviors and vice versa.

The sources for these beliefs are cultural resources and personal experiences. They are subject to change due to media exposure, education, and family relationships with significant others. These beliefs may also be influenced by personal knowledge and the developmental level of the child. It is this aspect concerning the influential ability of beliefs that has peaked the curiosity of many researchers in recent years.

**Factors affecting parental beliefs.** Parental beliefs are changing and are influenced by a variety of factors. They are affected by the child's development and influenced by a complex and larger cultural context (Sigel & Cocking, 1977). These beliefs are therefore *influencing* and *being influenced* by other factors within the environmental system, including the family system of the child. Interventions focusing on the parent's childrearing practices are likely to be unsuccessful unless they take into account the personal beliefs of parents about children's learning and development (Holloway, 1985).

It is not easy to research parental beliefs and attitudes. One could assume that it makes

perfect sense that a mother's behavior toward her child reflects her honest beliefs about that

child. This is not necessarily the case. Most mothers reflect an enhanced attitude of their child's

behaviors, aspirations, and cognitive levels (Sigel, 1985). Another problem is that children and

parents do not interact in a tightly sealed vacuum. They are small components of a large,

complex ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Many other factors influence both the

directed beliefs of the parents and the reciprocal behaviors of the child, such as culture,

community, and ethnicity.

Several variables concerning demographics such as income level, parental education, and

ethnicity have been linked to parental differences in parental child-rearing beliefs and attitudes.

The results proved this theory to be relevant for changing beliefs or attitudes of parents. In the

Ready for School study, parents who began the program defining their role as teachers, did not

change their beliefs or attitudes. It seemed that spending more time interacting with their

children in a positive way, led to fewer discipline encounters (Segal, 1985).

Parents do hold certain beliefs about children and parenting (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

It has even been established that under some conditions, children also maintain these same views

as their parents (Cashmore & Goodnow, 1985). There is evidence that differences in parental

beliefs have been linked to the beliefs about how children learn. Several studies have investigated

the impact of experiences as a parent (number of children). Others have been concerned with

parent's styles of interaction at work, responsibilities, and commitments influence perspectives

on people on children and the role of the parent. Still others tend to rely on the theory that one

*parents* as they were parented to as a child. This leads to the theory that parenting beliefs are

transmitted across generations to influence parenting practices, with this pattern of parenting

promoting similar set of beliefs to their children as a result (Simons et al., 1992).

Many believe that attitudes are derived from one's beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Many attitude theorists believe that people have beliefs about attitude objects and these beliefs

are referred to as the basic building blocks of attitudes (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993).   Beliefs are

those ideas that one has internally developed throughout one's lifetime.  Beliefs are more

personal and influence how one feels about many issues.  Personal convictions toward something

are the end results for forming one's beliefs.  Like attitudes, beliefs are influenced by many

factors and develop independently for each individual.

**Attitudes – defined.**    Attitudes have been defined as "predispositions to respond in a

particular way toward a specified class of objects" (Allport, 1968, pp. 59-60).  Attitudes are not

directly observable or measurable.  Instead, they are inferred from the way one reacts to stimuli.

To complicate matters, attitudes are more easily measured than defined (Dawes, 1972).  Attitudes

have also been described as being the end products of the socialization process.  They have been

known to significantly influence one's responses to other persons, to groups of people, and

cultural issues (Shaw & Wright, 1967).  They are ordinarily expressed in cognitive, behavioral,

or affective responses (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993).  Affective attitudes are liking or disliking

something.  Cognitive attitudes, commonly known as beliefs, are a personal idea about

something (Dawes, 1972).

An attitude implies a relationship between a person and a specific aspect of his

environment.  An individual does not acquire an attitude until he/she responds to an entity on a

behavioral basis.  This mental response is stored in memory only to be triggered by the presence

of the object or cues related to the object.  Virtually anything that can be evaluated can function

as an attitude object, such as, abstract viewpoints (e.g. liberalism and humanism), concrete views (e.g. a hat or shoe), or behaviors (e.g. playing football or singing a song).  Attitudes, in actuality, are a hypothetical construct used by psychologists and must be inferred from observable responses (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993).

Parents are of primary importance in providing their children with life experiences. Because of this, the attitudes that parents hold to be true toward parenting are likely to influence their child's personality and self-esteem (Anderson & Hughes, 1957).  Many studies in the past have not been conclusive due to the fact that poorly developed measurements were implemented. These measures have included many other facets of the parenting construct such as values and behaviors.

**Functions of attitudes.**  Katz (1960) has suggested that there are four major functions that attitudes perform.  They are as follows: (a) u*nderstanding* (*knowledge):* many attitudes help us to understand our world around us and to make sense of the things that happen there, (b) n*eed satisfaction:* we form attitudes as a result of the past experiences (punishments and rewards) for doing and saying things,  (these actions help us to satisfy our daily needs and to reach our goals), (c) e*go defense*: attitudes can enable us to enhance our self-esteem and put up barriers of defense for our daily living, and (4) v*alue expression*: these attitudes help us to establish our self-identity. This portrays exactly what kind of person you are.  It is sometimes recognized that the more important attitudes express an individual's basic values (Oskamp, 1977).

Another issue to consider is the consistency of parental child rearing attitudes. Historically, it has been taken for granted that the social order of attitudes has resulted in the globally accepted ideas being overcome with the specific ones.  It is a simple matter of the majority rules.  There has never been any proof to this but this idea has been around since the

1930's. For instance, the concepts of overprotection and rejection seemed to overcome the parent's behaviors (Levy, 1943). These actions are a compensation for any inadequacies felt by the parents.

**Structure of attitudes.** A common view of attitudes is that they maintain three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The cognitive component includes the ideas and beliefs that the attitude-holder has about the attitude-object. The affective component refers to the feelings and emotions one has toward the attitude-object. Finally, the behavioral component consists of the action tendencies toward the object.

Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) did a study that interpreted the correlation between attitudes and behaviors. They proposed that attitude has a direct influence on the behavior in addition to its indirect influence on behavior by means of intentions. Attitude can influence behavior only through its effects on intentions. These behaviors are stable and predictable. This theory has raised the question of previous behaviors maintained by the parent. These behaviors may have a direct impact on the intentions or subsequent behaviors of the parent.

In a study by Schaeffer and Bell (1958), the subjects were 100 unmarried student nurses in their freshman and sophomore years. The determination of this study was to investigate if it was possible to differentiate meaningful patterns of maternal attitudes in young unmarried females. This study hoped to provide a basis for predicting mother-child interaction from data collected prior to the child's birth (Schaeffer & Bell, 1958). Over-possessiveness of the child supported the mother's need to control the family environment. This need for control could have been a result of growing up in a home environment that displayed a controlling parenting scheme. In some extreme cases, infantilization was evident. This was when the mother controlled the child

to the extreme that she kept the child indebted to the mother, immature and totally dependent

(Shaeffer & Bell, 1958).

      **<u>Parental attitudes.</u>**  Differences in global child rearing attitudes are assumed to be

related to different parental behaviors resulting in differential child outcomes in the past.  Issues

investigated included the structure of attitudes, how attitudes related to behavior, and how

parental attitudes impacted parent-child relations.  Instruments used in past research studies have

been loosely defined.  They have been directed not only toward the attitudes of parents, but also

parental behaviors, beliefs, and values.  Parental attitudes have been proven as a distinct and

useful concept because they provide an insight that summarizes collective behavior. (Holden &

Edwards, 1989).

      Parents have been implicated as the principal causal agents in their child's behavioral,

personality, emotional, and cognitive development (Holden & Edwards, 1989).  This great

impact is achieved through passive and active as well as non-reactive and reactive processes

(Baumrind, 1980).  Passive procedures reflect an individual's lack of activity or conscious

participation in the process.  Active are quite the opposite.  They represent an active participation

and involvement in the learning procedure.  Reactive processes are a result or response to a

stimulus (similar to a reflex response), while a non-reactive response is difficult to justify

considering the specific stimuli.  In spite of the importance placed on parental influence,

evidence has accumulated on many ways the child's environment affects the child's development

(Maccoby & Martin, 1983).  So it is believed that parents are not alone in this endeavor.

      Today's newer attitude, described as "uninvolved" parenting (Maccoby and Martin,

1983), can also be defined as a global pervasive attitude.  Most parents are not persuaded by

these global ideals, but they are out there and must be taken into consideration (Holden & Edwards, 1989).

Finally, the concept that even if the parents have acquired parental attitudes of some kind, it is not clear how stable they are. Remember that *attitudes* are learned responses and are formed by environmental interactions (Goodnow, 1988). Some researchers have recognized that attitudes can be modified due to developmental changes or changing characteristics of the individual child (Coleman, Kris, & Provence, 1953), and may differ across the children in a particular family (Horney, 1933). Children provide their parents with immediate feedback to their behaviors. This may prompt parents to reevaluate or change their beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors frequently (Patterson & Reid, 1984).

There has been some evidence to adequately support the theory that parental attitudes affect the development of the child. For one reason, the attitudes of parents do not provide one with adequate assessment of their family environment. If the attitudes of parents are to influence the child, they must be stable, coherent, and reflect behavior (Holden & Edwards, 1989). This is not always the case. Many other factors influence these attitudes such as family, community, environment, peers, and culture.

**Historical origins of parental attitudes.** It is believed that the first parent-child rearing attitude questionnaires (PCRA) were developed in 1899 in collaboration between G. Stanley Hall and C.H. Sears. It contained a series of questions designed to explore and expose opinions of adults concerning punishment, the types of child behaviors that should be punished, and the type of punishment to be utilized (Holden & Edwards, 1989).

As early as 1936, Freud mentioned parental attitudes and their effect on child outcomes. Freud was not highly sensitive to the impact of parental attitudes on child development. He

simply outlined or laid the groundwork for his successors to investigate this theory. This

evolvement was left to those researchers such as E. Jones (1923), Horney (1933), and Ribble

(1943). Since then, numerous studies have been addressed on this topic (Rohner, 1986). The

basic premise is the *normal* attitude of parents is one of affection. If the emotional needs of the

parents have not been met, the parent will carry out these personality needs into their parenting

styles (Bakwin & Bakwin, 1940). This may lead to overprotection or rejecting of the child

(Levy, 1943). Overprotection is equivalent to prolonging infantile care whereas rejection is at

the opposite end of the spectrum.

Other "attitudinal excesses" in parents have also been investigated. Some of these were

strictness, permissiveness, authority, indulgence, and perfectionism (Bakwin & Bakwin, 1940).

As a result of these studies, attitude therapy was initiated to modify parental attitudes. Child

guidance clinics began to appear as early as 1920 to address this issue (Watson, 1953).

During the 1930's and 1940's, the study of parental attitudes rapidly expanded. For

example, the maternal attitudes toward breastfeeding (Freeman, 1932), hyperactivity (Ginsberg,

1934), and sex education (Ackerly, 1935) were all topics for discussion. Individuals promoting

parent education developed a program at the University of Iowa to collect and disseminate

knowledge about child rearing. As studied by Sears (1975) "If research could improve corn and

hogs it could also improve knowledge about child rearing" (p. 19). These efforts were the

beginning of parent education.

Parent attitudes were construed as beliefs about how to rear children. As advances in

knowledge about child rearing developed, parent's attitudes also changed (Florin & Dokecki,

1983). It was thought that "Defects in parental attitudes may be dependent, primarily, on

inexperience or ignorance of proper methods of child rearing or they may be the expression of distortions in the parental personalities" (Bakwin & Bakwin, 1940, p. 11).

**Impact of children on parental attitudes.** Today it is recognized that child behavior influences parental attitudes and behaviors. A child's characteristics, such as sex, age, temperament, intention, and behavior all influence parental responses (Grusec & Kucynski, 1980). Belsky (1984) portrayed that parental behaviors were determined by parental attitudes and the individual's developmental history, marital relations, social network, work status, and children's personal characteristics. Bacon and Ashmore (1986) developed a process model of parenting that required both cognitive and affective structures (beliefs, goals, and feelings) and cognitive processes (decision making and categorizing) to account for parental behaviors. Goldberg and Easterbrooks (1984) determined how the quality of marital relations could affect and influence parental attitudes (Holden & Edwards, 1989).

It should also be recognized that the child's perception of their parent's attitudes maintains an important role in the equation of parental influence. It has been found that although many questionnaires have been created to evaluate parent-child relations, they have limitations. Attitudes have been a difficult construct to measure accurately due to problems with relationship assessment instruments. Personal feelings and interpretations interfere with accurate assessments of attitudes. Some researchers such as Parke (1978) have suggested that other implications for behavior could be studied more profitably. These include judgments and attributions, problem solving, and decision-making. Parke has suggested that parents should be first recognized as thinking beings and, thus far, child rearing attitude surveys have failed to do so. Many of these surveys are outdated. Refinements and updates to these surveys have not been made to include changes in our present society.

**Parental influences on children's attitudes.**  It has been explained that the amount of parental influence over a young child's attitudes and behaviors is tremendous.  Parents have almost total control over the young child's informational input, the child's behaviors, and the rewards and punishments handed out.  This entitles them to have great power over shaping their child's attitudes.  It is true that most of childhood attitudes are formed as a result of direct experiences, but it must be remembered that almost all of these experiences are accomplished by the modeling and teachings of the parents.  A few examples of topics where the child would have no prior experiences to learn from are war, foreigners, political parties and candidates, other countries, and abstract concepts like freedom and justice (Oskamp, 1977).

Children are born with an uncanny sense of acceptance and until they learn otherwise, are usually accepting to others.  It is quite possible for children to learn prejudices indirectly, without any intentional teaching from their parents and/or acquaintances (Oskamp, 1977).  As children grow older, there are many other influences on their attitudes.

Many studies have attempted to trace the prejudices of children to the parenting styles of their parents.  Many researchers believe that children are what they observe and act accordingly. Disciplinarian parents that stress obedience, discipline, and punishment are likely to have prejudiced and authoritarian children (Oskamp, 1977).

Other researchers have concerned themselves with measuring parental attitudes with the consideration that attitudes are viewed as creating an emotional climate for children.  These studies have established that by evaluating the emotional impact that parental attitudes have on children, a description of attitudes can be devised in retrospect.  Parental attitudes have been viewed as creating a self-defined emotional climate in which children are reared (Falender & Mehrabian, 1980).

The results of these tests (Falender & Mehrabian, 1980), investigating various levels of pleasure, arousal, and dominance, showed an adequate internal consistency in child rearing attitudes but further evaluations are needed to evaluate relationships resulting from different parental temperaments, child temperaments, and parental child-rearing attitudes.  Within these child-rearing attitudes, areas of permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles could also be identified as a factor of pleasure, arousal, and dominance (Falender & Mehrabian, 1980).  Further research is needed in this area for this to be determined.

**Changing parental attitudes.**  Knowing that parents do indeed have attitudes about certain child rearing practices and these attitudes are handed down to their children, one can only speculate about the possibilities of encouraging attitude changes.  Education that is concerned with parent-child relationships is concerned with concepts, ideas, and attitudes, not just knowledge, information, and facts (Hereford, 1963).  This is a gray area that some believe is difficult to comprehend and few have ventured to take on.

Hereford (1963) believed that changing parental attitudes could be done through group discussion.  Through this attitude change, it is possible that a behavioral adjustment or change will undoubtedly follow.  Although Hereford found the subject matter difficult to find generally accepted factual knowledge – even from experts – he pushed forward with his investigation.  There is no absolute factual information dealing with parent-child relationships.  This subject matter is personal and complex (Hereford, 1963).

Hereford's (1963) four-year longitudinal study was based on the assumption of self-development.  The researcher conducted surveys and interviews with the participating parents and their children before and after the research intervention.  Five measures were used. They were: (1) Causation of Child's Behavior – concerned with the parent's interpretation of the

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child's behavior; (2) Acceptance of the Child's Behaviors and Feelings – measures the degree of

satisfaction of the parent with the child; (3) Mutual Understanding – an interaction variable for

communication;(4) Mutual Trust – measures the confidence parents and child have in each other;

(5) Classmate Relations and Adjustment – measures the social adjustment of the child (Hereford

1963).

Hereford (1963) determined that a parent should be directed to grow in his own way that

seems appropriate for him and his child.  A parent's goals should be to help the child develop his

potentials and in doing so find the behaviors, values, and attitudes that are most effective and

rewarding for his family.  It was believed that through participation and personal involvement

that the participating parents realized that they had to become ego-involved and self-invested.  By

listening and interacting with other parents, parental attitudes could be adjusted, if not changed

on certain topics.

**Summary of literature on parental attitudes and beliefs.**  Parental attitudes are

influenced by many factors.  It has been established that parents are causal agents in their child's

behavioral, personality, emotional, and cognitive development (Baumrind, 1980).  Holden and

Edwards (1989) believed that if the attitudes of parents are to influence the child, they must be

stable, coherent, and reflect behavior.  This is not always the case, resulting in a wide variety of

parenting styles and behaviors.

It is believed that parental attitudes are important in providing their child with life

experiences that, in turn, help the child to define his own attitude.  The attitudes that parents hold

true toward parenting are likely to have an influence on their child's personality and self-esteem

development (Anderson & Hughes, 1957).

Parental child rearing attitudes should also be considered as an important factor when investigating and explaining child-rearing issues (Levy, 1943). Researchers are hopeful that through modification of parenting styles and behaviors that many child-rearing issues may be more positively influenced (Coleman et al. 1953; Goodnow, 1988).

Some believe that attitudes are the end result of the socialization process (Shaw & Wright, 1967). Others describe attitudes as cognitive, commonly known as beliefs. These are personal ideas about something (Dawes, 1972). They can be formed, retained, or changed according to each individual's preference.

Parental attitudes are derived from many sources and are maintained through experience. These attitudes may be more clearly understood concerning parental attitudes about child rearing through future investigations. These attitudes may directly affect the parental beliefs and behaviors as well as parenting styles toward child rearing and parenting issues. The intentions of this study are to investigate how this might occur.

Beliefs are personal convictions about something. Beliefs help one form attitudes about certain subjects and are based on convictions and knowledge. They are formed by one's personal experiences and are maintained as absolute truths (Segal, 1985). Beliefs are distinct from one's wishes, goals, and values, but may be influenced by the latter (Miller et al., 1991). Some believe there is a correlation between parental beliefs and parental behaviors (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982). Concerning parental beliefs, there are no right or wrong answers. Every individual develops at his/her own pace and each parent observes these abilities through a familial basis (Miller, 1988).

Some beliefs are globally accepted. For example, children learn through exploration and through the accumulations of knowledge. Beliefs are interactional and they influence many areas

of our lives.  Beliefs are not static, but they tend to change through the life cycle due to education and knowledge (Sigel, 1985).

**Parenting Styles and Behaviors**

       **Parenting styles.**  It is understood that there are many different interpretations of parenting styles and child rearing attitudes.  Parents interact with their children in many different manners (Baumrind, 1971).  Parental interaction with the child is positively correlated with many characteristics that lead to optimal development of the child--emotionally, socially, and perhaps even physically.  This positive interaction will also influence the child's self-esteem and self-concept.

       Every parent has his or her own viewpoint on parenting and child rearing and will interact with their child in different ways than other parents.  This parenting style is what influences the child and affects his/her development.  Baumrind (1973) also views this interaction as detrimental to the child's social competence.  Baumrind focused on three parenting styles called authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive.  In each of these three family styles children are expected to adopt different values and behaviors from their parents.  The means of transmitting these values and behaviors is also different in each of the parenting styles.  Last of all, the parent's expectations concerning their children develop differently in each of these family styles (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987).

       In recent years parenting styles have become the focus of many researchers due to the widespread publicity concerning the phenomenon of child abuse.  It is also a focus due to the increasing number of children in the face of reduced mother-care as a result of more working mothers in our society.

**Parenting styles – defined.**   In a family viewed as *authoritarian,* the parental attitude is

very formal.  A very high level of demandedness is enforced on the part of the parents and a low

level of responsiveness by the child.  This family's authority is virtually one-sided.  These

parents enforce strict limits on the child's expressions and abilities.  Rules are enforced without

discussion or explanation.  Authoritarian parents believe their children are "good" if they are

obedient.  Challenging the parent is not tolerated and if it does occur, it is often met with severe

punishment.

Verbal interaction in the form of "give and take" is not encouraged.  Authoritarian parents

are simply too controlling (Baumrind & Black, 1967).  Some believe that authoritarian parenting

might lead to high rates of defiance and anger outbursts due to the rigid rule structure.

Coopersmith (1967) found that male children demonstrated low self-esteem when raised in an

authoritarian environment.

*Permissive* parenting is demonstrated by parents who are very tolerant and understanding

when it come to the behaviors and actions of their children.  Punishment is seldom utilized and

"free will" is encouraged with very few demands being made of the child.  Children are allowed

to be self-regulatory in their actions and consequences (Dornbusch et al., 1987).  These parents

accept impulsive behaviors and avoid almost entirely any forms of authority, restrictions, or

control on the child (Baumrind, 1971). Society often views a permissive parent as one who is

uninvolved and not caring.  In Baumrind's study (1971), children of permissive parents were

found to demonstrate a lack of social responsibility and independence.

An *authoritative* parent, as defined by Baumrind (1973), is the firm expectations from the

parents of mature behavior by the child.  Strict enforcements of rules and standards and

sanctions, when deemed necessary, are understood as the norm.  Open communication between

the child and the parents is expected and the expression of individuality on the part of the child is encouraged.  In an authoritative family both the parents and children have freedoms and rights and are recognized by all those involved.

The authoritative parent is considered the best solution to child rearing by many researchers (Baumrind, 1971; Coopersmith, 1967).  Parents practicing the authoritative parenting style will make firm, understandable, but reasonable demands on their children.  These demands will allow the child to make decisions and choices that are likely to promote higher self-esteem and social confidence.

It is believed that parenting styles influence the behavior of the child.  Some believe that these reactions of the child directly change or modify the attitudinal behavior of the parents.  It is the understanding of this researcher that parenting styles are in actuality parenting behaviors.

**Parental behaviors**.  Parental attitudes toward their child must be reflected in the form of parental behavior in order to be perceived by the child as important enough to influence the child's self-concept.  Two important factors concerning this are parental control and support.  Positive support for the child such as showing interest, support, or participation is positively related to the child's self-esteem (Gecas, 1986).

Gecas (1986) found parental support to be related to the child's self-esteem in a study of high school students.  Rosenberg  and Black, (1965) found high self-esteem to be related to parental interest in high school students.  In a study of high school boys, Bachman (1970) found good family relationship to be correlated to high self-esteem.  Coopersmith (1967), while studying younger children (fifth and sixth graders), found three conditions to be present with a child's high self-esteem: (a) parental acceptance of their child; (b) behavioral limits well-defined and enforced; and (c) respect for the child's actions within these set limits.  All of the above

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parent-child interactions convey to the child pertinent information about his/her inherent worth (Gecas, (1986).

The studies of Baumrind (1971) have focused on younger children (preschool and early grade school) and the correlation between parenting styles and school performance. Hess and McDevitt (1984) studied these same effects using older children (12 years of age). They found some evidence that high achievement is associated with high family identification with parents (Dornbusch et al., (1987).

Dornbusch et al., (1987) further investigated Baumrind's theory using a very diverse and large group of adolescents (7,839 students). They used a large-scale questionnaire to study these students and obtain the indirect styles of parenting. These questionnaires asked about student backgrounds, self-reported grades, and perceptions of parenting attitudes and behaviors, and family communication patterns. From these answers, parenting styles and background information were used as control variables, while grades were dependent variables (Dornbusch et al., 1987).

Numerous measures were included in the Dornbusch et al., study (1987), including the parenting style measure. There were small sex differences in this measure. Females showed a significantly lower level of authoritarian parenting, as compared to males. No differences were found in permissive parenting. It was also found that the age of the adolescent was directly linked to the parenting style of the parent. Older students displayed evidence of more permissive parenting while younger students showed a decline in the authoritarian parenting style. There was no clear relation to age with the authoritative parenting style in this study.

Ethnic group differences were found in the Dornbusch et al., study (1987). Black, Asian, and Hispanic families were higher on the authoritarian index for both males and females than

were White families.  These same family groups were lower in the authoritative family index.

Concerning permissive families, and compared to Whites, Blacks were lower and Hispanics and Asians were slightly higher than Blacks, respectively.

Parents who had higher levels of education were lower in authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and higher in authoritative parenting styles.  Families with two natural parents showed a lower level of permissiveness than single-mother families.  Single mothers showed lower levels of authoritarian parenting for sons only.  Single fathers were more permissive with both sexes (Dornbusch et al., 1987).

Concerning grades achieved in school across ethnic groups, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were correlated with lower grades, while authoritative parenting was related to higher grades.  Those children who were identified with more authoritarian, more permissive, and less authoritative parenting styles tended to get lower grades (Dornbusch et al., 1987).

Parents who used punitive disciplinary actions or disagreed with their spouse reported that their children were disobedient, aggressive, and had control problems.  Those parents disclosing the closeness to their children reported their children were well adjusted, independent, and did not have control problems (Kandel, 1990).

In a longitudinal study by Kandel (1990) it was found that previous drug use by parents had strong effects on participation in family-related roles later in life.  For example, marijuana use was related to marriages later in life, less chance of becoming a parent, and, if used after marriage, a greater chance for divorce (Yamaguchi & Kandel, 1985).  Individuals with a history of drug involvement were expected to convey their nonconformist lifestyles in areas of their lives such as child bearing.  Kandel (1990) believed that these parents would be less strict and less

consistent concerning discipline, resulting in the children of these parents to display more problematic behaviors.

Kandel (1990) obtained data from a cohort of adults who were followed since they were in their teens in 1971-72 in 18 high schools in New York State. These adults were then re-interviewed in 1980 and 1984. Approximately 1,222 young adults were participants of this study.

Data were collected through personal interviews that were approximately two hours each. Parents with young children (at least two years old) were interviewed in 1984. By then, the parents had 222 children aged six or older. The parenting scales used calculated a measure of supervision (punitive punishment, monitoring, affective closeness, discussion, and positive involvement). An item on parental disagreement was also identified.

The results of the study strongly supported the relationships between parenting styles and the children's behaviors, as assessed by the parents. The strongest correlations were between child aggression and parental discipline and between child attachment to the parent and parental closeness. Parents who disagreed with their spouse about discipline issues or who used punitive measures of discipline were more likely to have aggressive children with control issues and to display disobedience. Parents reporting closeness with their children and actively discussing issues with them were more likely to have well adjusted, independent children with little control problems (Kandel, 1990).

Kandel's study (1990) also reported that mothers seemed to have greater influence in childrearing than did fathers. The findings reinforce the dominant role that mothers have on the socialization of children. Other areas of influence include educational aspirations, moral development, religious beliefs, and values.

Antisocial behavior in children is promoted by familial disorganization, lack of parental discipline and monitoring of the child, and the apparent absence of rules in the household (Loeber & Dishion, 1983). These facts were supported in that male children who engaged in drug use and disorderly behaviors came from families with the most disruptive parenting skills (Loeber & Schmaling, 1985). Both the use of drugs and conduct problems seemed to appear in families set apart by similar childrearing styles.

It should be noted that conduct disorders, early forms of antisocial or aggressive behavior, and drug experimentation, including alcohol and cigarettes appeared in early and middle childhood and as early as age six. It appeared that certain parenting styles encouraged deviant behaviors in children who, as they grew older, repeated these same patterns of deviance behaviors with their children (Kandel, 1990).

**Attitudes and behaviors.** Attitudes are not necessarily obtained entirely through cognitive, affective, or behavioral processes. It is quite possible for a person to acquire an attitude simply by reading about a subject, having an indirect experience concerning a certain subject, and then never engaging in relevant behaviors pertaining to that particular attitude (reading) while the attitude was formed (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). A person may read about an attitude subject, then form an attitude about this particular subject and never engage in any activity concerning the newly formed attitude. The attitude is formed and never taken any futher.

There are several issues that need to be considered when investigating parental attitudes. One of these is the preexistence of child rearing attitudes. It is true that parents have many child rearing values they maintain (Kohn, 1977). They also differ in the ways that they believe these values affect the child's development (Goodnow, 1985; Miller, 1988). One needs to understand that there are many areas in which parents have yet to develop views about child rearing.

It needs to be understood that child rearing attitudes are not always bipolar or uni-dimensional as believed in the past. There is reason to believe that these attitudes reflect social attitudes concerning close relationships and are considerably more complex (Holden & Edwards, 1989). Reasons for this are: (a) parents are ego-invested in their children; (b) parents simultaneously have a history of interactions with their children and future expectations; and (c) the individual may have competing thoughts or attitudes about their children, for whatever reasons (Holden & Edwards, 1989).

Holden and Ritchie (1988) have argued that parental attitudes are often characterized by conflict and not harmony. These conflicts can be experiences by outside sources (advice from in-laws) or from internal, conflicting sources. These conflicts cause a dilemma for parents concerning social integration of their children going to school for the first time or determining the autonomy and independence of the child while still wanting obedience. These conflicts require flexibility on the part of the parents and adaptability in their parental behaviors (Holden & Edwards, 1989).

**Summary of literature on parental styles and behaviors**. Parenting styles are what influence the child and affects his/her development (Baumrind, 1973). The parenting styles discussed were: (1) authoritative; (2) authoritarian; (3) permissive. Each of these parenting styles the children are expected to adopt and conform to different values and behaviors of the parents. The means of transmitting these values and behaviors differ in each of these styles.

Parenting styles have been linked to parental beliefs concerning child rearing. Some of these differences in parenting styles are related to educational level, marital status, and ethnicity (Nitzberg, 1979). For example, authoritarian beliefs were associated with low parent education

and low value on process goals.  Parents with higher levels of education were lower in permissive and authoritarian styles and higher in authoritarian parenting styles.

Parental behaviors reflect the attitudes toward the child and should be perceived as positive to influence the child's self-esteem (Gecas, 1986).  Two examples of this are parental support and control.  To accept and acquire a positive self-concept, parents must show an interest in the child, display support, and participate in the child's life on a daily basis.

Parenting styles are learned and acquired through experience, example, and education.  A purpose of this study is to investigate the implications and results of such an educational intervention concerning parent education on child rearing.  Parenting styles are influenced by attitudes and beliefs of parents.  This study is focused on these interrelations.

**Parent Education - Intervention**

There has been research that indicates that positive changes in children are created by educating parents through intervention programs (Powell, 1983, 1986).  Parent education has been proven effective in changing parental attitudes about child rearing (Anchor & Thomason, 1977).  In reviewing the available literature, it suggests there are few quantifiable differences with regard to improvements or results among different types of parenting programs.  Some researchers suggest that these intervention programs include: (1) an assessment of parental needs with a plan for strategic implementation of these needs (Kroth & Otteni, 1983), (2) participation of these parents along with the children (Coleman & Ganong, 1983), (3) parental support (Pfannenstiel & Seltzer, 1989), and (4) the individualized structuring of these programs to fit the parents (Powell, 1983).

Traditional parent education programs have been criticized for helping only those parents with minimal problems with their children.  The result is a lowering of self-confidence levels of

parents who do have problems or issues with their children by inducing feelings of inadequacy or incompetence on the part of the parent. This provides a need for the individualization of parent education programs that would make the focus more sensitive to the needs of more parents.

A few programs have emphasized the investigation of the entire family system as a unit (Brooks, 1981) and the developmental concept (Noller & Taylor, 1989). These are important issues that are critical to the understanding of child rearing due to the fact that family interaction plays a big part in the child's developmental growth. It has been established that, for parents, attendance at these training programs can result in the desired improvements in family interactions and parenting skills (Spoth, Redman, Haggerty, & Ward, 1995).

Some of these issues discussed in the intervention specifically are related to the individual community the individuals live in. Rural communities are the focus of this study because it has been brought to the attention of the researcher that this population has limited resources available to them concerning parenting and child rearing skills.

## Rural Communities

Rural communities are defined as any persons living in towns with populations of less than 2,500, either incorporated or unincorporated. Rural communities, and communities less than 50,000 are labeled "non-metropolitan". Rural populations are divided into "rural farm" and "non-rural farm". Rural farm consists of all rural households living on farms whose agricultural products were sold for $1,000. Non-rural farm include all other rural households (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990).

The Appalachian Region is a 200,000-square-mile region that follows the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. Included in this region are the entire state of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky,

Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Approximately 22 million people live in this region called Appalachia. Almost half of the population of this region is rural (46%), compared to 20% of all the United States. The economic resources in this area are contributed to the extraction of natural resources (coal and natural gas) and manufacturing. The modern economy is focused on the service industry and tourism (Appalachian Regional Commission, 1999).

Rural communities depend on the interaction between the education source (schools) and parents for social and cultural activities. These communities are viewed as more conservative and value family and community interaction. Rural men and women tend to maintain more traditional gender roles than their urban counterparts (Bescher-Donnelly & Smith, 1981).

Rural communities have not escaped the many issues that parents of urban communities also face. Many rural families have both parents working outside the home resulting in "latchkey" or "self-care" children. As with many urban families, dual income resources are a necessity for the family's survival. Rural families face these needs with fewer resources available to them (Karnes & Stevens, 1995).

There is a prevalence of negative attitudes toward rural people and places (Herzog & Pittman, 1995). Our modern society does not value the rural community. Despite the fact that our American culture has a heightened awareness of and sensibility to cultural differences, it is considered politically correct and socially acceptable to make "fun" of this population. These obstacles compound the problems of rural parents.

Social interaction is limited and transportation can be an issue. The length of driving time to and from work can also be a problem due to the proximity of the home to the workplace.

Many families own only one vehicle and it is considered the primary source of transportation to work for the breadwinning parent. Those family members remaining at home without transportation experience further social isolation.

This study focused on these issues and investigated the results for the rural parents involved. Rural parents need a source for information concerning parenting and child rearing. Through this intervention discussions and interactions concerning child-rearing issues could be investigated. By providing an educational developmental base for these parents along with available community resources, a stronger bond might be formed between parents and their children.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Methods

### Overview

This study was undertaken for the purpose of investigating the effect of participating in a rural parenting program on parental attitudes, beliefs, parental behaviors or parenting styles. A pilot-parenting program for rural parents was implemented and evaluated.

Parents in rural areas often have problems relating to social isolation and this program was formatted to alleviate many of these problems. One of the major objectives of this study was to provide instruction in the form of a pilot program to parents of rural demographics. The program's focus was to describe and explain developmental growth of the child. Development occurs in physical, emotional, social, and behavioral aspects of a child's life. Parents understanding of these factors may help them realize that many of the behaviors of their children can be readily explained and understood. By implementing a program concerning child development and family interactions, many issues confronted by these parents can be addressed and discussed further.

### Description of Subjects

The proposed participants of this study were parents of children from infancy to adolescence. The six participants averaged two children per household. The ages of these children ranged from 2 to 15. Seven of these children were male and six were female. All of the participants were mothers and all were married except for one, who was divorced. These parents participated at Starting Points, located at the Waitman-Barbe Elementary School and Scott's Run Settlement House in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Two of the mothers were stay-at-home moms, three were employed outside the home, and one was unemployed. Four out of five of their spouses were employed full time outside the home. Two of these mother worked full time and one worked part time. Two of the mothers had completed grade school; one had attended some college; two has received their BA/BS Degrees; and one had earned her Masters Degree.

The average total family income for the families of the participants was: one family made under $4,999; two families earned between $15,000 and $19,999; two families made between $25,000 and $29,999; and one family earned over $30,000.

The study design was faulty experimental one group pretest-posttest test with paired subjects implemented in the form of a pilot study with a projection of 20 parents participating in the study. It included both pretest and posttest evaluations of the parents. These parents were selected by voluntary participation. Parents of all socio-economic backgrounds were welcomed. Parent participants selected were already familiar with Scott's Settlement House and Starting Points programs.

**Tentative Plans for Implementation of a Rural Parent Education Program**

As part of a resource network for parents in rural communities, family professionals are often frustrated with the lack of information for rural parents. A parent education program has been developed to target this group. This program was an interactive lecture/discussion group that met the needs of parents with children in all age groups (see Table 1). Parents learned: (a) developmental milestones for children age birth through adolescence, including coping mechanisms, for stressful periods in each age span, (b) communication strategies, (c) stress relief, (d) positive discipline techniques and (e) age appropriate activities.

The program was designed to take place over a period of seven weeks, with classes once each week for two hours. The first hour was an informative, developmental overview and the second was a group discussion during which specific concerns will be addressed. A short refreshment break divided each of the two sessions.

**Procedure**

Prior to teaching the parenting program and data collection, permission from the West Virginia University Institutional Review Board and the Directors of both Scott's Run Settlement House and Starting Points was obtained. The directors received a detailed outline of the parenting program including a timetable of the class sessions to be used.

Each potential participating parent received a letter explaining the study. This letter included approval information from the West Virginia Institution Review Board. Confidentiality was maintained by a numeric coding system. Participation was strictly voluntary. Parents taking part in the pilot study were given consent forms prior to any testing (see Appendix A). All participants have the expressed right to withdraw at any time from this study, no questions asked without penalty or consequences.

**Table 1.**

**<u>Rural Parent Education Program</u>**

I. Week One

    A. Welcome Forum

    B. Pretest

II. Week Two

    C. Infancy (Birth-Age Three)

        1. Physical, Social, & Mental Developmental Milestones

        2. Communicating with your Infant

        3. Behavioral Issues

        4. Discussion of Relevant Issues

III. Week Three

    A. Preschool (Age Three-Five)

        1. Physical, Social, & Mental Developmental Milestones

        2. Helping your Child Gain Self-Awareness

        3. Behavioral Issues

        4. Discussion of Relevant Issues

IV. Week Four

    A. School-Age Children (Age Five – Seven)

        1. Physical, Social, and Mental Developmental Milestones

        2. Helping your Child Become Well Socialized

        3. Behavioral Issues

4. Discussion of Relevant Issues

V. Week Five

    A.  Middle-School Age Children (Age Seven-Twelve)

        1.  Physical, Social, and Mental Developmental Milestones

        2.  Dealing With the Problems of Puberty

        3.  Behavioral Issues

        4.  Discussion of Relevant Issues

VI. Week Six

    A.  Adolescence (Age 13-Early 20's)

        1.  Physical, Social, and Mental Developmental Milestones

        2.  Bridging the Gap between Childhood and Adulthood

        3.  Behavioral Issues

        4.  Discussion of Relevant Issues

VII. Week Seven

    (1)  Summary

    (1)  Posttest

A standard demographic information and basic background sheet was given, along with written directions for filling out the questionnaire (see Appendix B). These directions and test questions were also given verbally at the time of the testing to insure clarity and understanding. A pretest was given to the participants during the initial class of the program. The posttest followed the six-week program and was given during the final class.

The Scott's Run Settlement House and Starting Points staff informed the participating parents of the program during other programs offered at the facilities. Questions about the program were directed to the co-authors and registration will be handled through a cooperative effort on the part of all parties. Final reminder calls and notification to the participants were made by the program's co-authors.

**Instruments**

**Parental Attitude Research Instrument.** The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) was used to measure parent's attitude toward child rearing (see Appendix C) by Schaeffer and Bell (1958). Although this instrument was developed many years ago, it has since been used and investigated by many researchers. Becker and Krug (1965) stated that the PARI had some shortcomings (i.e., the educational level of the respondents resulting in an unsuccessful questioning style) that could have caused a bias in question formation and interpretation, but it had indeed served as a steppingstone for the assessment of parenting attitudes. Perry, Jensen, and Adams (1985) used the PARI in a study investigating parent's attitudes toward child rearing and the sociometric status of preschool children. This study found potentially important relationships between the parent's perception of the child rearing role and peer relations during early childhood. It was found that peer evaluated social groups and child-rearing perceptions of parents positively corresponded.

Each scale of the PARI measures an attitude that is theoretically relevant to personality development in children. The PARI assesses child-rearing attitudes predicted to be associated with popular/amiable or rejected/isolated peer status. A shortened form of the original PARI consists of nine scales of five items each. These scales are rated in a Likert-type form. It contains a four-point response format ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The variables evaluated are authoritarianism and warmth. Authoritarianism is measured by irritability and reversed irritability. Warmth is measured by encouraging verbalization, equalitarianism, reversed deification, excluding outside influences, reversed excluding outside influences, and deification. The author, as a filler question, added a final variable called deception. For first-time mothers, reliability was .65 and for new, but not first-time mothers, the reliability was reported to be .68 (Cross & Kawash, 1968). Minor alterations may be made to alter the questions to fit maternal responses due to the expectation that primarily mothers will be participating in the study.

**Parenting styles and dimensions.** The Parenting Styles and Dimensions (PSD) was used to measure Baumrind's (1971) authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles (see Appendix D). Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, and Hart developed this measure in 1995. It was originally a 133-item questionnaire, which was derived from 80 items from Block's 1965) original report and 53 new items based on the three parenting styles of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. The 53 items were drawn from current literature that appeared to have face validity. After an initial testing, the questionnaire was streamlined to the 62 items. Of these 62 items, 19 (31%) were from the Block report and 43 were new items (69%). The PSD consists of 62 questions concerning parenting styles. A five-point Likert scale anchored by *never* and *always* represents the participant's responses. There are different questionnaire forms for

mothers and fathers. Only the Mother's Forms were used in this study due to the fact that all participants were mothers. If the participant ha more than one child, they were asked to answer the question for the child they felt was most the demanding. The authoritarian items consist of 27 questions with a Cronbach alpha of .91, the authoritative items consist of 20 questions with a Cronbach alpha of .86, and the permissive items consist of 15 items with a Cronbach alpha of .75 (Robinson et al., 1995).

**Program content measure.** A questionnaire was given to the participants concerning the content of the parenting program (see Appendix E). This questionnaire was used to assist in evaluating the program validity and effectiveness. It will consist of 20 multiple-choice questions evaluating the developmental and other information taught in the parenting classes.

**Demographics.** A demographic information sheet was developed by the researcher to obtain any necessary information relating to socio-economic status, background information, education level, age and gender of the participating parents and their children (see Appendix B).

**Statistical Analysis.** The study design was a faulty experimental one group pretest-posttest in the form of a pilot study. The data was analyzed by a paired subject t-test analysis.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Results

### The Reliability of Measurements

Cronbach's alphas were run to verify the reliability of the measurements. The Cronbach's alphas for the Parental Attitudes Research Instrument (PARI) for warmth and authoritarianism were .76 and .79, respectively. Data pertaining to the three parenting styles; authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, are presented in Table 2 and range from .79 to .92. High reliability was found for all of the variables except the content measurement (see Table 2). The Cronbach's alpha for the content measurement was .43.

**Table 2.**

### Cronbach's Alpha of each Parental Attitude and Parenting Style Subscale and the Content Measure Scores

| BASE VARIABLES | CRONBACH'S ALPHAS |
|---|---|
| Warmth (PARI) | .7563 |
| Authoritarianism (PARI) | .7913 |
| Authoritative Parenting Styles (PBF) | .8190 |
| Authoritarian Parenting Styles (PBF) | .7894 |
| Permissive Parenting Style (PBF) | .9183 |
| Content | .4334 |

**Primary Analysis**

An alpha level of .05 was used in all statistical analysis. According to the paired-sampled t-tests (see Table 3), the attitudes toward parenting reflecting warmth did not show any significant improvement after participating in a parent education class $t$ (.98) = .76, p = .374. The primary analysis of this study showed the means of the parental attitudes scores reflecting warmth did not significantly improve after participating in a parent education class (see Table 4). Instead they slightly decreased from 86.33 to 84.66.

As estimated in the hypothesis, the mean scores reflecting attitudes of authoritarianism, (PARI) did decrease slightly from 29.33 to 28.33 after participating in the parent education classes (see Table 4), but due to the small sample size, this was not supported by the results of the t-test; $t$ (-.67) = .79, p = .53 (see Table 3).

Authoritative parenting styles were hypothesized to increase significantly after participating in the parent education classes. The mean scores (see Table 4) decreased slightly from 80.50 to 80.00. This reduction was less than one. This was not a significant enough difference to substantiate a valid conclusion. The t-test failed to prove that the authoritative parenting styles showed a significant improvement after the intervention program (see Table 3), $t$ (.17) = .82, p = .19.

It was speculated that the authoritarian parenting styles would show a significant reduction after the parent education classes. The t-test analysis (see Table 3) failed to prove that the authoritative parenting style showed a significant improvement after the intervention program, $t$ (1.52) = .79, p = .87. The means of the scores reflecting the authoritarian parenting styles (see Table 4) went from 39.17 to 35.33. This was a slight decrease from pretest to posttest

but the t-test analysis failed to support this theory.  Perhaps with a larger sample size the t-test results could have supported the hypothesis.

The permissive parenting styles mean scores went from 25.50 to 28.67, pretest to posttest (see Table 4).  These numbers did not decrease significantly, but increased slightly.  The t-test analysis for the permissive parenting style, t (-1.84) = .92, p = .13, failed to support the proposed hypothesis by not showing a significant reduction after participation in a parent education program (see Table 3).

The significance of the parent education program, parenting styles and attitude changes were evaluated by observing the means of the base variables (see Table 4).  There was not a significant improvement in the program content scores after participating in the parent education program for seven weeks.  The pretest scores mean score was 18.33 and the posttest was 17.50. This was a decrease of less than one and does not substantiate a valid conclusion.  The t-test results failed to support the proposed hypothesis.  The results were t (-1.39) = .43, p = .224.

**Table 3.**

**Paired Samples t-test of Each of the Parenting Style Subscales and the Content Measure Scores**

| BASE VARIABLES | t-Values | df | p_Values |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Warmth** (PARI) | .7563 | .977 | .374 |
| **Authoritarianism** (PARI) | .7913 | -.674 | .530 |
| **Authoritative Parenting Styles** (PSD) | .8190 | .173 | .189 |
| **Authoritarian Parenting Styles** (PSD) | .7894 | 1.520 | .869 |
| **Permissive Parenting Styles** (PSD) | .9183 | -1.840 | .125 |
| **Content** | .4334 | -1.387 | .224 |

Note: An alpha level of .05 was used.

**Table 4.**

**Table of Means and Standard Deviation for Parenting Styles, Parental Attitudes, and
Program Content**

|  | *MEANS* | *STD. DEVIATION* |
|---|---|---|
| **WARMTH** | | |
| *PRETEST* | 86.33 | 6.35 |
| *POSTTEST* | 84.66 | 4.18 |
| **AUTHORITARIANISM** | | |
| *PRETEST* | 28.33 | 5.05 |
| *POSTTEST* | 29.33 | 2.42 |
| **AUTHORITATIVE** | | |
| *PRESTEST* | 80.50 | 7.40 |
| *POSTTEST* | 80.00 | 5.97 |
| **AUTHORITARIAN** | | |
| *PRETEST* | 39.17 | 7.14 |
| *POSTTEST* | 35.33 | 2.42 |
| **PERMISSIVE** | | |
| *PRETEST* | 25.50 | 6.44 |
| *POSTTEST* | 28.67 | 3.62 |
| **CONTENT** | | |
| *PRETEST* | 18.33 | 1.51 |
| *POSTTEST* | 17.50 | 2.07 |

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Discussion

This study examined the effect that attending a parent education program had on parental attitudes and beliefs and parenting styles.  The contents of the rural parent education program were measured for retention and validity.  Results of the study failed to support the various hypothesis which were:

1.      a. Attitudes toward parenting reflecting warmth will show significant improvement after participation in a parent education class.

        b. Attitudes toward parenting reflecting authoritarianism will show significant reduction after participation in a parent education class.

2.      a. Authoritative parenting styles will show significant improvement after participation in a parent education class.

        b. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles will show a significant reduction after participation in a parent education class.

3.      There will be an improvement in the program content scores concerning developmental aspects of children and other parenting issues after participation in a parent education class.

Numerous studies (Anderson & Hughes, 1957; Baumrind, 1971; Holden & Edwards, 1989; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982; Miller et.al. 1991) revealed that parental attitudes and parenting styles influence children.  It is through these parent-child interactions displayed through parental attitudes and parenting styles that the child can develop positive self-esteem and self-concept.  This interaction is also responsible for the optimal development of the child -- emotionally, socially, and even physically.

It was the intent of the researcher to reaffirm this theory that parental attitudes could improve attitudes reflecting warmth and authoritative parenting styles.  It was speculated that

attitudes reflecting authoritarianism would be reduced, and attitudes reflecting authoritarian and permissive parenting styles would improve.

It was also the intention of the researcher to implement and validate the newly formed rural parent education intervention to a select population who were apt to benefit from such a program.

**<u>Attitudes Reflecting Warmth</u>**

The variables representing parental attitudes reflecting warmth were represented by the subscales of encouraging verbalization, equalitarianism, reversed deification, excluding outside influences, reversed excluding outside influences, and deification. The subscales of encouraging verbalization, equalitarianism, reversed deification, and reversed excluding outside influences were reverse coded to maintain the higher numeric scores. Higher scores would indicate a higher degree of warmth by the parents. The results showed no significant difference in a lower score from pretest to posttest (86.33 to 84.66).

Although not significant, the possible reasons for these lower scores might be the indecision of the participants after attending a relatively small number of parent education classes. Many of the participants were very attentive and full of discussion throughout the intervention. Many of the mothers admitted to personal conflicts concerning attitude differences between themselves and their spouses (significant other). These conflicts may have influenced the mothers to answer the survey questionnaire according to their spouses' beliefs instead of revealing their own true feelings.

The results of this study failed to support the generalized hypothesis referring to warmth. The relatively small sample size and short duration of the intervention program could have had a negative impact on these issues. The differences in the socio-economic status between the

participants may have affected the results of the survey. Most of the mothers from the Starting Points facility had a higher socio-economic status and were educated at least through high school. Some had attended or completed college. All of the mothers at Starting Points were currently married. This was not the case at Scott's Run Settlement House.

### Attitudes Reflecting Authoritarianism

The variables representing authoritarianism parenting styles were represented by the subscales of irritability and reversed irritability. The pretest to posttest means increased slightly (28.33 to 29.33) and this failed to support the reduction speculated in the hypothesis. These subscales were reversed coded to depict lower scores representing non-authoritarian parental attitudes. The short length of the intervention (seven weeks) was evidently not sufficient to significantly improve these scores.

### Authoritarian Parenting Style

The results of the study showed no significant decrease in the mean scores from the pretest to posttest (39.17 to 35.33). These scores, although not conclusive, do support the reduction of the authoritarian parenting style after attending a short parent education class. Again the small sample size and short length of the intervention may have had an adverse affect on the results.

### Authoritative Parenting Style

The pretest-posttest scores differed only slightly (80.50 to 80.00). This difference was non-significant and did not support the hypothesis as stated in this study. Although it was the hopes of the researcher to have a significant impact on the improvement of this particular parenting style, the general speculation still stands to be proven effective. Perhaps repeating this

study with a much larger sample size and having a longer intervention program could prove more significant results.

## Permissive Parenting Style

The results of this study did not significantly reduce the scores concerning the permissive parenting styles, according to the t-test. However, the results showed a slight increase from pretest to posttest (25.5 to 28.67). This difference may have been significant with a larger sample size.

## Limitations of the Study

**Program scheduling.** Program scheduling was one issue that greatly hindered the research project. The researcher was at the mercy of fitting into the already formed schedules of the two testing facilities. Not only were the days of the week that the parent education classes held on an issue, but the exact time of the intervention was also a concern. This lack of total control was a major hindrance to the researcher and potentially, the results of the study. The proposed times that were available were not necessarily the most opportune time for parents to attend.

At Scott's Run the classes had to be scheduled when there was childcare facilities available and on Food Pantry days with the anticipation of a higher traffic flow. Neither of these issues proved to enhance the participation of the classes. The Starting Points Center had a little more successful response by holding the parenting classes concurrently with the Happy School Program. This gave the parents an excuse to come to the facility and also gave them something to do for the two hours their child attended Happy School.

**Transportation concerns**. The class numbers were low due to the lack of transportation to and from the facilities. Those parents who already were bringing their child to Starting Point's

Happy School were already driving to and from the facility. At Scott's Run the parents had a much more difficult time getting to the facility. Even with the social worker volunteering to pick up and return some of the participants, attrition became a big problem. There were no public transportation available and it was not affordable for those attending the parenting classes. Those participants who did drive to the parenting classes every week were apparently struggling to do so. The question of gasoline reimbursement came up numerous times. Due to the lack of grant funding, this was not an option at this time.

**Length of the intervention.** The length of the parent education program was not sufficient to show significant improvements/reductions as speculated in the hypothesis. It takes time to form a positive rapport with the participants of any program and one concerning such a personal issue as child-rearing and children is even more so invasive. Due to the time constraints of the university semester system, it was very difficult to schedule an intervention that would involve more than 6-7 weeks. This may have hindered the program's outcome.

Parenting issues have had many years to form and develop and cannot be changed in such a short time span. Many class lectures had to be cut short in order to fit in the developmental life stages considered important by the researcher and this could have caused adverse results. This program was devised to be a pilot program. It was difficult to determine and pinpoint what each of the facilities wanted and what the individual participants needed to hear and discuss according to their families' needs. Personal attitudes and those outside influencing factors (spouses' opinions) are difficult to identify and approach.

**Control of sample.** There was little, if any control over the sample size of this study. The researcher was at the mercy of the volunteering facilities that were willing to participate in the study. There were no grants funding the study and no reimbursement monies were available

for the participants.  Monetary incentives could have increased the sample size and limited the attrition rate.

It was difficult to positively determine if the small sample size of only six participants had any effect on the results of this research project.  To have a more valid and reliable study, it is believed that a larger sample size was needed.  The attrition rate was 22% and there were also three participants who did not attend the recommended five out of seven program classes.  It was determined by the research that if more participants were allowed to join the classes at a later date, or to miss more than two sessions, the social interaction and comfort zone of those already attending would be disrupted.

**Program content measure.**   This measure consisted of 20 true/false questions that addressed some of the basic issues discussed in the basic parenting class lectures during the seven- week intervention.  Also, there were only 20 questions in this survey questionnaire.  A larger questionnaire might have displayed better results.

## Summary

The parenting styles addressed in this study were identified by the PBS measure.  It is unknown how the participants would have done had the intervention been longer in length and how much of the condensed/omitted content information might have made a difference in the results.  Due to the time restraints these measures had to be taken.  The low participation numbers (six) had an adverse impact on the outcomes of this study.  Repeating the study with a much larger sample population from a more diverse group might make a significant difference in the results.

The fact that these parents did volunteer to participate in the parent education program showed that they were interested in their children and were concerned parents.  The fact that

many of these parents sent their children to Happy School demonstrated their interest in their children's social and educational development.

       **Speculation of the researcher.** It is believed by the researcher that this program could be a success given a different set of circumstances. Some of these circumstances pertain to sample size, (e.g., a more diverse sample including fathers and all socio-economic backgrounds), scheduling and length of the program, facilities, and transportation issues. All of the above mentioned determining factors may have had impacts on the results of the study.

       It may have been helpful to determine how much time parents actually spent with their children. This is another issue that influences the perceptions of the parenting styles. It may have been useful to add an observational approach to this study. This would have enabled the researcher to observe how parents actually interact with their children and it would have helped to eliminate any self-report bias from the parents.

## Contributions of the Study

       This study proves that more research is needed on the parenting styles and parental attitudes. Parent-child interaction influences the child's self-esteem and self-confidence and should be considered one of the most important applications in parenting. Therefore, it is imperative that this research continues and develops further.

       As a result of this study the Scott's Run Settlement House have decided to continue a Parent Group that will meet weekly and continue parenting discussions. At the Starting Points Center, an application for a grant that would fund this type of program in the Fall of 2000 has been filed. These are actions are encouraging and support the idea that there is a great need for rural parent education in our society.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**
**Consent Form**

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
### Effects of a Rural Parent Education Program

**Introduction.** I _____, have been asked to participate in this study. Janie Cole and Kathy Canter have explained this study to me. This study is being conducted as the fulfillment of the thesis portion for the degrees of Master of Science in Child Development and Family Studies in the Division of Family and Consumer Science at West Virginia University.

**Purpose of the Study.** I have been told that the purpose of the study is to examine the effects of a rural parent education program. This program has been developed by the researchers and focuses on developmental milestones and behavioral issues. It is a seven-week program that will be held for two hours each week.

**Description of Procedures.** The study will be performed at both Scott's Run Settlement house in Osage, WV. and Starting Points Center at Waitman-Barbe School. I will be asked to complete a set of questionnaires at two different times during the program. The questions will be related to how I feel about myself as a parent, my child rearing practices, child development facts and similar topics. I do not have to answer all of the questions. It will take approximately one hour to complete all of the questions. I will have the opportunity to view the questionnaires before signing this form. There will be approximately 20 parents involved in this study.

**Discomforts.** The questions are not supposed to be difficult or disturbing to me. The only inconvenience is the time that will be given to be in the study.

**Benefits.** I understand that this study will help the researchers learn more about the needs of rural parents. I may learn more about effective parenting from this study.

**Contact Persons.** For more information about this research, I can contact Janie Cole or Kathy Canter at (304)-293-3402 ext. 1780 or Dr. Carol Markstrom at (304)-293-3402 ext. 1775. For information regarding my rights as a research subject, I may contact the Executive Secretary of the Institutional Review Board at (304) 293-7073.

| Initial | Date |
| --- | --- |

**Effects of a Rural Parent Education Program (continued)**

**Confidentiality.** I understand that any information obtained as a result of my participation in this research will be kept as confidential as legally possible. I understand that these research records, just like hospital records, may be subpoenaed by court order or may be inspected by federal regulatory authorities. In any publications that result from this research, neither my name nor any information from which I might be identified will be published.

**Voluntary Participation.** Participation in this study is voluntary. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time. Refusal to participate or withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of benefits for me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and I have received answers concerning areas I did not understand. Upon signing this form I will receive a copy.

**Alternatives.** I understand that I may choose not to participate in this study.

I willingly consent to my participation in this study.


_____        _____        _____
Signature of Participant        Date             Time


_____        3/22/00          11:00
Signature of Co-Investigator    Date             Time


_____        3/22/00          11:00
Signature of Co-Investigator    Date             Time


_____        3/22/00          11:00
Signature of Co-Investigator    Date             Time

**APPENDIX B**
**Demographics**
**Background Information Sheet**

**Background Information Sheet**

1.      **Age:** _____            **Birth Date:** _____

2.      **Sex:**    _____Male          _____Female

3.      **Racial Background (If you are more than one race, check all that apply):**
   \_\_\_\_\_ African-American (Black)
   \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian
   \_\_\_\_\_ Asian American
   \_\_\_\_\_ Latino (Hispanic)
   \_\_\_\_\_ European American
   \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please identify)

4.      **Marital Status:**
   \_\_\_\_\_ Married
   \_\_\_\_\_ Single
   \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced/Separated

5.      **Employment:**
   \_\_\_\_\_ Currently Employed: What kind of work do you do?_____
                             How many hours per week do you work? _____
   \_\_\_\_\_ Unemployed
   \_\_\_\_\_ Disability
   \_\_\_\_\_ Retired
   \_\_\_\_\_ Stay-at-Home Parent

6.      **Education (Please check the highest level completed):**
   \_\_\_\_ Completed Grade School
   \_\_\_\_ Graduated High School
   \_\_\_\_ Attended Trade/Technical School
   \_\_\_\_ Graduated Trade/Technical School
   \_\_\_\_ Attended some College
   \_\_\_\_ Earned Bachelor's Degree
   \_\_\_\_ Earned Master's Degree
   \_\_\_\_ Earned Professional Degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., J.D.)

7.    **How many children do you have?** _____

**For each of your children answer the following:**
Age    Sex          This child lives with you:


___    ___          Full time__ Part time__ None of the time__

                    I am this child's:____Biological mother/father
                                      ____Step-mother/father
                                      ____Adopted mother/father
                                      ____Other, please specify_____

___    ___          Full time__ Part time__ None of the time__

                    I am this child's:____Biological mother/father
                                      ____Step-mother/father
                                      ____Adopted mother/father
                                      ____Other, please specify_____

___    ___          Full time__ Part time__ None of the time__

                    I am this child's:____Biological mother/father
                                      ____Step-mother/father
                                      ____Adopted mother/father
                                      ____Other, please specify_____

___    ___          Full time__ Part time__ None of the time__

                    I am this child's:____Biological mother/father
                                      ____Step-mother/father
                                      ____Adopted mother/father
                                      ____Other, please specify_____

___    ___          Full time__ Part time__ None of the time__

                    I am this child's:____Biological mother/father
                                      ____Step-mother/father
                                      ____Adopted mother/father
                                      ____Other, please specify_____

**Age**   **Sex**

___   ___                Full time__ Part time__ None of the time__

                         I am this child's:____Biological mother/father
                                          ____Step-mother/father
                                          ____Adopted mother/father
                                          ____Other, please specify_____

___   ___                Full time__ Part time__ None of the time__

                         I am this child's:____Biological mother/father
                                          ____Step-mother/father
                                          ____Adopted mother/father
                                          ____Other, please specify_____

8.    What is your total yearly household income (total combined earnings of all household
      members)?
      ____ $4,999 or less
      ____ $5,000 - $9,999
      ____ $10,000 - $14,999
      ____ $15,000 - $19,999
      ____ $20,000 - $24,999
      ____ $25,000 - $29,999
      ____ $30,000 or more

**APPENDIX C**
**Parental Attitude Research Instrument**
**(PARI)**

Appendix C

Read the statements carefully. After reading each statement, use the scale provided to rate your feelings toward the statement.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | | | **Strongly Disagree** |

____1.  Children should be allowed to disagree with their parents if they feel their own ideas are better.

____2.  When a parent asks a child to do something the child should always be told why.

____3.  A child should be taught that there are many other people he will love and respect as much or more than his own parents.

____4.  Children should never learn things outside the home which make them doubt their parent's ideas.

____5.  Parents very often feel that they can't stand their children a moment longer.

____6.  There's no excuse wasting a lot of time explaining when you can get kids doing what you want by being a little clever.

____7.  Children have every right to question their parent's views.

____8.  A child should grow up convinced his parents always know what is the right thing to do.

____9.  Most parents can spend all day with the children and remain calm and even-tempered.

____10. Children should be encouraged to tell parents about it whenever they feel family rules are unreasonable.

____11. Parents should adjust to the children some rather than always expecting the children to adjust to the parents.

____12. Most children soon learn that their parents were mistaken in many of their ideas.

____13. There is no excusing someone who upsets the confidence a child has in his parent's ways of doing things.

____14. The things children ask of a parent after a hard day's work are enough to make anyone lose his temper at times.

|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Strongly Agree** | | | **Strongly Disagree** |

_____15. Often you have to fool children to get them to do what they should without a big fuss.

_____16. If a parent is wrong he should admit it to the child.

_____17. A child soon learns that there is no greater wisdom than that of his parents.

_____18. A parent should keep control of his temper even when children are demanding.

_____19. A child's ideas should be seriously considered in making family decisions.

_____20. In a well-run home children should have things their own way as often as the parents do.

_____21. Loyalty on the part of children to their parents is something that the parents should earn.

_____22. A parent should never be made to look wrong in a child's eyes.

_____23. It's natural for a parent to "blow his top" when children are selfish and demanding.

_____24.  It's best to trick a child into doing something he doesn't want to do instead of having to argue with him.

_____25. A good parent can tolerate criticism of himself even when the children are around.

_____26. Loyalty to parents comes before anything.

_____27. Raising children is an easy job.

_____28. When a child is in trouble he ought to know he won't be punished for talking about it with his parents.

_____29. As much as is reasonable a parent should try to treat a child as an equal.

_____30. A parent should not expect to be more highly esteemed than other worthy adults in their children's  eyes.

_____31. It's best for the child if he never gets started wondering whether his parents' views are best.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | | | **Strongly Disagree** |

_____32. It's a rare parent who can be even tempered with his children all day.

_____33. You have to fool children into doing many things because they wouldn't understand anyway.

_____34. When a child thinks his parent is wrong he should say so.

_____35. More parents should teach their children to have unquestioning loyalty to them.

_____36. Most parents never get to the point where they can't stand their children.

_____37. A child has a right to his own point of view and ought to be allowed to express it.

_____38. Children are too often asked to do all the compromising and adjustment and that is not fair.

_____39. Loyalty to parents is an overemphasized virtue.

_____40. The child should not question the thinking of his parents.

_____41. Raising children is a nerve-wracking job.

_____42. When a child is doing something he shouldn't, one of the best ways of handling it is to just get him interested in something else.

_____43. A child should be encouraged to look for answers to his questions from other people even if the answers contradict his parents.

_____44. A child should always love his parents above everything else.

_____45. There is no reason why a day with a child should be upsetting.

**APPENDIX D**
**The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Instrument (PSD)**
*Mother's Forms*

**Appendix D**

**\*Mother's Form**

**Directions:**

The following pages contain a list of behaviors that parents may exhibit when interacting with their children. The questions are designed to measure (1) *how often your spouse/partner* exhibits certain behaviors towards your child(ren). Please respond to the items <u>independent of your spouse</u> and <u>do not </u>discuss your answers until after the questionnaires have been returned to the researcher.

**Example:**

(1) Please read each item on the questionnaire and think *how often your spouse/partner* exhibits this behavior and place your answer on the **first** line to the left of the item.

**[He]**  [I]

 **3**  _ 1. **[He allows]** [I allow] our child tp choose what to wear to school.

> SPOUSE EXHIBITS BEHAVIOR:
>     1 = Never
>     2 = Once in a While
>     3 = About Half the Time
>     4 = Very Often
>     5= Always

(1) Then rate *how often you* exhibit this behavior and place your answer on the **second** line to the left of the item.

[He]  **[I]**

3  **2** 1. [He allows] **[I allow]** our child to choose what to wear to school.

> I EXHIBIT THIS BEHAVIOR:
> 1 = Never
> 2 = Once in a While
> 3 = About Half the Time
> 4 = Very Often
> 5 = Always

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**REMEMBER: make two rating for each item; (1) Rate <u>how often your spouse/partner</u> exhibits this behavior with your child and (2) <u>How often you</u> exhibit this behavior with your child.**

**SPOUSE EXHIBITS BEHAVIOR:**     **I EXHIBIT THIS BEHAVIOR:**
**1 = Never**                               **1 - Never**
**2 = Once in a While**          **2 = Once in a While**
**3 = About Half of the Time**    **3 = About half of the Time**
**4 = Very Often**                     **4 = Very Often**
**5 = Always**                                 **5 = Always**

[He]  [I]

___ ___  1.  [He encourages] [I encourage] our child to talk about the child's troubles.

___ ___  2.  [He guides]  [I guide] our child by punishment more than by reason.

___ ___  3.  [He is] [I am] unsure on how to solve our child's misbehavior.

___ ___  4.  [He finds] [I find] it difficult to discipline our child.

___ ___  5.  [He gives praise] [I give praise] when our child is good.

___ ___  6.  [He spanks] [I spank] when our child is disobedient.

___ ___  7.  [He jokes & plays] [I joke & play] with our child.

___ ___  8.  [He demands] [I demand] that our child does/do things.

___ ___  9.  [He shows] [I show] sympathy when our child is hurt or frustrated.

___ ___ 10.  [He punishes] [I punish] by taking privileges away from our child with little if any explanations.

___ ___ 11.  [He spoils] [I spoil] our child.

___ ___ 12.  [He gives] [I give] comfort & understanding when our child is upset.

___ ___ 13.  [He yells or shouts] [I yell or shout] when our child misbehaves.

___ ___ 14.  [He is] [I am] easy going and relaxed with our child.

___ ___ 15.  [He allows] [I allow] our child to annoy someone else.

___ ___ 16.  [He explains] [I explain] the consequences of the child's behavior.

___ ___ 17.  [He scolds & criticizes] [I scold & criticize] to make our child improve.

**SPOUSE EXHIBITS BEHAVIOR:**
1 = Never
2 = Once in a While
3 = About Half of the Time
4 = Very Often
5 = Always

**I EXHIBIT THIS BEHAVIOR:**
1 - Never
2 = Once in a While
3 = About half of the Time
4 = Very Often
5 = Always

**[He]  [I]**

___ ___ 18. [He shows] [I show] patience with child.

___ ___ 19. [ He grabs] [I grab] our child when being disobedient.

___ ___ 20. [He states] [I state] punishments to our child & does/do not actually do them.

___ ___ 21. [He shows] [I show] respect for our child's opinions by encouraging our child to express them.

___ ___ 22. [He allows] [I allow] our child to give input into family rules.

___ ___ 23. [He argues] [I argue] with our child.

___ ___ 24. [He is] [I am] confident about parenting abilities.

___ ___ 25. [He gives] [I give] our child reasons why rules should be obeyed.

___ ___ 26. [He uses] [I use] threats as punishment with little or no justification.

___ ___ 27. [He tells] [I tell] our child that we appreciate what the child tries or accomplishes.

___ ___ 28. [He punishes] [I punish] by putting our child off somewhere alone with little if any explanation.

___ ___ 29. [He helps] [I help] our child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging our child to talk about the consequences of our own actions.

___ ___ 30. [ He is] [I am] afraid that disciplining our child for misbehavior will cause the child to not like his/her parents.

___ ___ 31. [He takes] [I take] our child's desires into account before asking the child to do something.

___ ___ 32. [He explodes] [I explode] in anger towards our child.

___ ___ 33. [He is][I am] aware of problems or concerns about our child in school.

___ ___ 34. [He threatens] [I threaten] our child with punishment more often than actually giving it.

___ ___ 35. [He expresses] [I express] affection by hugging, kissing, & holding our child.

**SPOUSE EXHIBITS BEHAVIOR:**
1 = Never
2 = Once in a While
3 = About Half of the Time
4 = Very Often
5 = Always

**I EXHIBIT THIS BEHAVIOR:**
1 - Never
2 = Once in a While
3 = About half of the Time
4 = Very Often
5 = Always

**[He]  [I]**

___ ___ 36. [He ignores] [I ignore] our child's misbehavior.

___ ___ 37. [He uses] [I use] physical punishment as a way of disciplining our child.

___ ___ 38. [He carries] [I carry] out discipline after our child misbehaves.

___ ___ 39. [He takes] [I take] into account our child's preferences in making plans for the family.

___ ___ 40. [He tells] [I tell] our child what to do.

___ ___ 41. [He gives] [I give] into our child when the child causes a commotion about something.

___ ___ 42. [He talks it over & reasons] [I talk it over & reason] with our child when the child misbehaves.

___ ___ 43. [He slaps] [I slap] our child when the child misbehaves.

___ ___ 44. [He explains] [I explain] to our child how we feel about the child's good and bad behavior.

___ ___ 45. [He allows] [I allow] our child to interrupt others.

___ ___ 46. [He emphasizes] [I emphasize] the reasons for rules.

___ ___ 47. When two children are fighting, [he disciplines] [I discipline] children first and ask questions later.

___ ___ 48. [He encourages] [I encourage] our child to freely express (himself) (herself) even when disagreeing with parents.

___ ___ 49. When our child asks why (he) (she) has to conform, (he) (I) states: because I said so, or I am your parent and that is what I want you to do.

___ ___ 50. [He scolds or criticizes] [I scold or criticize] when our child's behavior doesn't meet our expectations.

**APPENDIX E**
**Program Content Measure**

## Program Content Test

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F) for the following questions:

____True ____False **(1)** Infants can show emotion very soon after birth.

____True ____False **(2)** An infant does not need interaction with both parents.

____True ____False **(3)** A toddler who is throwing a temper-tantrum is being a "bad child".

____True ____False **(4)** It is common for pre-school children to want to "show off" in front of others.

____True ____False **(5)** A parent should be concerned if their child cannot write letters or numbers by age 4-5.

____True ____False **(6)** The things you say to your child will have no effect on the way they see themselves.

____True ____False **(7)** A child should be allowed to make suggestions in making family rules.

____True ____False **(8)** A child can actually get more tired by sitting still for long periods of time than by running or playing.

____True ____False **(9)** Peer pressure does not happen until high school.

____True ____False **(10)** A teenager who looks like an adult will always act like an adult.

____True ____False **(11)** A teenager who dresses in an outrageous way does it to embarrass parents.

____True ____False **(12)** It is normal for a parent to feel overwhelmed when raising a child.

____True ____False **(13)** Play is not an important escape from the real world for young children.

____True ____False **(14)** Rules are very important for young children.

____True ____False **(15)** It should be a parent's goal to be their child's best friend.

____True ____False **(16)** It is acceptable to spank your child out of anger.

____True ____False **(17)** Tension in the home will not affect an infant.

____True ____False **(18)** Your teenagers' choice of friends will reflect how they feel about themselves.

____True ____False **(19)** Pre-school children should be given responsibilities at home.

____True ____False **(20)** There is no reason to discuss sex with your child, the school will take care of that.

<div align="center">VITA</div>

**Personal Data**

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Kathryn A, Canter |
| Date of Birth: | January 23, 1954 |
| Place of Birth: | Canton, Ohio |

**Education**

West Virginia University
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Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences (2000)

Alderson-Broaddus College
Phillipi, West Virginia
Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management (1997)

**Work Experience**

West Virginia University
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Graduate Research Assistant, Dr. Carol A. Markstrom
(1998-2000)

**Professional Organizations and Honoraries**

Phi Upsilon Omicron – Lambda Chapter
(1998-Present)

Gamma Sigma Delta
(1999-Present)

American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences
(1999-Present)

Society for Research for Adolescents
(1998-Present)

National Council on Family Relations
(1998-Present)

National Association for the Education of Young Children
(1999-Present)