

PARENTAL CHILDREARING CONCERNS REGARDING  
SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

---

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF NURSING

BY  
SANDRA L. BLANKENBAKER, B.A.

---

DENTON, TEXAS

MAY 1981

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The friends, committee members, family, and respondents who helped to complete this thesis have my sincere thanks.

In particular, I would like to thank the following persons: Donna Kem, R.N., M.S., for her encouragement and guidance in beginning the research study; Gail Watson, R.N., M.S., Estelle Kurtz, R.N., M.S., and Judy Erlen, Ph.D., for their guidance and assistance which they gave during the writing of the thesis; Joan Reisch, Ph.D., for her consultation in statistics; and to my friends who supported me in writing the thesis.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS . . . . .	iv
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Statement of Problem . . . . .	2
Purposes of Study . . . . .	4
Background and Significance . . . . .	5
Hypotheses . . . . .	12
Definition of Terms . . . . .	14
Limitations . . . . .	16
Delimitations . . . . .	17
Assumptions . . . . .	18
Summary . . . . .	18
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	20
Historical Attitudes toward Children and Childrearing . . . . .	20
Child Growth and Development . . . . .	25
Parental and Family Growth and Development . . . . .	31
Parent-Child Communication . . . . .	36
Influences of Variables on Childrearing Concerns . . . . .	37
Summary . . . . .	39
3. PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION AND TREATMENT OF DATA . . . . .	40
Setting . . . . .	40
Population and Sample . . . . .	40

	Page
Protection of Human Subjects . . . . .	42
Instrument . . . . .	43
Data Collection . . . . .	46
Pilot Study . . . . .	47
Treatment of Data . . . . .	49
 4. ANALYSIS OF DATA . . . . .	 50
Description of Sample . . . . .	52
Findings . . . . .	55
Summary of Findings . . . . .	68
 5. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY . . . . .	 69
Summary . . . . .	71
Discussion of Findings . . . . .	72
Conclusions and Implications . . . . .	73
Recommendations for Further Study . . . . .	 75
 APPENDIX A . . . . .	 76
APPENDIX B . . . . .	78
APPENDIX C . . . . .	80
APPENDIX D . . . . .	32
APPENDIX E . . . . .	85
APPENDIX F . . . . .	91
APPENDIX G . . . . .	94
REFERENCE LIST . . . . .	97



## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Age Distribution of Sample . . . . .	53
2. Educational Preparation of Sample . . . . .	54
3. Years of Childrearing Experience . . . . .	55
4. Summary of Results Regarding Maternal and Paternal Childrearing Concerns . . .	57
5. Summary of Results Regarding Parental Levels of Educational Background and Childrearing Concern . . . . .	60
6. Summary of Results Regarding Parental Ages and Childrearing Concerns . . . . .	65
7. Summary of Results Regarding Years of Parenting Experience and Childrearing Concerns . . . . .	67

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

"You don't seem to care how I'm feeling," is a familiar phrase expressed by children to their parents. Parents, in general, face a number of developmental crises in raising their children. Although developmental processes are occurring with the children as well as the adults themselves, many parents do not realize that these crises are common in the process of growth in parenting.

The concept of parenting to most has been primarily the result of unconscious thoughts and beliefs developed during their own childhood. Childhood and parenthood have been romanticized in the expectations of children's growth and development and the handling of developmental crises. Parents have been caught unprepared for parenthood. Ambivalence and guilt have arisen as parents try to resolve the discrepancy between the actual situations that arise in childrearing and that which parents believe and expect would resolve the childrearing situations. Parents have encountered

difficulty integrating old beliefs with situations that need a new approach.

Seldom, until a severe crisis occurs, does a parenting problem become recognized and help sought. As a result, many conflicts in the parenting role go unresolved for years and emotional damage may follow for both parents and children.

From the general personal feelings and conflicts of parenting, parents have, and express, concerns about childrearing in relation to growth and development and communication interactions within their families. Many growth and developmental changes are occurring in families which have school-age children. Parents are undergoing growth and developmental changes as well as their children. All of these changes have impact on the family. This study explored concerns of parenting as expressed by mothers and fathers related to their children and family growth and development.

#### Statement of Problem

The problems of the study were:

1. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding child growth and development.

2. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding communication interactions.

3. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding family and parental growth and development.

4. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental levels of educational background to the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

5. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

6. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

7. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental ages and the degree of child-rearing concern regarding child growth and development.

8. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental ages and the degree of child-rearing concern regarding communication interactions.

9. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental ages and the degree of child-rearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

10. To identify if there is a significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

11. To identify if there is a significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

12. To identify if there is a significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

#### Purposes of Study

The purposes of this study were:

1. To identify maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

2. To identify the relationship of maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

3. To identify the relationship of maternal and paternal levels of educational background to the degree of childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

4. To identify the relationship of maternal and paternal ages to the degree of childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

5. To identify the relationship of the years of parenting experience to the degree of childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

#### Background and Significance

Parenting is one of the most important tasks a person can undertake, not only for himself and his child, but for society (Salk, 1974). Balter (1976)

disclosed the fact that most parenting is the result of unconscious thoughts and beliefs concerning the roles of mother and father developed during childhood. Little formal education exists to prepare parents for parenthood; yet, thousands assume the role each day.

Parenthood is defined by Callahan (1973) as a process by which the parent protects and nurtures his child. "Good" parents are identified as those who provide warmth, shelter, food, clothing, medical care, and safety. These parents delight in the uniqueness of each child. McBride (1973) spoke of parenthood as a role into which one grows.

Gordon (1970) further identified that each child needs to see his parents as real persons with whom he would like to have a relationship. Parents are described as inevitably feeling both accepting and unaccepting toward their children, not hiding their true feelings, and feeling different degrees of acceptance toward each individual child (Gordon, 1970).

The skill with which a mother and father will parent depends upon the degree of maturing parental personality used to cope with the stress of caring for the demands of the child along with general

knowledge of child care (Callahan, 1973). In order to mature in parenthood, parents need to understand their values, problems, role conflicts, adaptation patterns, and how these relate to the role of being a parent (McBride, 1973).

It would seem that parents would have fewer child-rearing concerns if they had practical knowledge of family development, the growth and development of themselves and their children, as well as healthy communication interactions. Understanding of family development is helpful to the healthy development of the parent-child relationship.

The family is the hub around which all other institutions and groups revolve--in every society and subculture known to man. Duvall (1971) defined the family as

a unity of interacting persons related by ties of marriage, birth, or adoption, whose central purpose is to create and maintain a common culture which promotes the physical, mental, emotional, and social development of each of its members. (p. 5)

Families encompass parents and children as well as other variations. Carter (1976) stated that a healthy family will also provide for the perception of needs



of the others, will respect those needs, and will make some effort to satisfy them.

Duvall (1971) reported that more and more of today's families see it as inadequate to only clothe and feed a child and make ends meet, and instead seek a quality of life for all its members. Families, in more recent years, have incorporated dreams and aspirations into the family group.

Family developmental tasks arise at certain stages as the family tries to meet the needs of the individual members and the family unit. These family developmental tasks parallel the developmental tasks of individuals. Family developmental tasks associated with the school-age child outlined by Duvall (1971) include: (a) providing for children's activity and parent's privacy, (b) keeping financially sound, (c) cooperating to get things done, (d) continuing to satisfy each other as married partners, (e) utilizing effective family communications, (f) feeling close to relatives in the larger family, (g) tying in with life outside the family, and (h) reevaluating the family's philosophies of life. In order to understand family roles, it is beneficial to understand the child's development as well as the parental development involved.

In the instance of the school-age child, a wide range of normal physical, mental, and social development is occurring. The school-age child is in the psychosocial developmental stage of industry versus inferiority as identified by Erikson (1963). The child wants to learn how to do and make things with others. The risk in this period of development is a sense of inadequacy and inferiority in a child who does not receive recognition for his efforts. In Freud's (1947) first six stages of human development, the school-age child is completing the oedipal stage of development and entering the latency stage. The completion of the oedipal stage is identified when the boy renounces his earlier tie to his mother and identifies with his father, while the girls becomes more feminine through her identification with her mother. After the resolution of the oedipal conflict, at about age 6, the child enters the latency stage. The latency stage is characterized by reality orientation. The child focuses on socially approved activities, especially learning. The latency stage continues until age 11 to 13 years.

Learning or the development of intelligence of school-age children, occurs during the preoperational

and concrete operation stage identified by Piaget (1972). In the preoperational stage the child uses symbols and his thinking is more flexible; while in the concrete operation stage, the child thinks about real, concrete things in systematic ways. That is, the child accumulates images and forms "intuitions" in the preoperational phase. In concrete operations, at 9 or 10 years, the child is able to order objects serially by length, later by weight, and at 11 or 12 years by volume (Phillips, 1969). While the child is developing physically, mentally, and socially, he has certain developmental tasks to accomplish.

The developmental tasks of the school-age child as reported by Duvall (1971) include: (a) learning the basic skills of school children, (b) mastering the physical skills appropriate to his development, (c) understanding the use of money, (d) becoming an active, cooperative member of his family, (e) relating effectively to peers and adults, (f) continuing to learn how to handle his feelings and impulses, (g) understanding his or her sex role, (h) continuing to discover himself as a worthy person, and (i) relating himself to loyalties beyond the moment and outside himself. During the course of the child accomplishing

these tasks, the parents are experiencing certain developmental stages also.

The developmental tasks of parents of school-age children include being sensitive to and providing for children's growth needs, enjoying life through children's eyes, and letting the children go and grow (Duvall, 1971). According to Erikson (1963), the young adult begins to feel secure in his identity and intimacy with himself and others versus the feeling of isolation. In adulthood the task is involvement in the well-being and development of the next generation versus self-absorption. Children and parents need to interact in order to accomplish their individual tasks.

Communication among family members is necessary for the successful functioning of the family. Needs of the individual members cannot be satisfied, problems solved, or goals reached without communication. Leonard and Bernstein (1969) stressed that one of the most important functions coming from human interaction is the identification and confirmation of self. Gordon (1970) further identified active listening as the message of acceptance and the avenue by which to identify the child's needs. Duvall (1971) contended that

democratic childrearing demands courage and capacity for verbal and nonverbal communication, openness and responsiveness with others, ability to handle abstractions as well as concrete things and thoughts. (p. 101)

Wahlroos (1974) stated that the degree to which one is following the rules of positive and constructive communication will be reflected in the individual's emotional health.

The total family function incorporates not only the individual parent and child developmental stages and tasks, but the linking of them by a healthy, constructive, communication interaction. In the literature, there is a lack of studies which identify the concerns of parents of normal school-age children. The study of parenting is needed in nursing to identify the areas of concerns of parents to give guidance in nursing assessments and plans of care.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study were:

1. There will be no significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development.

2. There will be no significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding communication interactions.

3. There will be no significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding family and parental growth and development.

4. There will be no significant difference between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

5. There will be no significant difference between the parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

6. There will be no significant difference between the parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

7. There will be no significant difference between the parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

8. There will be no significant difference between the parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

9. There will be no significant difference between the parental ages and the degree of child-rearing concerns regarding child growth and development.

10. There will be no significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development.

11. There will be no significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

12. There will be no significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study the following definitions were utilized:

1. Child--foster, adoptive, or biological offspring of a mother and father.

2. Child growth and development--the process of increasing the amount/complexity of the physical and

psychosocial aspects of children as measured by the degree of childrearing concern.

3. Childbearing--methods of problem solving in the growth and development of children utilized by parents.

4. Communication interactions--human interaction that leads to identification and confirmation of self (Lennard & Bernstein, 1969) as measured by the degree of childrearing concern.

5. Degree of childrearing concern--the number as expressed by parents on a Likert scale in response to statements regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

6. Father--foster, adoptive, or biological male parent with whom the child resides.

7. Family growth and development--the process of increasing the amount/complexity of the psychosocial dimensions of the family as measured by the degree of childrearing concern.

8. Levels of parental education background--highest level of formal education of the mother and father.



9. Maternal and paternal childrearing concerns--an interest, care, or anxiety expressed by parents in the areas of child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

10. Mother--foster, adoptive, or biological female parent with whom the child resides.

11. Parental ages--the chronological time since birth of the foster, adoptive, or biological mother and father.

12. Parental growth and development--the process of increasing the amount/complexity of the physical and psychosocial dimensions of adulthood as measured by the degree of childrearing concern.

13. Parenting experience--number of years of having children in the home.

#### Limitations

For the purposes of this study, the following limitations were identified:

1. There may be internal instability in the family which may influence the response by the parent.

2. The parents may discuss the questionnaire before it is completed and returned which might not give their individual opinion.

3. The parents may not answer all parts of the questionnaire or may choose not to return the questionnaire.

4. The parents may answer the questionnaire in relation to other children instead of the child in the age group of 5 through 10 years.

5. Parents may not have understood the directions to the questionnaire and the questionnaire itself.

6. The developed questionnaire has only content validity.

7. The sample was not a random sample.

#### Delimitations

The following delimitations were identified in this study:

1. Parents are living together at the time of the study.

2. One child is in the age category of 5 through 10 years.

3. All children are normal physically and mentally in the family as perceived by the parents.

### Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Each family is its own unique system, though similarities can be found between families.
2. Most families have problems or concerns about childrearing.
3. Most parents desire the best for their children, that is, health and happiness.

### Summary

This chapter has included a discussion of the problem of the research study and provided supportive background information to justify the problem. Included in the chapter were the assumption, hypotheses, definition of terms, and limitations for the research study.

Chapter 2, Review of Literature, discusses parenting, family and parental growth and development, child growth and development, and communication interaction of parents and children. Chapter 3, Procedure for Collection and Treatment of Data, explains the method of data collection and the treatment of this data to meet the purposes of this study. Chapter 4, Analysis of Data, describes the statistical analysis of the

data obtained. Chapter 5, Summary of the Study, discusses the findings, conclusions and implications of the study, and makes recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This research study was conducted for the purpose of identifying and showing the relationship of the maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development. How these concerns relate to educational background, ages of the parents, and years of parenting experience were also examined. This chapter presents the historical attitudes regarding children and childrearing that have evolved in the United States, child growth and development, family and parental growth and development, and parent-child communication interactions in parenting.

#### Historical Attitudes toward Children and Childrearing

Historically, attitudes toward childhood and childrearing have varied widely. Up until the 17th century in Europe, there was no special emphasis on childhood as a separate phase of the life cycle. Aries (1962) believed that children in the premodern times were

treated indifferently. Somewhere between the ages of 4 to 7 years, children were integrated into adult life. These "small adults" mingled, worked, and played with mature people.

The art of medieval times depicts children as immature adults. Their clothing was not distinctive and was a miniature prototype of their own adult social class. There was no graduated system of education during these times; so, students from 10 to 20 years of age were mixed together in the classroom. Children were not thought of as being "innocent" nor in need of protection in regard to sexual matters. Children were a part of the wild and violent life of the times and even in school they were unruly, disobedient, and violent (Aries, 1962).

Although parents might have been thought of as indifferent or insensitive to young children's needs, at the same time, this process did allow parents to accept more comfortably the presence of their offspring. The children were from then on regarded as functioning members of the community rather than as dependents (Aries, 1962).

During the period of time before the age of 4 years, children were coddled by their mothers and

nannies. This "childhood," in which the child was believed to be innocent and simplistic, was a source of amusement and relaxation for the adult.

The 17th century marked a great change in attitudes toward children and their morals. As a result of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, clergymen and humanitarians began to encourage the separation of children from adults. This movement influenced parents to develop a family attitude oriented toward the child and his education. The concept of innocence of childhood won acceptance and children were spared all reference to sexual matters lest this would spoil their innocence. The child became a special person, set aside by dress that set him apart from adults. Moral education became one of the main objects of school life.

This new attitude of childhood and the founding of the first settlements in the United States occurred about the same time. Freed from the traditions of Europe, Americans were more experimental and saw many changes in childrearing patterns. To better understand the changes that have taken place in childrearing and explain what is believed to still be the most

dominant styles of parenting in this country, the philosophical movements of Puritanism, Rationalism, and Romanticism need to be examined.

Puritanism saw mankind as an evil nature and the moral aspects of a child's personality occupied all of the parent's attention. Parents aimed primarily at the suppression of sinfulness, the control of the Devil within the child, and making the child a moral subject of the Puritan community. Overtones of the Puritan attitude toward children can be heard today when parents say, "you're a bad boy," "you'll make God unhappy," or "wait until Daddy gets home" (Karson & Karson, 1976, p. 3). Positive judgments were rarely used in this type of attitude and the control of behavior was maintained through the instillation of fear.

Rationalism assumed that life and the universe were rational and there was a solution to every problem. Parents of this belief insisted on academic skills and book learning and regarded reason as the one human characteristic. The child was thought of as an empty vessel which needed to be filled. These parents generally made comments such as "look it up" or "try it and see what happens." However, the rationalist



parent frequently complained that the "child doesn't take no for an answer" and that the child must "have an explanation or logical reason given for everything" (Karson & Karson, 1976, p. 4).

Romantics held the view that all people were to allow the child to find his inner voice untainted by institutions of society. Romantics felt that children were born good and were corrupted by society. The style of parenting derived from Romanticism makes "feelings" the central criterion by which behavior between parents and children are judged. There was a sense in this style of relationship that there are no finite limits to the child's capacities or to the parent's patience or endurance. Because the Romantic attitudes set no criterion for achievement, the child did not know when his work had reached a desired level of excellence, when he might stop an interpersonal transaction as a "bad bet," or when he might invoke standards for behavior other than those expressed by his parents without feeling disloyal and cut adrift (Karson & Karson, 1976).

In more recent years, other influences have been superimposed on the traditional parenting attitudes

that have evolved from the Puritan, Rational, and Romantic philosophical movements. Concern about good moral training that predominated around 1900 was replaced by emphasis on proper health conditions and strict discipline by the 1920s. In the 1940s, maternal models emerged. Mothers were preoccupied with personality development and the importance of the emotional security provided by parental tender loving care. This reflected a basic concept that the child possessed positive growth forces. The upheaval of World War II also fostered a compassionate, responsible attitude of society toward its children (Borstelmann, 1976).

All of these historical attitudes toward childhood and childrearing can be seen to some degree with parenting styles today. These parenting styles influence the child's growth and development.

#### Child Growth and Development

Children in the age category of 5 through 10 years are going through a number of physical and psychosocial developmental stages. Success in task attainment of earlier developmental stages is considered necessary or desirable if the individual is to successfully meet

later ones. There is variation between individuals in ways of attainment of specific developmental tasks as well as unique patterns of task attainment in different societies.

In Erikson's (1963) psychosocial developmental life cycle model, each phase of life has a crisis introduction and a task to be accomplished. The key concept in Erikson's psychosocial scheme is that of "identity." The developing individual pursues his identity throughout the life cycle as it is attained, maintained, lost, and regained. This is accomplished through feedback processes as the individual interacts with significant "others" in different environments. The school-age child is seeking his identity in his accomplishments. The child learns to win recognition by producing things. He realizes that there is no workable future within his family and begins to apply himself to skills and tasks by developing a sense of industry. It is in this stage that the child gains an understanding of technology and economy. Since industry involves doing things with others, a sense of division of labor and of opportunity develops.

According to Erikson (1963) the school-age child's task is the development of a sense of adequacy versus

a sense of inferiority. If the child despairs of his body's abilities and skills, or of his status among his peers, he may be discouraged from identifying with them and the working world. The child that despairs of his abilities in the working world may consider himself doomed to mediocrity or inadequacy.

In western countries, schools are a primary working ground for the child in developing himself. School in itself is a culture with its own goals, limits, achievements, and disappointments. Havighurst (1948) defined the purpose of education to help the young person achieve his developmental tasks in a personally and socially satisfactory way. The developmental tasks for the middle-age child are identified as (a) learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games, (b) building wholesome attitudes toward oneself as a growing person, (c) learning to get along with age mates, (d) learning an appropriate masculine or feminine role, (e) developing fundamental skills in reading, writing, and calculating, (f) developing concepts necessary for everyday living, (g) developing conscience, morality, and a scale of values, (h) achieving personal independence, and (i) developing attitudes toward social

groups and institutions (Havighurst, 1948). Middle childhood is characterized by three great outward pushes.

There is the thrust of the child out of the home and into the peer group, the physical thrust into the world of games and work requiring neuromuscular skills, and the mental thrust into the world of adult concepts, logic symbolism, and communication. (Havighurst, 1948, p. 17)

Growth and the experiences of life bring to the child an expansion in his image of the world of things and human relationships. A child is not born with values but forms them in his relationships with his family and his culture. The child will learn to value things in a manner similar to the parent because the child is so dependent on his family. One's values are learned from parental figures, teachers, peers, the mass media, and other informational inputs which set upon the individual continually from outside and from within.

Freud's (1947) theories of personality growth developed from his observations of neurotic adults. The theories stress the first 5 years of life to the development of the adult personality. The emphasis of his theory is built on the psychosexual drives of

the individual. More specifically, the psychoanalytic view of Freud (1947) depicts the school-age child entering a state of quiet and relative inactivity of the sexual drive (latency state). The major direction of the drive is focused or directed into socially approved activities such as learning. The ego is further developed and ideals become formed. The school-age child in this stage of psychosocial development has a need for belonging to a group and this brings gratification to his developing individuality (Freud, 1947).

While the theories of Freud (1947) and Erikson (1968) attempted to explain the psychosexual and psychosocial development of the child, Piaget (1972) dealt specifically with the origin and development of basic psychological processes. Piaget's (1972) cognitive phase of development views the child as trying to make sense of his world by mastery of skills in manipulating objects and the concepts of the child's culture. The child in the 4 to 7 year age span is at the intuitive stage of cognitive development. He/she relies more heavily upon immediate perception and the direct experience than on logical operations. The child

centers on one dimension or feature at a time, he sees the world mostly from his own point of view (egocentricity), and cannot reverse his thinking (Piaget, 1972). As the child moves into the concrete stage of cognitive development, he gains an ability to go beyond the immediate self and is able to notice different facets regarding an object and reconcile differences between the two. In the concrete stage (about ages 7 to 11), the child begins to be able to think logically. The child can classify things and deal with a hierarchy of classifications (Piaget, 1972). Children actively select the experiences they wish to understand and explore.

While Freud (1947), Erikson (1968), and Piaget (1972) have contributed greatly to the theoretical formulations of human growth and development, some more recent contributions offer advice to parents dealing with their child's growth and development. Engelhardt (1974) recommended the following to parents in childrearing:

1. The child should be encouraged to interact at his level of functioning with his environment.
2. The thought process that the child is using should be accepted.

3. The parent should recognize that intellectual development is gradual and dependent on all previous stages and experiences.

4. The individuality of the child should be recognized and accepted.

5. The child should be provided with experiences that are appropriate for his stage of development.

6. The child should be provided with experiences that challenge him.

7. The child should be provided with an environment that encourages active exploration and examination.

#### Parental and Family Growth and Development

In more recent years there has been an expansion of research in adult stages of growth and development. In human development research, the child and more recently, the aged, have received most of the attention of researchers.

Parents of children of ages 5 through 10 years are going through concurrent stages of growth and development as supported by more recent studies. Some authors (Levinson, 1978; Sheehy, 1976) have contended that young adults in their 20s are focusing externally



to attain their aspirations by deciding how to attain them and who can help them. These young adults are concerned with what "should" be done in accordance with family models, pressure of the culture, and peer prejudices. There is the sense that choices made are irrevocable.

Concentration during the 30s leads individuals toward doing what they want to do rather than what they should do as in the 20s. During this passage there is a restlessness where new choices must be made and commitments, such as marriage, are altered or deepened (Sheehy, 1976). This period generally involves change, turmoil, and not uncommonly, a crisis--that one has come to the end of the rope and needs to grab onto something else. This transition then moves into a settling down phase (ages 32-39). The "deadline decade" (ages 35-45) is when one sees his life as half over and feels the need to reexamine and re-evaluate his life thus far to see in what he really believes (Sheehy, 1976).

According to Erikson's (cited in Sutterley & Donnally, 1973) psychosocial theory of development, the young adult is working through intimacy and

solidarity versus isolation. This phase centers around a mutual intimacy in marriage involving an ability and willingness to share mutual trust and allowing for the fullest potential development of each other. This foundation then leads into the middle years where the predominant theme is interest in establishing and guiding the next generation. The crisis of the middle years of life is one of generativity versus self-absorption or stagnation.

Havighurst (1972) identified some early adulthood (ages 18-30 years) activities involving learning to live with a marriage partner, rearing children, managing a home, getting started in an occupation, and taking on civic responsibility. Choices are made that give social identity. During the decade of 30 to 40 years, there is a regrouping in which the person settles into the identity he has chosen.

As parents go through their own personal adult life stages, it should be kept in mind that parents are persons and do not cease to be human when they become parents. Parents will make mistakes (Gordon, 1970). Fundamental to the parents' attitude toward their children is their perception of the nature of man.

Some parents feel that human beings cannot be trusted, therefore, removing authority will result in their children becoming savage. They see little positive human potential in their offspring (Gordon, 1970).

There is the need for parents to see their children as separate individuals and not extensions of themselves. Many conflicts arise in not seeing problems as solely those of the child or the parents or those in which a problem-solving approach is applicable (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964; Gordon, 1970). It is how conflicts get resolved that is important to the family--not how many conflicts occur.

Although parents may, as individuals, differ in their belief about many things, a total consistent front on how children should be raised is not necessary. Dreikurs and Soltz (1964) stated that the child will make up his own mind about what he will accept and reject from individuals in his environment. The stimulus to which a child is exposed is much less important than his response to it. Children need guidance in their responses. Children need experience with a wide range of people so that they can learn to understand and evaluate people (Gordon, 1970).

Dreikurs and Soltz (1964) stated that the strongest motivation for the child is the desire to belong. The child's security or lack of it may hinge upon his feeling of belonging within the group at home, in the neighborhood, or at school. The child needs encouragement to develop his aptness, skill, and self-image. Encouragement is aimed at giving the child a sense of self-respect and a sense of accomplishment. The parent is looked upon as a back-up support for the child launching into society. Parents can be helpful consultants to their children by sharing their ideas, experience, and wisdom.

Democratic living is based on mutual respect. Some authors (Callahan, 1973; Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964) hold the belief that children should share in the whole aspect of family life; that parents are responsible to foster a relaxed atmosphere of solidarity through play and doing things the family enjoys. Ginott (1965) suggested that the responsibility expressed by children in helping around the house starts with the parent's willingness to allow children to feel their feelings and showing them acceptable ways of coping with their feelings. Parents will not be accepting of all of

their child's behaviors, but the child has a right to be told when his parents are not feeling accepting of a certain behavior (Gordon, 1970).

Some parents see discipline as a power struggle rather than a setting of limits. Consistency is a part of discipline and a part of order helping to establish boundaries and limitations that provide the child with a sense of security. Some parents may persist in using power out of a lack of knowledge and experience with any other method of resolving conflicts in human relations (Gordon, 1970).

#### Parent-Child Communication

Effective communication centers around parents talking with children and not to them. Much of an open communication depends upon the parents' ability to respect the child, even when they disagree with him. Parents are much inclined to presume that they know how a child feels (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964).

In talking with children, parents and children search together for ideas as to what can be done to solve a problem or improve a situation. Children, thus, have a creative part in the construction of family harmony and realize they contribute to the whole

(Gordon, 1970). In a study by Lewis, Beavers, Gossett, and Phillips (1976), communication processes in optimal families were clear as well as spontaneous. The feeling tone was mainly caring. "Expressions of all kinds of affect were acceptable; empathetic responses were frequent; individuals were 'heard' and acknowledged" (Lewis et al., 1976, p. 226). Chamberlin (1975) found that mothers who had more positive contact in childrearing used fewer communications in the form of directives and power and more communication in the form of praise and social conversation.

Erikson (1963) stressed mutuality in the parent-child relationship. Imitation, identification, and modeling are the core of the parent-child process. Some authors (Callahan, 1973; Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964; Gordon, 1970) believed that there needs to be a balance of frequency, consistency, and sensitivity for a good parental response in the communication with children.

#### Influences of Variables on Childrearing Concerns

There was little literature available to show the differences of parental age, sex, educational background, and years of parenting experience to the areas

of concern (child growth and development, parental and family growth and development, and communication interactions) of children in the age category of 5 through 10 years. One study of undergraduate students in a child psychology course asked the subjects to pretend they were 35 years of age and a parent of a 10-year-old child (Treichel & Nance, 1970). The subjects were asked to rank 50 items of possible concern according to the Q-sort procedure. Results of the study showed that women had a greater preoccupation with items related to mental health and emotional factors such as feelings, while men concentrated more on items dealing with the handling of aggression.

Dyer (1963) reported in a study of parenthood of newborns that university-educated husbands were more likely to report difficulties with parenthood crises than those with less education. Mothers in a program designed to teach mothers their role, showed that younger mothers were eager for suggestions in dealing with problems of their child's growth and development (Shaw, 1974). Another study of fathers (Obrzut, 1976) showed that fathering and mothering are complimentary processes with fathers taking a more active role in parenting in more recent years.

Summary

The review of literature has presented various attitudes toward childhood and childrearing as well as the manner in which these attitudes have influenced child growth and development. Many biological, social, and psychological developmental stages characterize the child in the age category of 5 through 10 years. Not only are children undergoing developmental phases, but more recent literature has referred to growth and development stages in adults. The process of parenting is functional by a mutuality in the parent-child relationship.

A search of the literature did not show any specific studies relating the parental concerns of child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development to the variables of sex, age, educational background and years of parenting experience. Some studies did apply the variables to other age groups of children.



## CHAPTER 3

### PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION AND TREATMENT OF DATA

This research project was an exploratory study conducted for the purpose of identifying the maternal and paternal childrearing concerns of parents with at least one child in the age group of 5 through 10 years. This chapter discusses the setting and population of the study, as well as the methods used in collecting and analyzing data.

#### Setting

The setting for this study was in the homes of the sample in a college town in rural Nebraska. The population of the town was approximately 20,000. The area about the town was predominantly agricultural.

#### Population and Sample

The target population of this study was composed of parents living in a rural area of Nebraska. The target population was derived from parents of children enrolled in the public school system.

The sample was composed of 374 individual consenting parents, 187 mother and father pairs, who met the criteria; i.e., mother and father figure in the home at the time of the study, who have one child in the age group of 5 through 10 years. Other children in the family were healthy physically and mentally as perceived by the parents.

The superintendent of the public school system was approached to obtain a list of parents to participate in the study. After the school administration consulted their legal counsel, a letter was sent home with children in grades kindergarten through fifth grade in the six public elementary schools. The letter (Appendix A) sought the mother's and father's signature and address to participate in the study. Eighteen hundred letters were delivered to the various schools to supply the 1,734 students enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade. The purpose of the study was explained and a request was made for the names and addresses of parents who: (a) had both a mother and father figure in the home at the time of the study, (b) had a child in the age category of 5 through 10 years, and (c) had physically and mentally healthy

children as perceived by the parents. A return of 187 consenting parent pairs was returned to the schools and all consenting pairs established the mailing list for the convenience sample. The school system was assured that these letter consents would be returned to the school system for their legal protection and no further use would be made of the mailing list.

#### Protection of Human Subjects

Submission of the study proposal was made to Texas Woman's University Human Research Committee and approval to initiate the study was received (Appendix B). A written consent from the public school system was obtained (Appendix C) to send forms home with the children asking the parents if they wanted to be in the study. The initial consents from the parents to be in the study were returned to the school superintendent. The consent forms (Appendix D) were picked up and the mailing list was established. These initial consents were returned to the school superintendent per his request. The school's legal counsel had recommended that the school have the initial consents for their legal protection.

When the questionnaires were mailed to the parent, two envelopes were enclosed to allow the parent to mail the questionnaire consent back in one envelope and the questionnaire back in the other envelope. The anonymity was assured by not knowing who had filled out the questionnaires. The mailing list was never seen or used by anyone other than the researcher.

#### Instrument

Since no tool was available to measure the maternal and paternal childrearing concerns and the relationship of the concerns to other desired variables, a questionnaire was developed by the investigator. The consent of the questionnaire was based on a review of the literature and was reviewed by a panel of experts in the fields of community nursing, mental health nursing, counseling, and educational psychology. The panel member from the community health field held a master's degree in community health nursing, doctorate in education, and several years of experience in the community health field. The mental health nursing representative held a master's degree in mental health nursing and 5 years of experience in the mental health teaching area. The expert in the area of guidance and

counseling held a doctorate in the area of guidance and counseling and several years of teaching experience and concurrent private practice. The panel of experts assisted with the development of the questionnaire for the purpose of establishing content validity.

Content validity implies the use of some expertise to define a universe of interest, the careful drawing of a representative sample of ideas from the universe, and the preparation of questionnaire items that match these ideas. Content validity can be assumed because the questionnaire items were drawn from a survey of the literature and because a panel of experts was used to review the questionnaire items (Treece & Treece, 1977).

The panel of experts offered several suggestions regarding the proposed questionnaire: words or phrases that were unclear were reworded, certain words which could be interpreted differently were defined or avoided, word changes were made to decrease bias or offense, some words were changed to correspond with the general education of the respondents, and the number of questions was reduced from 52 to 26. An open-ended question was suggested and inserted as the final question of the questionnaire.

In the literature it was found that parenting is influenced by how the parents perceived parenting from their own childhoods and societal influences (Callahan, 1973). Also playing a part in parenting are (a) how the parents are dealing with their own growth and development and life tasks, (b) their understanding of the child's growth and development and life tasks, and (c) the quality of the parent-child communication interactions.

Based on the above information, a final questionnaire was developed (Appendix E). It was divided into two areas. Part I consisted of demographic data to determine the variables of sex, age, educational background, and years of parenting experience. Part II consisted of 25 Likert-scaled statements to measure parents' concerns regarding childrearing. The Likert-scale is a qualitative, ordinal type of scale which places a responsibility on the rater to respond to each statement by different degrees (Abdellah & Levine, 1965). The scored values on the Likert-scale were: 1--strongly agree, 2--agree, 3--undecided, 4--disagree, and 5--strongly disagree. These scores were utilized in determining the scoring of the concerns of parents.

The questionnaire items in Part II were coded into three areas of concern. Child growth and development statements were Items 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, and 18. Communication interactions items on the questionnaire were Items 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, and 23. Items 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 were related to family and parental growth and development.

Question 26 of Part II of the questionnaire consisted of one open-ended question to determine what other concerns parents had in childrearing. The open-ended question is designed to permit a free response from the subject rather than one limited to stated alternatives. The distinguishing characteristic of the open-ended question is that it merely raises an issue but does not provide or suggest any structure for the respondents' reply (Warwick & Lininger, 1975).

#### Data Collection

After receiving the names and addresses of the consenting parents from the elementary schools, a convenience sample of 374 parents, 187 mother and father pairs, was mailed the consent, cover letter (Appendix F), and the Maternal/Paternal Concerns of Childrearing Questionnaire. There were 220 individual

questionnaires returned to the investigator. The responses were not matched pairs.

The investigational phase of the research study was from October 21, 1977 to October 31, 1977. The questionnaire and written consent were mailed to each participant. A letter accompanying the questionnaire requested the parent to complete the questionnaire and return it by October 31, 1977. Two stamped, self-addressed envelopes were enclosed for convenience in returning the questionnaire and written consents. Each participant was assured anonymity in the study and participation was voluntary.

Parents in the study were instructed to complete the demographic data sheet in Part I. In Part II, they were asked to respond to each item as it related to their child and childrearing concerns.

#### Pilot Study

Prior to the data collection and in order to make modifications and detect problems, 10 parents or 5 father and mother pairs, were selected by a convenience sample to participate in a pilot study. The pilot study is a small, preliminary investigation of the same general character as the major study.



The parents for the pilot study were selected from acquaintances who had children in the public school system in a rural city in Nebraska. These parents met the same criteria as the population of the study.

The investigational phase of the pilot study was from October 7, 1977, to October 15, 1977. The questionnaire, written consent form, and accompanying letter of explanation were mailed to each participant. Two stamped, self-addressed envelopes were enclosed for convenience of returning the questionnaire and written consent form. Each participant was assured anonymity in the study and participation was voluntary.

Six of the 10 participants in the pilot study returned the questionnaire and written consents. The responses of the pilot study participants suggested changes in Item 6 of Part I. One participant suggested a rewording change of Item 6 which was changed to "father and mother figures are present in this home at the time of this study." Items 6 and 7 were used to delineate eligible participants for the study only, and therefore, were not part of the purposes of the study.

Minor revisions were made in the wording of Item 14 of Part II. Since the population of the study included parents in the same area in which the pilot study was conducted, the pilot study sample did not participate again.

#### Treatment of Data

Once the questionnaires were received in the mail, the responses were tabulated and evaluated. Responses concerning demographic data were entered into frequency tables for ease of presentation.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks was used to test whether the differences among the samples signified genuine population differences or whether they represented merely chance variations such as are to be expected among several random samples from the same population. The alpha level of significance was set at .05. All statements from the open-ended question, Item 26, were summarized (Appendix G).

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

An exploratory research study was conducted for the purpose of identifying the maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and parental and family growth and development. Additional problems of the study were:

1. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding child growth and development.
2. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding communication interactions.
3. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding family and parental growth and development.
4. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.
5. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental levels of educational background

and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interaction.

6. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

7. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

8. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

9. To identify if there is a significant difference between parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

10. To identify if there is a significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

11. To identify if there is a significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

12. To identify if there is a significant difference between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

#### Description of Sample

The sample was composed of parents, both male and female, who currently had a child in the age group of 5 through 10 years. Tables 1 through 3 present a summary of the demographical data regarding the sample. Table 1 summarizes the age distribution of the population and demonstrates that approximately 76% of mothers and fathers in the sample were 30 years of age or over.

The sex distribution of the sample indicated 99 fathers and 121 mothers responded to the questionnaire. The fathers represented 45% of the sample and the mothers represented 55% of the sample.

Table 2 summarizes the educational level of the sample and demonstrates that approximately 44% of the parents had baccalaureate degrees or higher. The category "other" comprising 17% of the sample, included persons with hours toward a master's degree, master's and doctorate degrees, and medical and dental degrees.

Table 1

## Age Distribution of Sample

Age Groups	Number of Mothers	Number of Fathers	Total
Less than 20 years	0	0	0
20-24 years	6	3	9
25-29 years	25	18	43
30-35 years	55	37	92
over 35 years	<u>35</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>76</u>
Total	121	99	220

Table 2  
Educational Preparation of Sample

Type of Preparation	Number of Mothers	Number of Fathers	Total
Not a High School Graduate	5	4	9
High School Graduate	32	19	51
Vocational or Technical Education	11	11	22
1-4 years of College	29	11	40
College Degree	29	31	60
Other	15	23	38
	—	—	—
Total	121	99	220

The number of years of childrearing experience of fathers and mothers is summarized in Table 3. From this table it can be seen that the majority (60%) of the sample had 6 to 10 years of childrearing experience.

Table 3  
Years of Childrearing Experience

Years	Number of Mothers	Number of Fathers	Total
0-5	7	10	17
6-10	75	57	132
11-15	23	18	41
16-20	8	7	15
21-over	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>15</u>
Total	121	99	220

### Findings

Hypothesis 1 stated there will be no significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development. To test Hypothesis 1 the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized. Table 4 gives a summary of the results. The possible range of scores for the child growth and development



questions was 6 to 30. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 1.21,  $df = 1$ , was 0.2715 which was greater than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development was retained.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there will be no significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding communication interactions. To test Hypothesis 2 the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized. Table 4 gives a summary of the results. The possible range of scores for the questions regarding communication interactions was 6 to 30. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 0.18,  $df = 1$ , was .6706 which was greater than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding communication interactions was retained.

Hypothesis 3 stated there will be no significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding family and parental growth and development. To test Hypothesis 3 the Kruskal-Wallis

Table 4

Summary of Results Regarding Maternal  
and Paternal Childrearing Concerns

Concern	Father		Mother		Kruskal-Wallis	
	N <sup>a</sup>	X	N <sup>b</sup>	X	X <sup>2</sup> Value	Probability
Child Growth and Development	99	14.48	121	13.97	1.21	.2715
Communication Interactions	99	14.57	120	14.55	0.18	.6706
Family and Parental Growth and Development	98	33.84	119	33.33	0.12	.7289

N<sup>a</sup> = responses out of total of 99.

N<sup>b</sup> = responses out of total of 121.

test was utilized. Table 4 gives a summary of the results. The possible range of scores for the questions regarding family and parental growth and development was 13 to 65. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 0.12,  $df = 1$ , was .7289 which was greater than the .05 level of significance. As a result the null hypothesis for a significant difference between maternal and paternal childrearing concerns regarding family and parental growth and development was retained.

Hypothesis 4 stated there will be no significant relationship between the parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development. To test Hypothesis 4 the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized. Table 5 shows a summary of the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 15.07,  $df = 5$ , was .0100 which was less than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development was rejected.

Hypothesis 5 stated there will be no significant relationship between the parental levels of educational

background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions. To test Hypothesis 5 the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized. Table 5 summarizes the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 11.57,  $df = 5$ , was .0412 which was less than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions was rejected.

Hypothesis 6 stated there will be no significant relationship between the parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development. To test Hypothesis 6 the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized. Table 5 summarized the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 9.82,  $df = 5$ , was .0805 which was greater than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significance of difference between the parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development was retained.

Table 5

Summary of Results Regarding Parental Levels of Educational  
Background and Childrearing Concern

Concern	Educational Background	Parents N <sup>a</sup> X	Kruskal-Wallis X <sup>2</sup> Value	Probability	
Child Growth and Development	Not a High School Graduate	9 11.78			
	High School Graduate	51 13.33			
	Vocational or Technical Education	22 11.59	15.07	.0100*	9 0
	1-4 years of College	40 13.88			
	College Degree	60 15.45			
	Other	38 15.83			
Communication Interaction	Not a High School Graduate	9 11.44			
	High School Graduate	50 13.60			

Table 5-- (Continued)

Concern	Educational Background	Parents N <sup>a</sup>	X	Kruskal-Wallis X <sup>2</sup> Value	Probability
Family and Parental Growth and Development	Vocational or Technical Education	22	12.41	11.57	.0412*
	1-4 years of College	40	14.38		
	College Degree	60	15.97		
	Other	38	15.76		
	Not a High School Graduate	9	27.67		
	High School Graduate	49	31.86		
	Vocational or Technical Education	22	29.55	9.82	.0805
	1-4 years of College	40	32.22		

Table 5--(Continued)

Concern	Educational Background	Parents		Kruskal-Wallis		Probability
		N <sup>a</sup>	X	X <sup>2</sup>	Value	
	College Degree	59	36.29			
	Other	38	36.63			

N<sup>a</sup> = Responses out of total of 220.

\*p < .05 significance level.

Hypothesis 7 stated there will be no significant difference between the parental ages to the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development. To test Hypothesis 7 the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. Table 6 gives a summary of the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 17.28,  $df = 3$ , was .0006 which was less than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between the parental ages to the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development was rejected.

Hypothesis 8 stated there will be no significant relationship between the parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions. To test Hypothesis 8 the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized. Table 6 gives a summary of the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 9.91,  $df = 3$ , was .0194 which was less than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between the parental ages to the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions was rejected.



Hypothesis 9 stated there will be no significant relationship between parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development. To test Hypothesis 9 the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized. Table 6 gives a summary of the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 12.36,  $df = 3$ , was .0063 which was less than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between the parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development was rejected.

Hypothesis 10 stated there will be no significant relationship between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concerns regarding child growth and development. To test Hypothesis 10 the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. Table 7 gives a summary of the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 4.21,  $df = 3$ , was .2392 which was greater than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between the years of parenting experience to the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development was retained.

Table 6

Summary of Results Regarding Parental Ages  
and Childrearing Concerns

Concern	Age Group	Parents		Kruskal-Wallis X <sup>2</sup> Value	Probability
		N <sup>a</sup>	X		
Child Growth and Development	Less than 20 years	0	0.00	17.28	.0006*
	20-24 years	9	11.44		
	25-29 years	43	12.67		
	30-35 years	92	13.42		
	Over 35 years	76	16.33		
Communication Interactions	Less than 20 years	0	0.00	9.91	.0194*
	20-24 years	9	11.22		
	25-29 years	42	13.71		
	30-35 years	92	13.84		
	Over 35 years	76	16.29		
Family and Parental Growth and Development	Less than 20 years	0	0.00	12.36	.0063*
	20-24 years	9	27.44		
	25-29 years	42	31.62		
	30-35 years	91	31.73		
	Over 35 years	75	37.60		

N<sup>a</sup> = Responses out of total of 220.

\*p < .05 significance level.

Hypothesis 11 stated there will be no significant relationship between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions. To test Hypothesis 11 the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. Table 7 shows a summary of the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 4.44,  $df = 3$ , was .2180 which was greater than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between the years of parenting experience to the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions was retained.

Hypothesis 12 stated there will be no significant relationship between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development. To test Hypothesis 12 the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. Table 7 gives a summary of the results. The probability of a  $\chi^2$  value of 5.36,  $df = 3$ , was .1473 which was greater than the .05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis for a significant difference between the years of parenting experience to the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development was retained.

Table 7

Summary of Results Regarding Years of Parenting  
Experience and Childrearing Concerns

Concern	Parenting Experience	Parents N <sup>a</sup>	X	Kruskal-Wallis X <sup>2</sup> Value	Probability
Child Growth and Development	0-5 years	17	14.53	4.2	.2392
	6-10 years	132	13.61		
	11-15 years	41	15.39		
	16 and over	30	15.00		
Communication Interaction	0-5 years	17	15.41	4.44	.2180
	6-10 years	131	13.95		
	11-15 years	41	16.10		
	16 and over	30	14.60		
Family and Parental Growth and Development	0-5 years	17	37.00	5.36	.1473
	6-10 years	130	32.04		
	11-15 years	40	36.10		
	16 and over	30	34.80		

N<sup>a</sup> = Responses out of total of 220.

Item 26 of Part II of the questionnaire asked the respondents to express other concerns they would like to identify. Responses numbering 35 concerns are listed in Appendix G.

#### Summary of Findings

In this study it was determined that there was no significant difference between mothers and fathers in their concern about the areas of child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development. A significant difference was found between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development and communication interactions. There was a significant difference found between the parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

An exploratory research study was conducted. The problems of this research study were:

1. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding child growth and development.
2. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding communication interactions.
3. To identify the maternal and paternal child-rearing concerns regarding family and parental growth and development.
4. To identify the significant differences between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.
5. To identify the significant differences between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.
6. To identify significant differences between parental levels of educational background and the

degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

7. To identify the significant differences between parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

8. To identify the significant differences between parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

9. To identify significant differences between parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

10. To identify the significant differences between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development.

11. To identify the significant differences between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding communication interactions.

12. To identify the significant differences between the years of parenting experience and the degree of childrearing concern regarding family and parental growth and development.

Summary

A questionnaire which represented items about child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development was developed by the investigator. This questionnaire was developed from a review of the literature and the assistance of three expert panel members. A pilot study was then conducted. The items on the questionnaire were then reformulated and the questionnaire was distributed to 187 parent pairs in the state of Nebraska who had a child in the age category of 5 to 10 years. The data collection period extended from October 21, 1977, to October 31, 1977. The sample was composed of 220 individual parents, 121 mothers and 99 fathers. Each subject in the sample was asked to give personal data and respond to questions about child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

Statistical analysis of the collected data was then conducted by using the Kruskal-Wallis test. The data were presented in summary tables.



In this study it was determined that there was no significant difference between mothers and fathers in their concern regarding the areas of child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development. When the variables of age, educational background, and years of parenting experience were applied to the concerns, there were significant differences found. A significant difference was found between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development and communication interactions. There was a significant difference found between the parental ages and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development.

#### Discussion of Findings

This study indicated significant differences between parental levels of education and the child-rearing concerns of child growth and development and communication interactions. More educated parents expressed concern than less educated parents.

Although the literature did not show studies of parental childrearing concerns of the age group of 5 through 10 years, one study (Dyer, 1963) of fathers of newborns indicated that more educated fathers had difficulty with parenthood crises than less educated fathers.

Significant differences were also noted between the parental ages of all three areas of childrearing concern. The younger parents were more concerned about the three areas of childrearing concern than older parents. One study (Shaw, 1974) of mothers in a self-help group indicated that younger mothers were eager for information regarding suggestions in dealing with problems concerning their children's growth and development.

#### Conclusions and Implications

This study showed a significant difference between parental age and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development, communication interactions, and family and parental growth and development. Younger parents were more concerned about all three of the studied areas than older parents. This study suggests that younger parent groups may

have a need for parenting classes. It may be helpful for a community to do a needs assessment to see if parental education is indicated.

A significant difference was also found between parental levels of educational background and the degree of childrearing concern regarding child growth and development and communication interactions. Parents with less education were more concerned about these two areas than more educated parents. This might suggest that more educated parents feel more at ease with their children's growth and development and their communication with them.

A person with special training conducting parenting classes may want to subdivide the class into educational levels in order to meet the needs of the less educated parents. Implications of the study show that the curriculum of the classes may need to be varied on the basis of the educational levels and the ages of the parents.

Responses to the open-ended question, Item 26 of the questionnaire, identified child growth and development as the main area of concern. The curriculum of parenting classes may need to be flexible enough

to allow for special concerns of particular parent groups.

The parents responding to the study numbered 121 mothers and 99 fathers. The fact that fewer fathers responded to the study raises the possibility that they were not as concerned regarding their children as were the mothers.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

The study raises other questions that might be worthy of investigation:

1. Of what does parenting actually consist?
2. What is the interrelationship of parental age, educational background, and years of parenting experience to childrearing concerns?
3. What are the differences of childrearing concerns between parenting in an urban versus a rural area?
4. For what childrearing concerns do parents seek help.
5. What groups of parents seek help for their concerns of parenting and from whom do parents seek help?

## APPENDIX A

Dear Parent:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in maternal-child health nursing at Texas Woman's University, Dallas Center, I am undertaking a study of the paternal and maternal child-rearing concerns of parents with a child in the age category of five through ten. I am an instructor in the new four year nursing program at Kearney State College.

This study involves parents (biological or real, adoptive, or stepparent) who (1) have a child in the age category of five through ten, (2) have a mother and father figure in the home at present, and (3) have all healthy and normal children. The study involves filling out a questionnaire and mailing it back in a stamped, addressed envelope provided.

You have a right to participate or not to participate in the study.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Sandy Blankenbaker  
Kearney State College Nursing Faculty  
Texas Woman's University Graduate Student

-----  
Please return this portion of the letter to school with your child by Tuesday, October 18, 1977 and indicate:

\_\_\_\_ We do wish to participate in the study

\_\_\_\_ We do not wish to participate in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Father's name (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mother's name (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing address

## APPENDIX B

## TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

## Human Research Committee

Name of Investigator: Sandra L. Blankenbaker Center: DallasAddress 616 14th StreetAurora, Nebraska 68810Dear Ms. Blankenbaker:Your study entitled Maternal and Paternal Childrearing Concerns  
Regarding School Age Children

has been reviewed by a committee of the Human Research Review Committee and it appears to meet our requirements in regard to protection of the individual's rights.

Please be reminded that both the University and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare regulations require that written consents must be obtained from all human subjects in your studies. These forms must be kept on file by you.

Furthermore should your project change, another review by the Committee is required according to DHFW regulations.

Sincerely,

*Christine M. Howard*  
Chairman, Human Research  
Review Committee  
at Dallas



## APPENDIX C

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF NURSING  
DENTON, TEXAS

DALLAS CENTER  
1810 Inwood Road  
Dallas, Texas

HOUSTON CENTER  
1130 M.D. Anderson Blvd.  
Houston, Texas 77025

AGENCY PERMISSION FOR CONDUCTING STUDY\*

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

GRANTS TO Sandra L. Blankenbaker

a student enrolled in a program of nursing leading to a Master's Degree at Texas Woman's University, the privilege of its facilities in order to study the following problem:

Maternal and Paternal Childrearing Concerns Regarding  
School Age Children

The conditions mutually agreed upon are as follows:

1. The agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
2. The names of consultative or administrative personnel in the agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
3. The agency (wants) (does not want) a conference with the student when the report is completed.
4. The agency is (willing) (unwilling) to allow the completed report to be circulated through interlibrary loan.
5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Date November 22, 1977

Sandra L. Blankenbaker  
Signature of student

Signature of Agency Personnel

Gail Watson  
Signature of Faculty Advisor

\*Fill out and sign three copies to be distributed as follows: Original - Student; first copy - agency; second copy - T.W.U. College of Nursing.

## APPENDIX D

## TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

(Form A--Written presentation to subject)

Consent to Act as a Subject for Research and Investigation:

(The following information is to be read to or read by the subject):

1. I hereby authorize Sandra L. Blankenbaker  
(name of person(s) who will perform  
procedure(s) or investigation(s))

to perform the following procedure(s) or investigation(s): (Describe in detail)

To provide a questionnaire about some childrearing concerns regarding school-age children. The questionnaire is to be mailed back in one envelope and this consent form in the other envelope provided to insure that my identity may remain anonymous if I so desire.

2. The procedure or investigation listed in Paragraph 1 has been explained to me by Sandra L. Blankenbaker.  
(name)

3. I understand that the procedures or investigations described in Paragraph 1 involve the following possible risks or discomforts: (Describe in detail)

The statements in the questionnaire may cause some anxiety in some parents.

4. I understand that the procedures and investigations described in Paragraph 1 have the following potential benefits to myself and/or others:

If the results of the study show particular child-rearing concerns, agencies or a college may offer more current information to the general population in regard to childrearing.

Form A--(Continued)

5. An offer to answer all of my questions regarding the study has been made. If alternative procedures are more advantageous to me, they have been explained. I understand that I may terminate my participation in the study at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX E

Maternal/Paternal Concerns of Childrearing

## PART I

INSTRUCTIONS: In each item, check the blank as it applies to you (#1-5) or your family (#6-7).

1. Age
  - ☐ Less than 20 years
  - ☐ 20-24 years
  - ☐ 25-29 years
  - ☐ 30-35 years
  - ☐ Over 35 years
2. Sex
  - ☐ Male
  - ☐ Female
3. Parent
  - ☐ Natural or real parent
  - ☐ Adoptive parent
  - ☐ Stepparent
4. Educational background
  - ☐ Not a high school graduate
  - ☐ High school graduate
  - ☐ Vocational or technical education
  - ☐ 1-4 years of college
  - ☐ College degree
  - ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of years of childrearing experience, that is, number of years you have had children in your home. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Father and mother figures are present in this home at the time of this study.
  - ☐ Yes      ☐ No
7. All of the children in our family are mentally and physically healthy at the time of this study.
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

## PART II

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Indicate your response to each of the items of this section by placing an "X" in the appropriate blank. Your response should represent your concern about raising children. When statements speak of "child," answer in terms of your child (children) in the age group of five through ten.

Please answer according to the following key:

- 1--Strongly agree
- 2--Agree
- 3--Undecided
- 4--Disagree
- 5--Strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Just being myself with my children.	—	—	—	—	—
2. Seeing my child as a separate person and not as part of myself.	—	—	—	—	—
3. Learning how to help my child avoid fighting and still be able to defend himself.	—	—	—	—	—
4. Allowing my child a right to his own point of view and allowing him/her to express it.	—	—	—	—	—
5. Learning how to teach my child to problem solve so that he/she can use it in his/her growing situations.	—	—	—	—	—



Please answer according to the following key:

- 1--Strongly agree
- 2--Agree
- 3--Undecided
- 4--Disagree
- 5--Strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
6. Learning to listen to what my child fears and is concerned about.	—	—	—	—	—
7. Learning how to talk openly about my feelings to my child.	—	—	—	—	—
8. Learning to respect each other's feelings in our family.	—	—	—	—	—
9. Realizing that children are about the same at birth: it's what happens to them after birth that affects them the most.	—	—	—	—	—
10. Seeing myself as a teacher for my child.	—	—	—	—	—
11. Realizing that frequently parents aren't sure what is the best way to bring up children.	—	—	—	—	—
12. Getting our family to talk things out.	—	—	—	—	—
13. Seeing the future looking good to our family.	—	—	—	—	—
14. Enjoying the get togethers of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and/or cousins.	—	—	—	—	—

Please answer according to the following key:

- 1--Strongly agree
- 2--Agree
- 3--Undecided
- 4--Disagree
- 5--Strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
15. Planning an opportunity for each member of our family to express himself in his own way.	—	—	—	—	—
16. Allowing the child to try out what he/she can do at times without the parents watching.	—	—	—	—	—
17. Developing our child's interest in the world about him and seeing situations from other people's point of view.	—	—	—	—	—
18. Helping our child feel good about the things that he is able to accomplish.	—	—	—	—	—
19. Following examples of pleasant family living set by other families.	—	—	—	—	—
20. Getting individual members of our family to share the work load around the house.	—	—	—	—	—
21. Realizing that when a child is right and the parent is wrong, he/she should admit it and try to do something about it.	—	—	—	—	—

Please answer according to the following key:

- 1--Strongly agree
- 2--Agree
- 3--Undecided
- 4--Disagree
- 5--Strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
22. Encouraging development of the positive aspects in all members of our family.	—	—	—	—	—
23. Creating a sense of belonging in our family.	—	—	—	—	—
24. Doing activities which we all enjoy doing together.	—	—	—	—	—
25. Disciplining in a moderate and consistent way in our home.	—	—	—	—	—
26. Other concerns you would like to identify.					
_____	—	—	—	—	—
_____	—	—	—	—	—
_____	—	—	—	—	—
_____	—	—	—	—	—

Additional comments:

APPENDIX F

Dear Parent:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in maternal-child health nursing at Texas Woman's University, Dallas Center, I am undertaking a study of the maternal and paternal concerns of parents with at least one child in the age category of five through ten. I am an instructor in the new four year nursing program at Kearney State College.

This study involves homes which (1) have a child in the age category of five through ten, (2) have a mother and father figure (natural or real, adoptive, or stepparent) in the home at present, and (3) have all healthy and normal children.

Parents in the area of Kearney, Nebraska will be included in the study and asked to complete a questionnaire. The information that you provide can be helpful to other parents that share the same parenting concerns as yourselves.

Your name is not required and in no way will you be personally identified in the study. So that the findings will represent the opinion of each individual parent, please do not discuss the questionnaire with anyone who is also participating in the study until the questionnaire has been returned. Since the purpose of the research is to provide reliable data, please give thought to each item and complete the entire questionnaire.

This study only includes the questionnaire and you will not be contacted further.

Please return the completed questionnaire by October 31, 1977. Two addressed, stamped envelopes are enclosed. The questionnaire should be mailed back in one envelope and the written permission to participate in the study mailed in the other envelope. This is to ensure that your name is not associated with the questionnaire.

Your participation in the study is sincerely appreciated. A summary of the findings of the study, should you be

interested in the results, will be available at Kearney State College Department of Nursing or at Texas Woman's University, Dallas Center.

Should you have any questions, I can be contacted at my home phone number, 237-9303.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Sandy Blankenbaker  
Kearney State College Nursing Faculty  
Texas Woman's University Graduate Student

## APPENDIX G

## Responses to Item 26 of Questionnaire

1. Dealing with sibling jealousy
2. Teaching her to respect the rights of others
3. Helping children to settle their own disagreements
4. What to do when the child talks back or lies to parents
5. Teaching a child to be self-reliant
6. Problems of child personality differences
7. Developing a child's individuality
8. Instilling a strong sense of truth in the child
9. Extent of punishment
10. Teaching respect for their belongings
11. Realities of school
12. How about when parents lose their cool in discipline
13. Dealing with tempers
14. Encourage expressing of emotions
15. Being able to support child's interests even though they do not comply with my own
16. How to deal with a child who obviously favors the other parent more
17. Stepparent relationship
18. Simply taking time out of a busy day for my child
19. Jealousy between child and stepparent



20. How to get other parent to discipline out of love and not anger
21. How to teach children not to use profanity--even though they hear it from their peers
22. Equal love for siblings
23. Sibling love
24. Learning responsibility
25. How to cope with other children during playtime
26. Personality conflicts at school
27. Comparison of active child and inactive child
28. How to help child work up to his potential
29. Working on self-confidence and overcoming shyness
30. Acknowledgement of child's right to possess his own temperament
31. Understanding of the unique aspects of the 5-10 stage
32. Talking with children of their own level
33. Teaching a child everyone even parents make mistakes
34. Encourage him or her the gentle art of patience
35. Learning to cope with older children smoking pot, when they refuse to quit

## REFERENCE LIST

- Abdellah, F. G., & Levine, E. Better patient care through nursing research. New York: Macmillan Company, 1965.
- Aries, P. Centuries of childhood. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.
- Balter, L. Psychological consultation for preschool parent groups. Children Today, 1976, 5, 19-22.
- Borstelmann, L. J. Changing concepts of childrearing, 1920s-1950s: Parental research, parental guidance, and social issues. Paper presented at Biennial Southeastern Conference on Human Development, Nashville, April 1976.
- Callahan, S. C. Parenting principles and politics of parenthood. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973.
- Carter, F. M. Psychosocial nursing. New York: Macmillan Co., 1976.
- Chamberlin, R. W. Parental use of "positive contact" in child-rearing: Its relationship to child behavior patterns and other variables. Pediatrics, 1975, 56, 768-773.
- Dreikurs, R., & Soltz, V. Children: The challenge. New York: Duell, Sloan, & Pearce Co., 1964.
- Duvall, E. M. Family development. New York: Lippincott Co., 1971.
- Dyer, E. D. Parenthood as a crisis: A re-study. Marriage and Family Living, 1963, 25, 196-201.
- Engelhardt, K. Piaget: A prescriptive theory for parents. Maternal-Child Nursing Journal, 1974, 3, 1-7.

- Erikson, E. H. Childhood and society. New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1963.
- Erikson, E. H. Identity: Youth and crisis. New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1968.
- Fox, D. J. Fundamentals of research in nursing. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970.
- Freud, S. The ego and the id. London: Hogarth Press, 1947.
- Ginott, H. G. Between parent and child. New York: Macmillan Co., 1965.
- Gordon, T. Parent effectiveness training. New York: Peter H. Wyden Co., 1970.
- Havighurst, R. J. Developmental tasks and education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.
- Havighurst, R. J. Developmental tasks and education. New York: David McKay Co., 1972.
- Karson, A., & Karson, M. The influence on American parenting styles of puritanism, rationalism, and romanticism. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1976. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 133 051).
- Lennard, H. L., & Bernstein, A. Patterns in human interaction. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Co., 1969.
- Levinson, D. J. The seasons of a man's life. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Lewis, J. M., Beavers, W. B., Gossett, J. T., & Phillips, V. A. No single thread--psychological health in family systems. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976.
- McBride, A. B. The growth and development of mothers. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

- Obrzut, L. J. Expectant father's perception of fathering. American Journal of Nursing, 1976, 76, 1440-1442.
- Phillips, J. L. The origins of intellect: Piaget's theory. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1969.
- Piaget, J. Judgment and reasoning in the child. Princeton, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, & Co., 1972.
- Salk, L. Preparing for parenthood. New York: David McKay Co., 1974.
- Shaw, N. R. Teaching young mothers their role. Nursing Outlook, 1974, 22, 695-698.
- Sheehy, G. Passages. New York: Bantam Books, 1976.
- Sutterley, D. C., & Donnelly, G. F. Perspectives in human development. Philadelphia: Lippincott Co., 1973.
- Treece, E. W., & Treece, J. W. Elements of research in nursing. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Co., 1977.
- Treichel, B., & Nance, D. Attitudes by young adults toward childrearing and presumed attitudes of their own parents. Psychological Reports, 1970, 27, 191-194.
- Wahlroos, S. Family communication. New York: New American Library, 1974.
- Warwick, D. P., & Lininger, C. A. The sample survey: Theory and practice. New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1975.