

D A T I N G   P R A C T I C E S   O F   T E E N - A G E  
G I R L S   I N   A   M E T R O P O L I T A N   A R E A

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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We hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under  
our supervision by Carolyn George Underwood  
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METROPOLITAN AREA

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## CHAPTER I

### I N T R O D U C T I O N

Teenagers tend to start dating at a much earlier age now than in the past. Children are growing up and maturing at a younger age than their parents and grandparents. Young people today are maturing physically earlier than children ever have before. Emotionally and psychologically, adolescents are exposed to sophisticated ideas through current literature, movies, and television.

Adolescents have more opportunities for dating than were available in earlier generations. Many of the school activities, church groups, and community programs are now planned for dating couples throughout the teen years.

Many parents are anxious for their children to date. Parents may feel that dating indicates a child's popularity and ability to get along well with friends. Some parents even push sons and daughters into dating situations before the young people are ready for dating. Teenage dating is very important to parents because of the value placed on good social adjustment in a competitive world.

Young teenagers are sometimes anxious to start dating, as going out on dates is a symbol of being grown up. Dating is a way of getting away from home and being independent which is of much importance to adolescent boys and girls.

In the past people believed dating should be delayed as long as possible. A girl and a boy going out on a date was considered more seriously than this activity is today. Adults believed that dating should be postponed until the girl and boy were ready for marriage. Duvall (11) stated that dating is no longer a commitment for marriage. Young people are now "pairing off" to attend a special function or just for the pleasure and satisfaction of being together. Burgess and Locke (4) have defined dating as "a social engagement of two young people with no commitment beyond the expectation that it will be a pleasurable event for both."

A nation-wide evaluation of high school students' attitudes toward dating by Christensen (6) revealed that both sexes had feelings of shyness in the dating situation. Other conclusions were that females were more touchy, inhibited, and money-minded while males tended to be more careless, disrespectful, and sex-driven. Christensen (6) found that nearly half the males thought that girls should be as free as boys in requesting dates, while only a little over one-fourth of the females were of this opinion. The Christensen (6) study

demonstrated that the majority of both boys and girls disapproved of the girl paying half the expense of dates. A large number of both sexes remained undecided on the question of whether sexual immorality is more wrong for girls than for boys. The girls tended to favor the double-standard while a larger proportion of the boys favored a single standard. On questions pertaining to necking and petting, females tended to be more conservative than the males with a smaller proportion of the girls indicating approval of kissing on the first date. A larger proportion of girls indicated that intimate petting should be delayed until after marriage. While approximately one-half of the boys and over one-third of the girls approved kissing on the first date, only about one-third of the boys and one-sixth of the girls thought intimate petting justifiable before marriage. Almost no one, of either sex, thought that the first kiss should be delayed until after marriage.

Duvall (10) used Bardis' dating scale to test 116 freshman girls in a large state university located in a coal mining community. The study revealed that the more liberal minded girls were the ones who were dating regularly more than once a week. The scores were more conservative as dating involvement increased. Despite the wide range of attitudes within the class, the majority of the students agreed on several areas. Approximately 85 per cent of the girls agreed young

people should have freedom to choose dating partners. More than two-thirds agreed that it was acceptable for dating partners to talk about sex. Sixty per cent of the girls agreed it was permissible for a girl to wait for a boy in a public place. Girls having their first date between 10 and 13 years of age seemed to be more liberal in dating attitudes than the girls who started dating at age 14. The engaged and married girls had conservative attitudes about dating, as did the girls without dating experiences.

Cameron and Kenkel (5) obtained information about the dating practices of high school students in Mason City, Iowa. Usable returns from 153 girls and 141 boys were obtained in this study. Eighty-eight per cent of the girls and 71 per cent of the boys dated during the sophomore year in high school. Approximately half of the girls and two-thirds of the boys reported dating once a week during the junior year. A higher proportion of the students dated during the senior year. About two-thirds of the students dated more than once a week.

Connor and Hall (8) reported on two groups of unmarried freshman and sophomore students and found the students living at home had fewer parental restrictions than the students living away from home; especially women students. College regulations for students living on the campus determined to

some degree a number of dating practices. Students living away from home returned from special dates earlier than those living at home. Two-thirds of the men and one-seventh of the women reported petting habitually; more men living away from home but more women living at home admitted to habitual petting. Necking and petting were reported to consume from one-fourth to three-fourths of the time the couple were alone. The majority of both men and women considered necking and petting not to be essential to popularity.

Bardis (1) analyzed the attitudes of students in a Michigan high school toward dating and related practices on the extent to which sex and age influence these attitudes. Students' responses dealing with the ages at which dating had begun were compared with those pertaining to the ages at which the students believed that young people should begin to date. Bardis (1) found that both the male and female participants reported dating at about the same age, slightly more than 14 years. The average age at which each group began dating did not differ significantly from that given by the students as a desirable time for members of their own sex to start dating. Both groups, especially females, were of the opinion that girls should start dating sooner than boys.

The primary purpose of Lowrie's (18) study of high school and university students was to investigate the factors



involved in the frequency of dating. Lowrie (18) noted with only minor exceptions the frequency of dating rose with age, both in the high school and the university samples. For each sex in high school and for the three lower age groups in the university, the frequency of dating increased with age. A sharp difference between the sexes in the frequency of dating was found. Girls invariably dated more frequently than boys of the same age. A third factor affecting frequency was dating status, whether the person was playing the field or going steady or engaged. The university men going steady in each age classification dated twice as frequently as the ones playing the field. The women students going steady or engaged dated more frequently than girls playing the field. Differences were not consistently as great as with the men students.

Lowrie (18) specified the age at which individuals had begun to date was a factor in frequency of dating among those playing the field. The earlier individuals started dating--beginning at 12 years of age--the more frequent dating occurred. Among the ones going steady, variations in the mean frequency of dating was too irregular and too small to have any meaning.

Investigations conducted by Kirkpatrick and Kanin (14) at Indiana University indicated the students tended to define

dating situations differently in regard to intimacies expected on dates at different stages of involvement. Two hundred ninety-one girls reported more than 1,000 dating situations in which offense had occurred because of the boy's aggressive sexual behavior. More than half of the girls reported having been offended at least once during the academic year, with 20.9 per cent offended by forceful attempts at intercourse. About one half of the offensive episodes occurred very early in the relationship. Very few of the pinned or engaged girls, 8.2 per cent, reported offensive behavior of the boys. A follow-up study of 262 freshman college girls was conducted to determine difficulties the girls had with aggressive dates during the last year in high school and the summer before entering the university. The girls rarely called in the authorities for assistance in this matter. Only 15.9 per cent of the girls had appealed to parents or other adults for help with these dating difficulties. Twenty-three per cent had kept the episode a secret while 31.2 per cent had terminated the relationship with the boy. Another third of the girls had discussed the difficulty with the boy or with other girls.

Koller's (15) classic study of three generations of women found that considerably more of today's parents disapprove of the boys their daughters date than was true in earlier generations. Twenty-three per cent of the grandmothers,

but only 10 per cent of the young women, reported yielding to their parents' wishes when parents disapproved of dating partners. Approximately half, 49.5 per cent, of the young third-generation women, in contrast to 13 per cent of the grandmothers, argued and tried to change the parents' negative attitude about dating partners. Koller (15) discovered several interesting changes in courtship patterns. Daughters had over four times as many dates per week as did the grandmothers, and the daughters also considered more men seriously as husbands before selecting a mate.

Opinions differ widely about the age young people should start dating. Some people conclude teenagers are fortunate if dating is delayed until time for marriage. Lowrie (17), in contrast to this belief, is of the opinion that the dating process should be a spontaneous development where young people gain experience and become more capable of selecting mates with judgment.

Lowrie (17) investigated dating in the high schools of three American cities of approximately 100,000 population located in Ohio, Texas, and California. Summary findings were: 1) daughters of parents with some college training tended to begin dating at an earlier age than those whose parents had a high school education or less; 2) children, especially the girls who came from small families, usually

started dating earlier than those from large families; 3) students from homes of higher economic and social status began dating at an earlier age than those from lower status homes; and 4) the age of dating varied from region to region-- young people in the South started dating earlier than in either of the other areas.

According to Duvall (13) three kinds of "going steady" are popular among today's dating couples. The first kind is found among more mature young people, further along in their relationship with each other, who may "have an understanding." This kind serves the important purpose of helping a more mature couple determine whether or not they are well matched before progressing into engagement and marriage.

Another form of going steady very popular among adolescents today is called "going steadily." A couple tend to date one another more than others but are free to date other individuals.

The last form of going steady is prevalent in contemporary schools starting in the elementary grades. Lewis (16) surveyed fourth, fifth, and sixth graders throughout the United States and found many of the youngsters in the fifth grade were dating and even going steady. Broderick and Fowler (3) found that many pre-adolescents were going steady in elementary and junior high school.

Cameron and Kenkel (5) found that an exceedingly high proportion of high school seniors, 82 per cent of the girls and 71 per cent of the boys, had at one time or another gone steady. Lowrie (17), in a study of adolescents in three major cities in the United States, reported that the earlier the dating age the longer the delay in beginning to go steady. For boys 17 years of age in the North, the delay decreased regularly from 2.5 years when dating started at age 12 or younger to 0.4 year when dating began at age 16 or older. Early daters "played the field" for a long time and became acquainted with a number of members of the opposite sex before initiating going steady. In contrast, beginning to date at a relatively late age usually involves beginning to go steady without dating long, often with a few individuals and leading to emotional involvement.

A study of 120 high school students in the ninth through the twelfth grades reported by Crist (9) indicated that going steady for these young people was more specifically related to the dating behavior system than to courtship or engagement. Steady dating relieved many students of emotional and psychological problems caused by the difficulty of making adjustments to the expectations and intimate associations of steady dating. Duvall (12) stated "When a couple start going steady before they're ready to settle down or assume responsibility for keeping their relationship on an even keel, they may be headed for painful situations and emotional distress."

The overall purpose of the present study was to gain factual information about the dating practices and personal and family relationships of 120 students enrolled in Homemaking I, Homemaking II, and Home and Family Living classes at Mesquite High School, located in Mesquite, Texas. The Mesquite Independent School District included, at the time of the present study, 14 elementary schools, three junior high schools, and one senior high school with a total enrollment of 14,176 students and 518 classroom teachers (7). In 1968 North Mesquite High School, a \$4,000,000 school plant designed for 3,000 students, will be opened (2). The median age population in Mesquite during 1966 was 22.4 years and the median educational level 11.9 years (7). Mesquite is a rapidly growing suburban city with a population of 47,600 in 1966 with an increase in population of 32,476 in the last decade.

The specific purposes for the study were:

- 1) To examine the age and frequency of dating.
- 2) To determine frequency and reasons for steady dating.
- 3) To inquire about the characteristics of dating partners.
- 4) To determine standards of dating behavior.
- 5) To investigate parental restrictions of teenagers.

## CHAPTER II

### P R O C E D U R E

In the present study data were secured from 120 girls enrolled in Homemaking I, Homemaking II, and Home and Family Living classes in Mesquite High School, Mesquite, Texas. Data were gathered in regular class periods during the spring semester of 1967. Information for the study was obtained through the use of two instruments.

### PERSONAL DATA SHEET

The first instrument, "Personal Data Sheet," was designed by the author to obtain personal and family background information. The purpose of the instrument was to secure information in the following areas: personal information, family background, allowances and earning money, use of money, and future plans. A statement concerning each area follows:

PERSONAL INFORMATION: High school girls supplied identifying information on name, age, grade, and level of homemaking classes.

FAMILY BACKGROUND: Contained information pertaining to members of the family including marital status of parents, occupation of father or stepfather, occupation of mother or stepmother if employed outside the home, and number and ages of brothers and sisters living at home.

ALLOWANCES AND EARNING MONEY: Included ways in which students obtained spending money for their own use.

USE OF MONEY: Pertained to various ways the girls spent their money.

FUTURE PLANS: Dealt with plans for the future including vocational training, attending a junior or four year college, or seeking employment.

The "Personal Data Sheet" is shown on the following pages.



P E R S O N A L   D A T A   S H E E T

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Age \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Grade \_\_\_\_\_
4. Homemaking class \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is your father living? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is your mother living? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are your parents living together \_\_\_\_\_, separated \_\_\_\_\_,  
or divorced? \_\_\_\_\_
8. If your parents are separated or divorced, are you:  
(Check one)  

_____ Living with mother	_____ Living with mother and stepfather
_____ Living with father	_____ Living with father and stepmother
_____ Living with other relatives	_____ Other arrangements

  
Name these other arrangements \_\_\_\_\_
9. Father or stepfather's occupation \_\_\_\_\_
10. Mother or stepmother's occupation (outside the home)  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How many brothers do you have living at home? \_\_\_\_\_  
Ages \_\_\_\_\_
12. How many sisters do you have living at home? \_\_\_\_\_  
Ages \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you earn all your spending money? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
How much allowance do you have per week \_\_\_\_\_ per month  
\_\_\_\_\_?

15. Do you have a part time job? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
16. What kind of job do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do your parents give you money as you need it?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
18. Check items for which you spend your money:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clothes \_\_\_\_\_ School supplies  
\_\_\_\_\_ Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ Others (list)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Movies \_\_\_\_\_
19. Following graduation do you plan to:  
\_\_\_\_\_ attend a junior college  
\_\_\_\_\_ go to a four year college  
\_\_\_\_\_ take some kind of vocational training  
\_\_\_\_\_ go to work  
\_\_\_\_\_ Others (list) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### SURVEY OF DATING PRACTICES

The second instrument developed by the author entitled "Survey of Dating Practices" was administered to determine the dating activities and practices of the students. The instrument consisted of a check list including 39 items completed during a regular class period in March, 1967. The "Survey of Dating Practices" included: age at time of first date, frequency of current dating, characteristics desirable in dating partner, involvement in the going-steady pattern, restrictions of parents on dating activities, methods used to control the extent of necking and petting, frequency of blind dates, extent of necking and petting, relationship with parents, smoking and drinking on dates, and places to go on dates.

The "Survey Form of Dating Practices" is shown on the following pages.

## S U R V E Y   O F   D A T I N G   P R A C T I C E S

These questions are directed to high school sophomore, junior, and senior homemaking students' dating practices. If you do not yet date, indicate in the questionnaire what your standards and expectations will be when dating occurs. Check in the appropriate space.

1. The following best characterizes my dating practices
  - ☐ never or seldom have a date
  - ☐ frequent dates with different persons
  - ☐ frequent dates with one person
  - ☐ going steady with one person
  - ☐ engaged
  - ☐ married
  
2. My first date was at age \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. The number of times I have gone steady is \_\_\_\_\_.
  
4. The longest time I have gone steady with a boy is \_\_\_\_\_.
  
5. My main reason or reasons for going steady now or in the past is
  - ☐ most of my friends go steady
  - ☐ can be sure of a date for all social events
  - ☐ have the same interests
  - ☐ enjoy each other's company
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other reasons
  
6. Below are listed characteristics that you might desire in a dating partner. Check characteristics that are most important to you.
 

<input type="checkbox"/> good conversationalist	<input type="checkbox"/> dances well
<input type="checkbox"/> the same moral standards	<input type="checkbox"/> appreciative
<input type="checkbox"/> sense of humor	<input type="checkbox"/> not critical
<input type="checkbox"/> same interests	<input type="checkbox"/> does not drink
<input type="checkbox"/> neat appearance	<input type="checkbox"/> shares responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/> dependable	<input type="checkbox"/> of dates
<input type="checkbox"/> good looking	<input type="checkbox"/> accepts me as I am
<input type="checkbox"/> sincere	<input type="checkbox"/> good mixer
<input type="checkbox"/> ambitious	<input type="checkbox"/> treats me with respect
<input type="checkbox"/> family of good reputation	

7. My parents expect me to be home from dates and social occasions at the following time during the week.
- ☐ Week nights
 ☐ Friday night  
☐ Saturday night
 ☐ Sunday night
8. My date and I talk about physical love
- ☐ never
 ☐ seldom
 ☐ frequently
9. My dates generally enjoy a good reputation
- ☐ in every case
 ☐ not usually  
☐ in most cases
 ☐ not at all
10. Parking
- ☐ occurs where we are.  
☐ usually occurs in front of the house.  
☐ usually occurs at what looks like a safe place.  
☐ does not occur as far as I am concerned.
11. If placed in a situation where alcoholic beverages are being consumed,
- ☐ I will be careful not to become intoxicated.  
☐ I will try to make one drink last as long as possible.  
☐ I will not drink at all.  
☐ I will not drink and demand that the date end immediately.
12. I smoke on dates
- ☐ regularly
 ☐ occasionally  
☐ frequently
 ☐ not at all
13. Places I go or things I do on dates
- ☐ drive-in movie
 ☐ dances that are sponsored  
☐ Dairy Queen
 ☐ drinking parties  
☐ parking
 ☐ banquets, and other  
☐ indoor theater
 ☐ dinner parties  
☐ watch television
 ☐ Others (list) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ visiting
 \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ sponsored school
 \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ affairs
 \_\_\_\_\_

14. Transportation for dates is provided by

- ☐ his family or my family.
- ☐ my date takes his own car.
- ☐ my date uses his family's car
- ☐ Others (list) \_\_\_\_\_

15. The following represents the extent of my courting:

- ☐ occasional light kiss
- ☐ some heavy or French kissing
- ☐ light petting
- ☐ occasional heavy petting
- ☐ frequent heavy petting

16. Below are listed methods used to control the extent of necking and petting. Check the ones that are most frequently used.

- ☐ refrain from long good-nights
- ☐ let boy know your attitude from the start
- ☐ keep talking, make interesting conversation
- ☐ ask to be taken home
- ☐ do not date fellows overly interested in necking and petting
- ☐ be honest, say "No" sincerely
- ☐ plan where to go and what to do in advance
- ☐ double or group-date
- ☐ keep attitude light and casual
- ☐ pass off attempts as a joke
- ☐ set an early curfew
- ☐ plan after-date activities
- ☐ set point beyond which you do not go
- ☐ do not encourage necking and petting by your actions

17. At the present time I date

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> once a month        | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 to 7 times a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> twice a month       | <input type="checkbox"/> never               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 or 3 times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> others (list) _____ |

18. In the case of an overly attentive date, you would

- ☐ respond freely
- ☐ urge restraint
- ☐ demand that the date end immediately

19. I pay all the expenses of dates

☐ often ☐ on special occasions  
☐ sometimes ☐ not at all

20. The most frequent age of my dates is

☐ younger than I  
☐ same age  
☐ 1 to 3 years older than I  
☐ 4 years or more older than I

21. Below is a list of dating behavior of boys. Check items that are most objectionable to you.

<input type="checkbox"/> vulgar in speech or action	<input type="checkbox"/> too much necking, petting
<input type="checkbox"/> too possessive	<input type="checkbox"/> too talkative or loud
<input type="checkbox"/> shy, self-conscious	<input type="checkbox"/> easily offended
<input type="checkbox"/> too serious	<input type="checkbox"/> dishonest flattery
<input type="checkbox"/> flirtatious with others	<input type="checkbox"/> too conceited on dates
<input type="checkbox"/> childish and silly	<input type="checkbox"/> disrespectful of girls and women
<input type="checkbox"/> always complaining	<input type="checkbox"/> self-centered and selfish
<input type="checkbox"/> too money-minded	<input type="checkbox"/> unfriendly
<input type="checkbox"/> pretentious	<input type="checkbox"/> inactive and non-creative
<input type="checkbox"/> easily angered or hurt	
<input type="checkbox"/> careless in dress, manners	

22. I like the person I date to

☐ know my parents  
☐ be approved by my parents  
☐ be acceptable to my school friends

23. Friends arrange blind dates for me

24. On a first date, I allow the boy to kiss me.

25. On certain occasions I ask boys for dates.

Often	Some-times	Never	At all times

	Often	Some- times	Never	At all times
26. I kiss my date in public.				
27. My dates call for me at my home.				
28. My dates visit in my home when neither of my parents are present.				
29. I wait for my date in a public place.				
30. My date and I go to drive-in movies.				
31. My date and I both have equal say as to what we would like to do on dates.				
32. My dates are with boys who go to my high school.				
33. My parents are informed about the places I go on dates.				
34. I get along well with my mother.				
35. I get along well with my father.				
36. My parents allow me to choose my dating partners freely and independently.				
37. When my parents are present in the home, I am allowed to entertain my dates.				



38. My parents are notified during the evening if my dating plans are changed or if arrival at home will be delayed.
39. One or both of my parents wait up for me until I am home from a date.

Often	Some- times	Never	At all times

### CHAPTER III

## P R E S E N T A T I O N   A N D   A N A L Y S I S O F   D A T A

The 120 students who participated in this study were selected from 135 girls enrolled in eight homemaking classes at Mesquite High School, Mesquite, Texas. During the study two students withdrew from school; three moved from the district and 10 students were eliminated because of failure to complete the "Personal Data Sheet." One hundred twenty of the original 135 students completed the "Personal Data Sheet" and the "Survey of Dating Practices."

### P E R S O N A L   D A T A   S H E E T

Forty-five students, 37.5 per cent, were 17 years of age. The distribution of ages of the students was as follows:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Group I		
15 years	11	9.2
16 years	42	35.0
Group II		
17 years	45	37.5
18 years	20	16.7
19 years	2	1.7

Slightly over 39 per cent of the students were from the senior class. Grade distribution of the students is shown below:

<u>Grade Distribution</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
10th grade	41	34.2
11th grade	32	26.7
12th grade	47	39.2

A majority of the students, 80 per cent, were living with natural parents, while 17.5 per cent were from broken homes. Three of the students indicated having deceased parents. Of the three having deceased parents, two fathers and one mother were not living.

<u>Marital Status of Parents</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Parents living together	96	80.0
Parents divorced or separated	21	17.5
Father deceased	2	1.7
Mother deceased	1	0.8

Approximately three-fourths of the mothers were employed outside the home. The largest group of both the fathers and mothers were employed as skilled workers. The next largest group, semi-skilled workers, account for 25.4 per cent of the fathers and 22.0 per cent of the mothers. An equal number of mothers and fathers were classified as employed in professional positions. The following categories show the employment of the students' parents.

<u>Occupational Groups</u>	<u>Fathers</u>		<u>Mothers</u>	
	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Professional	7	5.9	7	7.7
Semi-professional	0	0.0	0	0.0
Business owners and managers	7	5.9	3	3.3
Skilled	68	57.6	51	56.1
Semi-skilled	30	25.4	20	22.0
Unskilled	6	5.1	10	11.0

Of the 120 participants, 58.3 per cent of the students had sisters living at home. Of the total group, 51.7 per cent had brothers living at home, and 14.2 per cent had

neither brothers nor sisters living at home. The composition of students' families is shown below:

<u>Composition of Families</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Students having sisters living at home	70	58.3
Students having brothers living at home	62	51.7
Students having both brothers and sisters living at home	41	34.2
Students having no brothers or sisters living at home	17	14.2
Students with other relatives living in the home	10	8.3
Students with other than relatives living in the home	2	1.7

Attending a four year college was anticipated by 14.9 per cent of the students, while 21.3 per cent preferred attending a junior college. Approximately 19 per cent of the participants planned some type of vocational training.

<u>Plans Following Graduation</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Attend a junior college	30	21.3
Attend a four year college	21	14.9
Take some kind of vocational training	26	18.4
Seek employment	64	45.4

Findings indicated that 27.5 per cent of the students received an allowance with 79.2 per cent receiving money when

needed. Thirty-five per cent of the students worked outside the home in order to earn additional spending money.

<u>Experience with Money</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Earn all spending money	22	18.3
Receive an allowance	33	27.5
Have a part-time job	42	35.0
Receive money from parents when needed	95	79.2
Use money for:		
Clothes	103	85.8
Lunch	63	52.5
Movies	59	49.2
School supplies	53	44.2
Other items	7	64.2

Homemaking students reported various job experiences.

<u>Types of Job Experiences</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Baby sitter	21	50.0
Fountain clerk	1	2.4
Telephone operator	4	9.5
Librarian	2	4.8
Beauty operator	2	4.8
Nurse's aid	2	4.8
Store clerk	3	7.1
Receptionist	5	11.9
Helping with family business	2	4.8

### SURVEY OF DATING PRACTICES

Findings from the "Survey of Dating Practices" revealed approximately 47.2 per cent of the students 15 to 16 years of age had frequent dates with different persons; 29.8 per cent

of the participants in the 17 years of age and over group dated different boys on frequent dates. Approximately 23 per cent of the 15 to 16 year old girls were presently going steady with one person. Students in the 17 years and over age group showed a slighter increase, 35.8 per cent, going steady with one person. Approximately 7.0 per cent of the younger girls were engaged at the time of the study as compared with only 3.0 per cent of the students in the 17 years and over age group. Results showed that more of the younger teenagers never or seldom dated. Only one student in the 17 years and over age group was married. Dating practices in which students engaged is shown below:

<u>Dating Practices</u>	<u>Group I</u> 15-16 years (N=53)		<u>Group II</u> 17 years and over (N=67)	
	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Never or seldom have a date	7	13.2	4	6.0
Frequent dates with different persons	25	47.2	20	29.8
Frequent dates with one person	5	9.4	16	23.9
Going steady with one person	12	22.6	24	35.8
Engaged	4	7.5	2	3.0

Students were asked at what age they had their first dates. The distribution of replies is shown below.

<u>Age at Time of First Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
9	1	0.8
12	5	4.2
13	12	10.0
14	36	30.0
15	45	37.5
16	19	15.8
17	1	0.8
18	1	0.8

Over one-third, 37.5 per cent, of the girls had their first date at 15 years of age. Five girls reported a first date at the age of 12 years, while one girl stated dating at age 9. One girls reported having a first date as late as 18 years of age.

Another question asked was, "How many times have you gone steady?" Approximately 40 per cent of the students in the 17 years of age and over group indicated going steady two to three times as compared to 35.8 per cent of the 15 to 16 year old girls. Almost 50 per cent of the younger girls had gone steady only one or less times with approximately one-fourth of the older age group reporting steady dating one or



less times. The number of different times reported going steady is illustrated below.

<u>Frequency of Steady Dating</u>	<u>Group I</u> 15-16 years (N=53)		<u>Group II</u> 17 years and over (N=67)	
	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
1 or less times	26	49.1	15	22.4
2-3 times	19	35.8	27	40.3
4-5 times	3	5.7	15	22.4
6 or more times	5	9.4	10	14.9

The girls were requested to state the longest time they had gone steady with one person. Approximately 45 per cent of the participants in Group II indicated steady dating with one boy 12 months and over; only 10.4 per cent had never gone steady; and 9.0 per cent reported going steady with one boy for less than three months. One-fourth of the 15 to 16 year old girls had reported steady dating with one person for less than three months, and 28.3 per cent stated the longest time for steady dating was from three to six months.

Students were requested to indicate characteristics desirable in a dating partner. The six characteristics rated highest by the group, in rank order, are as follows: "treats me with respect," "neat appearance," "accepts me as I am," "sense of humor," "good conversationalist," and "dependable." (See Table I.)

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED IN A DATING PARTNER  
AS INDICATED BY 120 HOMEMAKING STUDENTS

Characteristics	Student Responses	
	Number	Per cent
Good conversationalist	68	56.7
The same moral standards	60	50.0
Sense of humor	88	73.3
Same interests	54	45.0
Neat appearance	97	80.8
Dependable	67	55.8
Good looking	40	33.3
Sincere	59	49.2
Ambitious	38	31.7
Family of good reputation	18	15.0
Dances well	19	15.8
Appreciative	43	35.8
Not critical	34	28.3
Does not drink	59	49.2
Shares responsibility of dates	48	40.0
Accepts me as I am	94	78.3
Good mixer	26	21.7
Treats me with respect	110	91.7

Approximately 51 per cent of the girls in the older age group returned home during the week from dates between 9:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Thirty-nine of the 67 girls in this group stayed out after midnight on Saturday nights. On Friday nights 52.2 per cent of the participants were allowed to stay out after midnight, and 83.6 per cent had to be home on Sunday nights between 9:30 p.m. to midnight.

The usual hour for the younger age group to return from week night dates was given as 9:30 p.m. or earlier to 10:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday night dates between 10:00 p.m. to midnight. The majority of the same age group were required to return home between 9:30 p.m. to midnight on Sunday night dates. Four of the girls reported not being permitted to date during the week, and two girls were allowed to stay out after midnight.

Over 80 per cent of the teenagers in Group I "never" or "seldom" talked about physical love, while an even larger percentage, 99 per cent, in Group II stated "never" or "seldom" discussing this subject. More girls in the younger group than older group stated "frequently" talking about physical love.

Over 95 per cent of the students in both groups indicated the dating of boys with good reputations either

"in every case" or "in most cases." A very small number denoted going with boys whose reputations were questionable.

Data indicated that the girls in Group II gave some consideration to where parking took place as 41.8 per cent usually parked at an area that looked like a safe place. Findings indicated 42.6 per cent of Group I were not interested in parking, while 35.2 per cent did park in a safe area.

<u>Place of Parking</u>	<u>Group I</u> 15-16 years (N=53)		<u>Group II</u> 17 years and over (N=67)	
	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Occurs wherever we are			4	6.0
Usually occurs in front of the house	12	22.2	19	28.4
Usually occurs at what looks like a safe place	19	35.2	28	41.8
Does not occur as far as I am concerned	23	42.6	16	23.9

A study of the drinking habits of these students showed that about 50 per cent would not drink at all. Thirty-two per cent of Group I and 16.4 per cent of Group II did not drink and demanded the date end immediately. A fewer number

stated being careful not to become intoxicated and making one drink last as long as possible.

<u>Drinking Practices</u>	<u>Group I</u> 15-16 years (N=53)		<u>Group II</u> 17 years and over (N=67)	
	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Will not drink at all	27	50.9	33	49.2
Will not drink and demand that the date end immediately	17	32.1	11	16.4
Will try to make one drink last as long as possible	6	11.3	12	17.9
Will be careful not to become intoxi- cated	3	5.7	11	16.4

The majority of the participants did not smoke at any time on dates. The smoking "regularly," "frequently," and "occasionally" made up a very small percentage of the total.

<u>Smoking Practices</u> <u>on Dates</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Not at all	106	88.3
Occasionally	6	5.0
Regularly	5	4.2
Frequently	3	2.5

Drive-in movies, the Dairy Queen, indoor theaters, banquets, and other dinner parties were the most frequently

mentioned places for dating. Other popular activities not included in the study were bowling, church, and swimming.

<u>Places to go on Dates</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Drive-in movie	94	78.3
Indoor theater	84	70.0
Dairy Queen	82	68.3
Watch television	72	60.0
Banquets and other dinner parties	64	53.3
Visiting	45	37.5
Parking	42	35.0
Sponsored dances	41	34.2
Sponsored school activities	39	32.5
Drinking parties	11	9.2

Over 75 per cent of the boys had their own cars to use for dates. Slightly less than one-fourth of the boys used the family car for dates.

Forty and four-tenths per cent of the 15 to 16 year old girls indicated engaging in occasional light kissing, while fewer of the 17 years of age and over group, 24.3 per cent, reported light kissing. More of the latter group, 45.7 per cent, stated involvement in some heavy and French kissing.

Methods used to control the extent of necking and petting varied. The most common practices cited were "Let boy know your attitude from the start," and "Don't encourage necking and petting by your actions." Other methods receiving a high number of responses were "Be honest, say no

sincerely," "Double or group-date," "Don't date fellows overly interested in necking and petting," "Plan where to go and what to do in advance," and "Set point beyond which you do not go" (Table II).

The frequency of dating reported most often by both age groups was two or three times a week. Slightly over 32 per cent of students in Group I reported having dates once or twice a month. The same percentage, 9.0 per cent, of girls in Group II stated dating once or twice a month and also dating from four to seven times a week. Of the 120 girls only five reported never dating.

<u>Frequency of Dating</u>	<u>Group I</u> 15-16 years (N=53)		<u>Group II</u> 17 years and over (N=67)	
	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Num- ber</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Never	2	3.8	3	4.5
Once or twice a month	17	32.1	6	9.0
Once a week	2	3.8	2	3.0
On week-ends	3	5.7	1	1.5
2 or 3 times a week	24	45.3	49	73.1
4 to 7 times a week	5	9.4	6	9.0

Twenty-four students of the 17 through 19 years of age group reported going steady, and only half of this number of the 15 to 16 year olds went steady. The majority of the girls gave the enjoyment of each other's company as the reason for

TABLE II  
METHODS USED TO CONTROL EXTENT OF NECKING AND PETTING  
AS INDICATED BY 120 HOMEMAKING STUDENTS

Methods	Student Responses	
	Number	Per cent
Refrain from long good nights	25	20.8
Let boy know attitude from start	83	69.2
Keep talking, make interesting conversation	31	25.8
Ask to be taken home	11	9.2
Do not date fellows over interested in necking and petting	48	40.0
Be honest, say "No" sincerely	68	56.7
Plan where to go and what to do in advance	45	37.5
Double or group date	50	41.7
Keep attitude light and casual	31	25.8
Pass off attempts as a joke	19	15.8
Set an early curfew	13	10.8
Plan after date activities	20	16.7
Set point beyond which you do not go	42	35.0
Do not encourage necking and petting by actions	83	69.2



going steady. Having the same interests was a reason mentioned by 25 of the girls. Ten per cent reported going steady because of the assurance of having a date for all social events. "Most of my friends go steady" was the reason given by 1.0 per cent of the students. Other reasons mentioned by students were "like the boy very much," "plan to marry," "serious," "in love," and "wanted to see what steady dating was like."

Three-fourths of the teenagers in the younger age group urged restraint when encountered with an overly attentive date. Most of the adolescents in the older age group used the same method to discourage overly attentive dates. The study showed that girls dating from two to three times a week were either using restraint or demanding the date end immediately when dates were overly attentive.

The boys nearly always paid all expenses on a date; a few girls paid all expenses, but the majority, 84.2 per cent, had no part in the expense of dates. On special occasions 12 girls were reported as paying all the cost of the entertainment.

Participants studied appeared to follow traditional preferences which demand boys be older since approximately three-fourths of the girls went with boys one to three years

older. Only 2.4 per cent of the students dated boys younger than they, and 22 of the girls reported going with boys their age.

Respondents were asked to decide the dating behavior of boys most objectionable. Of the 20 items listed, the six most frequently considered as being undesirable were: "vulgar in speech or action," "disrespectful of girls and women," "too much necking and petting," "self-centered and selfish," "childish and silly," and "careless in dress and manners" (Table III).

The majority of the students in both groups placed more emphasis on having dates approved by parents rather than school friends. Only 16 of the adolescents wanted dates to be acceptable to school friends.

A summary of responses of student dating activities is shown in Table IV.

TABLE III  
 DATING BEHAVIOR OF BOYS MOST OBJECTIONABLE  
 AS INDICATED BY 120 HOMEMAKING STUDENTS

Dating Behavior	Student Responses	
	Number	Per cent
Vulgar in speech or action	93	77.5
Too possessive	41	34.2
Shy, self-conscious	29	24.2
Too serious	31	25.8
Flirtatious with others	57	47.5
Childish and silly	70	58.3
Always complaining	58	48.3
Too money-minded	39	32.5
Pretentious	51	42.5
Easily angered or hurt	61	50.8
Careless in dress, manners	66	55.0
Too much necking and petting	74	61.7
Too talkative or loud	31	25.8
Easily offended	37	30.8
Dishonest flattery	52	43.3
Too conceited on dates	53	44.2
Disrespectful of girls and women	80	66.7
Self-centered and selfish	71	59.2
Unfriendly	49	40.8
Inactive and non-creative	22	18.3

TABLE IV  
STUDENTS' DATING ACTIVITIES AS INDICATED  
BY 120 HOMEMAKING STUDENTS

Item Number	Activities	Percentage of Student Responses			
		Often	Sometimes	Never	At all times
23	Friends arrange blind dates for me.	0.8	52.5	45.8	0.8
24	On a first date, I allow the boy to kiss me.	13.3	58.3	15.0	13.3
25	On certain occasions I ask boys for dates.	0.8	41.7	57.5	0.0
26	I kiss my date in public.	2.5	45.0	50.0	2.5
27	My dates call for me at my home.	10.0	5.0	3.3	81.7
28	My dates visit in my home when neither of my parents are present.	1.7	47.5	48.3	2.5
29	I wait for my date in a public place.	0.0	15.8	81.7	2.5
30	My date and I go to drive-in movies.	33.3	47.5	16.7	2.5
31	My date and I both have equal say as to what we would like to do on dates.	11.7	52.5	27.5	8.3
32	My dates are with boys who go to my high school.	11.7	52.5	27.5	8.3
33	My parents are informed about the places I go on dates.	9.2	13.3	0.8	76.7
34	I get along well with my mother.	20.0	32.5	5.8	41.7
35	I get along well with my father.	14.3	34.4	5.0	46.2
36	My parents allow me to choose my dating partners freely and independently.	11.7	17.5	3.3	67.5
37	When my parents are present in the home, I am allowed to entertain my date.	15.0	22.5	0.8	61.7
38	My parents are notified during the evening if my dating plans are changed or if arrival at home will be delayed.	12.5	23.3	6.7	57.5
39	One or both of my parents wait up for me until I am home from a date.	40.0	12.5	27.5	20.0

## CHAPTER IV

### S U M M A R Y , C O N C L U S I O N S , A N D R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

The purpose of the study was to become specifically informed about family backgrounds, the dating practices, and personal and family relationships of teen-age girls. Two instruments were used to obtain data, "Personal Data Sheet" and "Survey of Dating Practices." The study included 120 students enrolled in Homemaking I, Homemaking II, and Home and Family Living classes at Mesquite High School, Mesquite, Texas, in the school term of 1966-1967.

Approximately 39 per cent of the students were 17 years of age and lived with natural parents. All but 17 of the students had brothers and sisters living at home. Seventy-three per cent of the fathers were employed as skilled or semi-skilled workers. Employed mothers totaled 76.5 per cent of all mothers. Skilled workers made up the largest group.

The majority of the students had experience earning money, and the most common source of earned income was caring for children. More students acquired personal income by requests from parents than by any other method. A small

number of students received all spending money through an allowance.

Almost two-thirds of the participants planned on seeking employment following graduation. A large percentage of this group stated a desire to combine college or vocational training with employment.

Almost one-half of the 15 to 16 year old girls had frequent dates with different boys, while 29.8 per cent of the students in the 17 years and over group frequently dated different boys. Slightly over one-third of the girls in Group II were going steady with 22.6 per cent of Group I reporting steady dating. The majority stated the reason for going steady was the enjoyment of each other's company. A very small percentage of the students gave the assurance of a date for all social occasions as the reason.

Data indicated that only a few restrictions were placed on the number of times adolescents in both groups were allowed to date, since 73.1 per cent of Group II participants and 45.3 per cent of the teenagers in Group I were allowed to date as often as two or three times a week. Verification of permission to date was brought out by the responses that only four girls dated once a week and four girls dated only on the week-end.

The majority of the participants checked the following characteristics as being the most desirable in a dating partner: "treats me with respect," "neat appearance," and "accepts me as I am." The most objectionable characteristics in a dating partner were: "vulgarity in speech or actions," "disrespectful of girls and women," and "too much necking and petting." Responses definitely showed that girls wanted to date boys with desirable characteristics and good reputations and also showed the girls' capability of judging desirable traits in boys.

One-half of the teenagers in both groups did not drink, while a small percentage of the participants reported trying to make one drink last as long as possible and being careful not to become intoxicated. These findings showed many girls are strong in their beliefs about drinking and will not drink or take part in drinking activities, while others, not having such strength of character, will go along with the group and make one drink last as long as possible. Participants did not indicate enjoyment of drinking but wanted to be accepted by the crowd.

Eighty-eight per cent of the girls stated that they did not smoke on dates. Only 4.2 per cent indicated smoking regularly when on dates. Results showed that girls either did not smoke on any occasion or feared the disapproval of the date.

Data indicated that the largest number of participants checked drive-in movies, Dairy Queen, and in-door theaters as places to go on dates. Bowling and church were mentioned more often than night clubs and drinking parties as usual places to go on dates.

Findings revealed the majority of participants were required to be home from dates by 10 p.m. on week and Sunday nights. Eighty per cent of the students in Group I reported being able to stay out as late as midnight on Saturday nights, while slightly over half the adolescents in Group II could stay out after midnight. Fifty-two per cent of the students in the 17 through 19 years of age group were allowed to stay out on Friday night dates after midnight as compared to the majority of the younger girls having to be in by midnight.

A large number of parents showed concern and interest in their teen-age children by placing regulations on places to go on dates and time to return. Seventy students checked a desire to go with boys approved by their parents which suggested that many teenagers respect authority.

More of the girls in the older group indicated their willingness to park with their dates than did the younger adolescents. Although the majority of the students never talked about physical love, the 15 to 16 year old group



reported talking on this subject more than the 17 years of age and over group. Fifty-eight per cent of all students stated "sometimes" allowing the boy a kiss on the first date, while 45 per cent reported "sometimes" kissing dates in public.

Ninety-eight of the girls reported having dates call for them at home "at all times," while only three waited for their dates in a public place. The majority of the girls' parents were informed where their daughters were going on dates, and 57.5 per cent notified parents about changes in plans of late arrival. One-fourth of the parents waited up for their daughters until they came home from a date. Over one-half were not allowed to entertain boys at home when neither of the parents were present, and the remainder said "sometimes" boys were allowed to visit when the parents were away. Five students were allowed to entertain boys in the home "often" or "at all times" when parents were not present. Over half of the girls, 61.7 per cent, were allowed "at all times" to entertain dates at home when parents were present. Findings showed parents are concerned in providing homes which children feel free to entertain friends but are also aware of the importance of proper supervision of the children's activities.

Parents also showed interest by wanting to know any change in time of arrival at home, and many waited up until their children were home. Data showed that many more parents were concerned about the activities of teenagers than parents showing little or no interest in their children's activities. Almost three-fourths of the girls reported "often" or "at all times" getting along well with their mothers and fathers which proved the young people in this study had good relationships with parents.

As a result of this study, the author recommends that a revision be made in the teaching curriculum on dating and more time be allowed for this phase of work. This would be especially valid for first and second year homemaking students. Dating information should be extended to include more complete units for preparation for marriage at the junior and senior levels. In schools where girls are marrying during the first or second year in high school, units on marriage should be taught at an earlier grade. Extensive up-to-date reading materials on this subject should be available for students in both the homemaking department and school library.

To meet the needs of teenagers, especially students not previously enrolled in a homemaking course, a required course in home and family relationships would be beneficial to both

boys and girls in high school. Many available community resources could be utilized. The area of family relations would provide excellent opportunity for team teaching using the school nurse, the counselor, and the sociology teacher to assist the homemaking teachers.

In order for teachers to be better prepared in teaching young people, more college or university courses in counseling and family relations should be required. Courses in this area would enable teachers to understand young people and their problems better and to help the youngsters resolve conflicts.

The author recommends a community program in family life education including a council of adults and young people giving opportunity for mutual understanding between the generations and cooperation in meeting needs of all family members. Teacher training workshops, parent study programs, and professional seminars would be valuable in giving parents insight into themselves and their children. Parents and teachers would be working with teenagers in schools, churches of all faiths and denominations, 4-H club work, and all programs in the city.

Additional emphasis should be placed by counselors, homemaking teachers, and other teachers in helping students to grow socially and emotionally, paving the way to a stable

marriage and happy and successful family living. Further research in the field of dating and family living needs to be undertaken with larger groups in this community and other communities to give adults working with this age group more insight into their needs and problems.

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