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A Study of the Attitudes of Parents in Relation to the Behavior of their Children in Nursery School

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A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF PARENTS

IN RELATION TO THE BEHAVIOR

OF THEIR CHILDREN IN

NURSERY SCHOOL

By

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CHAPTER I

THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

A crucial problem for every society concerns the
rearing of children so that they will become adequate mem-
bers of that society. Socialization refers to this process
whereby each individual, born with wide behavioral poten-
tialities, is led to confine his actual behaviors within
the framework specified as customary and acceptable by his
group (Child, 1954). Analysis of the socialization process
has been a major concern of the behavioral sciences, and
empirical studies of socialization have been conducted by
representatives of several disciplines, e.g., sociology,
anthropology, and psychology. Interdisciplinary investi-
gations of socialization have reflected two major themes.
First, socialization is recognized as the mechanism through
which the culture of a society is transmitted and upon
which the continuance and survival of the culture depends.
Second, the determinants of the personality of the individ-
ual have been sought within the interaction between the
child and the socializing agent.

Although each of the various behavioral sciences
has defined socialization in terms of its own emphasis,

there has been no real disagreement in their definitions about the agents and methods of socialization. All recognize the nuclear family as the primary agent of socialization. It is also agreed that the process of socialization within the family setting is both intentional and unintentional. Much of early socialization is characterized by actual teaching or instruction, with the parents specifying for the child acceptable and unacceptable modes of behaving. However, the child can also learn the ways of his parents through conscious and unconscious imitation. The parents serve as models; the child, exposed as he is to the influence and presence of his parents, tends to pattern himself after them. Further, there is theoretical agreement as to the continuity of the socialization process, that is, it begins at birth, continues throughout the lifetime of the individual, and is adaptive and modifiable as the individual moves into more complex relationships.

However, in their studies of the socialization process, there are evident differences among the various social science disciplines in details of theoretical emphasis and research methodology. For example, the cultural anthropologist views socialization as the means of culture transmission, and so uses the concept of socialization to explain uniformities and diversities within a society and among different societies. Anthropological research data are usually based upon informants' reports and, therefore,

tend to be "narrative." Typically, socialization vari-
ables in a particular family or group are observed and
this data is used as the basis of generalization about
that group's culture. On the other hand, the social psy-
chologist, who views socialization as a crucial factor in
personality development, is prone to treat socialization
variables as antecedents and to attempt to relate them to
the present behavior of the individual. Quantitative
methods of research which place an emphasis upon mental
and personality testing are generally used.

However, in recent years even these differences in
theoretical orientation and research techniques have been
breaking down. As Hallowell (1953) has pointed out, the
conventional distinction between "culture" and "personal-
ity" may very well be a false dichotomy. The concept of
socialization has served to focus the attention of social
psychologists and cultural anthropologists on the common
problem of understanding the bases of the essential social
nature of man and toward this end, recent "culture and
personality" research has often been an interdisciplinary
effort.

The major concern of the present investigation is
with the process of socialization revealed by the effects
of the parent-child relationship upon the behavior of
children in social situations. During the early years of
life a child is almost completely under the influence of

his parents. The child soon learns that in order to
receive certain gratifications he must conform to a set
of ideal norms expected by his parents. The parents, being
products of the society in which they live, transmit to the
child the expectations and values of the culture. While
these norms are culturally determined, they are represent-
ed to the child simply as the wishes and rules of his
parents. In effect, then, the child learns the ways of
his society through the mediating influences of his own
parents. Consequently, he receives not only the broad
cultural values, but the individual variations imposed by
the parents upon these norms.

Early socialization has been regarded as the most
critical factor in the development of the personality of
the individual. Freud (1933) and Erikson (1950), for
example, have traced the growth of personality and the
appearance of personality disorders in relation to the
socialization process. Freud paralleled the development
of the super-ego, of which the conscience is a part, with
the internalization of the limits placed on behavior by
society. Thus, the development of the super-ego is regard-
ed as a direct consequence of the socialization process.
Freud emphasized that very young children are amoral, that
is, they are born without internal inhibitions against the
seeking for pleasure, and so they present a threat to the
security of the society. It is the task of the parents

as agents of the society to curb these pleasure-seeking
impulses. Within the framework of the society parents
set limits upon the expression and satisfaction of the
child's biological drives; they show approval when the
child restrains and controls these drives and punish him
if he fails to do so. Punishment is interpreted by the
child as loss of love; rather than risk this he conforms
to the imposed rule of his parents. As the child matures,
he internalizes the restrictions set up by the family and
becomes, in fact, the possessor of a "super-ego." At about
the same time the child begins to identify with his same-
sexed parent and use him as a model. Freud calls this the
"ego-ideal"; sociologists refer to it as "role conscious-
ness."

At an early age, the individual also begins to
evolve an image of what he ought to be in order to secure
love and approval from his parents and other significant
figures around him. When the child learns to adapt his
behavior in light of what others expect of him, he is
responding to the "generalized other" (Mead, 1934), and so
the child's certainty of what his role is and should be
is determined by the treatment accorded him by others.
However, this treatment does not bear a direct relationship
to the child's self image; rather it is the way in which
the child interprets this treatment that determines his
ultimate conception of himself, i.e., his "looking-glass

self" (Cooley, 1902).

Mead (1934) has emphasized the importance of language in the socialization process. While a child may sense from facial expressions or gestures the approval or disapproval of his parents, it is only through language that there can be more explicit communication and exchange of ideas. When he learns to comprehend the speech of others and to speak himself, the child is able to learn the beliefs and values which shape the life of the society. Only then can he truly comprehend such abstract concepts as "truth," "honor," and "justice."

As the verbal and physical abilities of the child develop, the influence of the family is no longer all-encompassing. He is exposed to the influences of play-mates, neighbors, radio, and television, and the wisdom and authority of his parents are no longer unchallenged. The early phase of the socialization process is now at an end. From this point the influence of secondary groups will increasingly modify the attitudes and behavior of the child.

Early research in the area of socialization was often concerned mainly with possible correlations between specific parental treatments and the behavior of the child. Socialization variables such as infant feeding schedules, weaning, and toilet training were investigated in conjunction with behavior designated as aggressive, dependent, and oral. In such research, it was hoped that clear

relationships would be obtained between age of weaning and thumb-sucking, for example, or between severity of toilet training and stinginess, obstinacy, or orderliness.

Unfortunately, as Orlansky has pointed out (1949), this approach is deficient on two accounts. First, it neglects the actual attitudes of the parents toward the children in favor of more quantifiable, but less meaningful, variables. Orlansky has stated that how parents feel about the way they treat their children may be more important than the treatment itself. Second, and more crucial, relationships between specific infantile frustrations and later behavior have not yet been conclusively proven. For example, Orlansky has reviewed several investigations seeking possible relationships between thumb-sucking and infantile oral deprivation. Such studies have indicated that thumb-suckers may have past histories of either sucking deprivation, excessive gratification of sucking, or normal sucking experience. Clearly the crucial variable determining thumb-sucking in children has not yet been identified. Similar ambiguities exist with respect to often hypothesized, but never proven, relationships involving nursing experiences, "mothering," and sphincter training on the one hand, and the later mental health of the individual on the other.

More recent inquiries into possible relationships between parental treatment and child behavior have been

concerned with variables other than those of specific in-
fantile experiences. A greater emphasis has been placed
upon the broad role of socio-economic factors, home atmos-
phere, and a wide range of parental actions and attitudes
in determining the behavior of children. Recent studies
of the socialization process have been mainly of two sorts.
First, there is the parental interview study in which the
mother, and occasionally the father, report their child-
rearing techniques and the consequences that such techniques
may have upon the behavior of the children. Second, there
is the observational study in which the child's behavior
is directly observed in nursery school, playground, or
clinic, and this behavior is then related to the attitudes
and practices of the parents with respect to child-rearing.

Studies gathering information using the interview
have been reported by Davis & Havighurst (1946), Maccoby
and Gibbs (1954), Littman, Moore, and Pierce-Jones (1957),
and Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957). Large samples of
parents were subjected to extended interviews in which a
variety of information was elicited, e.g., child-rearing
techniques, family history, demographic information, and
family activities. These studies placed a special emphasis
upon possible differences in child-rearing methods as a
function of differences in social class.

While interviews of parents have revealed impor-
tant information about methods of child care in our society,

they are limited in several respects. These studies have
solicited from parents not only a report of their actions
and attitudes about child-rearing, but also their assess-
ment of the resulting behavior of the child. While un-
doubtedly parents are in the best position to observe their
own children, the accuracy and objectivity of their reports
is open to some question. Also, parents usually can report
only on the behavior of their children in family situations;
they are not in a position to discuss the behavior shown by
the children in other social situations. Therefore, while
this kind of study is valuable in presenting a general
survey of parental techniques and attitudes, the analysis
by parents of their childrens' behavior is indeed a limited
one.

Observational studies in which the behavior of
children is evaluated by impartial observers, while avoid-
ing the biases of the interview method, must, of necessity,
deal with a more limited sample of the child's behavior.
However, it is felt that the kind of behavior exhibited by
children in a social setting, such as the nursery school,
is a better reflection of the effects of parental influenc-
es than is the report of childrens' behavior by their
parents. Because of the focus of the present investigation,
such studies are of special interest.

Both Grant (1939) and Baldwin (1949) attempted to
relate the atmosphere within the home to the behavior of

the child in nursery school. These investigators concluded that a warm, democratic atmosphere within the home results in a child who is secure, cooperative, and self-assertive in nursery school. On the other hand, indulgence, over-protection, or rejection in the home results in varying degrees of maladjustive behavior in nursery school, e.g., behavior which is submissive, withdrawn, or sadistic.

Merrill (1946) observed nursery school children and their mothers individually (mother-child pairs) through a one-way vision screen. The behavior of mothers was rated in terms of interfering, helping, criticizing, interactive play, and other categories. Merrill reported a wide range of maternal behavior patterns and hypothesized possible relationships between the maternal behavior and child personality.

Sears, Whiting, Nowlis, and Sears (1953) sought possible relationships between certain aspects of child-rearing behavior of mothers and aggression and dependency shown by their children in nursery school. Although their findings indicated relationships between frustrating and punitive conditions in the home and aggressive behavior in nursery school, these relationships were not simple ones. Severity of punishment bore a curvilinear relationship to aggression, a moderate degree of punishment in the home producing the highest degree of aggression in suchool. Current frustration within the home showed a positive

relationship to aggression; however, infant frustration such as early weaning, severe toilet training, and rigid food scheduling, were in no way correlated with later behavior.

Finally, mention must be made of other studies which have been concerned with child-rearing practices of the parents of maladjusted children. Bell (1958) has reviewed several investigations in which the attitudes of parents of problem children were studied. While differences in attitudes were noted, these findings seem limited in their applicability to the general problems of socialization because of the emphasis placed upon maladjustment. In addition, Bell has criticised such studies because of their inherent postdictive character, that is, the maladjusted child has been identified first, and only then were the attitudes of parents investigated. Hence, it is never clear whether the attitudes were responsible for the child's maladjustment or whether the highly atypical maladjustive behavior of the child molded the attitudes of the parents.

The preceding discussion of the socialization process has emphasized the role played by the parents. The techniques used by the parents to lead their children into the roles and behaviors approved by the society have been referred to as child-rearing techniques. While parents in a single society reflect the culture of that

particular group, individual differences have been found to arise in the transmission of the culture by the parents to their children. This phenomenon will account for the wide variance in individual practices; however, these practices are all within the accepted framework of the society in which the individual lives.

The present study is primarily concerned with differences in child-rearing practices that exist within the American culture and further with the possible effects of such differences upon child behavior. With this in mind, the investigator assessed the attitudes toward child-rearing of mothers and fathers of children enrolled in a university nursery school with respect to the behavior of their children within the nursery school situation.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects of this study were thirteen children enrolled in the Nursery School of the Psychology Department at the University of Maine and their respective parents. The nursery school group consisted of seven boys and six girls; two of the girls were siblings. At the beginning of the experiment the mean age of the children was 48 months with a range of 37 to 58 months.

The mean age of mothers in the study was 29 with a range of 24 to 38 years. Six of them were mothers of three children, four had two children, and two had five children. All mothers in the study were high school graduates. Two had some college training, four were college graduates, and one had a Master of Arts degree.

The mean age of fathers was 31.8 with a range of 25 to 39 years. Fathers of eight of the children were faculty members at the university, one father was a high school teacher, two were college students, and two were millworkers.

Measuring Instruments

Nursery School Behavioral Check List

After a series of trial observations in the nursery
school, a behavioral check list (appendix 1) was developed
by the experimenter designed to encompass social and non-
social behavior within the nursery school setting. Major
divisions of the check list include the following cate-
gories: social isolation, parallel play, and social inter-
action. A child's behavior was recorded in the social
isolation category if he played alone or wandered around
the room by himself. Activity was considered as parallel
play if the child played near others but did not communicate
with them. Both aggressive and cooperative behavior were
considered as social interaction. Cooperation included
such behaviors as giving advice, sharing, following direc-
tion, and praising. Aggression included teasing, cursing,
taking toy from another, and striking with hand. Also
indicated on the check list was the recipient of an action,
i.e., whether adult, child, or object.

Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI)

The PARI (appendix 2) is a Likert-type attitude
scale of 115 items devised by Schaefer and Bell (1958) to
assess parental attitudes toward child-rearing. This test
has been item-analyzed for internal consistency with Final
Form IV as used in the present study consisting of 23 five-
item scales of satisfactory reliability. The 23 scales are

designed to survey a wide range of parental attitudes, e.g., ascendency of the mother, exclusion of outside influences, fostering dependency, suppression of aggression, etc. A complete list of the scales is presented in appendix 3.

At the present time the PARI is being widely used in research concerned with parent-child interaction. It has been cited as the most adequate parental attitude questionnaire available for research (Mussen, 1960). The extremely careful design of the scale is reflected in its comprehensiveness, efficiency, and objectivity.

Each of the 115 items in the PARI presents a statement of an attitudinal position, e.g., "Children need some of the natural meanness taken out of them," and requests the parent to indicate the extent of his agreement by choosing one of four possible responses: "strongly agree," "mildly agree," "mildly disagree," and "strongly disagree."

The 23 subscales of the PARI have been factor-analyzed by Schaefer and Bell (1959) and three dimensions of parental attitudes have been identified: Factor I - maternal control of the child; Factor II - expression of maternal hostility; Factor III - democratic attitudes toward child-rearing. Factor I consists of 80 items which measure the extent of the mother's influence upon the child. Included as such items as "It's best for the child if he never gets started wondering whether his mother's views are right," "More parents should teach their children

to have unquestioning loyalty to them," and "A mother should make it her business to know everything her children are thinking." Factor II consists of 20 items and is a reflection of the mother's own degree of hostility toward her child and husband and her dissatisfaction with her own role. Representative items of this factor include, "Children will get on any woman's nerves if she has to be with them all day," "It's natural to have quarrels when two people who both have minds of their own get married," and "One of the bad things about raising children is that you aren't free enough of the time to do just as you like." Factor III consists of 15 items and measures the acceptance of the child as an equal and integral part of the family group with a right to express his own beliefs and opinions. Included here are such items as, "Children should be allowed to disagree with their parents if they feel their own ideas are better," and "Parents should adjust to the children some rather than always expecting the children to adjust to the parents." It is to be emphasized that names given to the factors are merely descriptive and are not uniformly employed in research using the PARI. McDavid (1959), for example, calls Factor I "Suppression and Interpersonal Distance."

Procedure

Nursery School Observations

Observations were conducted by the experimenter

(who was also the nursery school teacher) during the first
hour of school, which was the free-play period. At this
time the children played with the available equipment and
supplies. Since there was a minimum of adult interference
at this time, the free-play period was an especially good
time for the observation and recording of childrens' beha-
vior. A standard time-sampling procedure was employed
whereby each day every child, in turn, was individually
observed for a period of exactly one minute. The one-
minute observation period was subdivided into four 15-
second periods to facilitate and objectify recording.
Observations were conducted over 30 school days; however,
due to absences the number of actual observation days
varied from 18 to 28 with a median observation duration
of 25 days. The actual order in which the children were
observed was randomly determined. A given time-sample for
a child was always begun on an even-numbered minute, e.g.,
9:08, 9:10, without reference to the child's behavior
before or after the specified minute of observation. In
this way the possibility of observer bias was minimized.

Parental Attitude Research Instrument

The PARI was administered to mothers and fathers
of the children enrolled in the nursery school. Each set
of parents was tested at the same time. The following
instructions were given by the experimenter: "I am doing a
study on parental attitudes on family life and children.

A lot has been written on this subject in newspaper and magazine articles. Frequuently these articles are not in agreement. I thought it would be a good idea to find out what parents of your caliber really think. Give your first reaction and please do not confer while taking the test. (For fathers) Some questions will seem to be slanted toward the mother. Will you please give _your_ _own_ attitude on these, that is what _you_ think. The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes. Please answer every question; this is most important. Also, give only one answer to each question."

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Nursery School Observations

The results of the observations in the nursery school are shown in Table 1. The mean percent of total time that children were observed in the major behavior categories are indicated, with a further categorization in terms of sex. It may be seen that differences between boys and girls are slight. Therefore, major attention will be paid to the data summarizing the entire sample of 13 children. More than one-half of the observation time was spent in some sort of social contact with other children; relatively little (10.6%) was spent in social contact with adults. Far less time was spent by children in aggressive behavior (3.4%) than in cooperative activities (49.6%); however, there were wide individual differences in the latter respect. A substantial amount of time was spent playing near, but not with, other children (parallel play = 19.3%); solitary activities occupied a considerable portion of time as well (16.9%).

Finally, while a comparison of boys and girls does not reveal any important differences in the mean amount of time spent in each of the behavior categories, the data

Table 1a

Childrens' Behavior in Nursery School:
Boys (n = 7)

Behavior Category	Mean percent of time	Standard Deviation	Range
Social Isolation	18.6	11.3	3.2-31.3
Parallel Play	16.2	12.6	1.4-41.7
Cooperation	48.3	26.7	15.7-86.3
Aggression	4.1	3.3	0.0-10.4
Total Social Contact with Children	52.4	28.6	15.7-89.8
Total Social Contact with Adults	12.7	8.1	5.6-30.4

Table 1b

Childrens' Behavior in Nursery School:
Girls (n = 6)

Behavior Category	Mean percent of time	Standard Deviation	Range
Social Isolation	15.0	6.0	7.5-24.2
Parallel Play	23.0	6.3	13.9-31.2
Cooperation	51.3	12.5	32.0-68.7
Aggression	2.7	3.4	0.0- 9.4
Total Social Contact with Children	54.0	12.1	34.6-68.7
Total Social Contact with Adults	8.1	2.7	3.3-12.2

Table 1c

Childrens' Behavior in Nursery School:
Total (n=13)

Behavior Category	Mean percent of time	Standard Deviation	Range
Social Isolation	16.9	9.5	3.2-31.3
Parallel Play	19.3	10.8	1.4-41.7
Cooperation	49.6	21.2	15.7-86.3
Aggression	3.4	3.4	0.0-10.4
Total Social Contact with Children	53.1	22.6	15.7-89.8
Total Social Contact with Adults	10.6	6.6	3.3-30.4

suggest that for five of the six categories boys show a larger standard deviation and hence a greater degree of variability than do girls.

Parental Attitude Research Instrument

Each of the 115 questions on the PARI may be answered by circling one of four possible choices: "strongly agree," "mildly agree," "mildly disagree," and "strongly disagree." These responses were assigned scores of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Table 2 shows the mean responses of mothers and fathers for the three factors: Maternal Control, Expression of Maternal Hostility, and Democratic Attitudes toward Child-rearing.

The results indicate only small differences between average maternal and paternal scores. Both mothers and

Table 2

Mean Responses of Mothers and Fathers on
the Parental Attitude Research Instrument

	Maternal			Paternal		
	Mean	S.D.	Range	Mean	S.D.	Range
Factor I Maternal Control	1.9	.28	1.4- 2.5	2.1	.44	1.6- 2.8
Factor II Expression of Maternal Hostility	2.7	.32	2.4- 3.4	2.8	.28	2.4- 3.2
Factor III Democratic Attitudes toward Child-rearing	3.5	.14	3.0- 3.9-	3.4	.35	3.0- 3.9

fathers mildly disagreed with the statements of Factor I
relating to maternal control of the child thereby suggesting
that this sample of parents oppose such authoritarian prac-
tices to some degree. Both maternal and paternal scores on
the second factor, expression of maternal hostility, show
mild agreement pointing toward some approval of the mother's
expression of hostility or at least a tolerance of such
activity. Scores on Factor III, democratic attitudes toward
childrearing, indicate mild-to-strong attitudes in favor of
acceptance of the child as an equal and participating member
of the family.

Correlations between PARI and

Childrens' Nursery School Behavior

Relationships between parental attitudes and nursery
school behavior were determined by correlating both maternal

and paternal scores on the PARI with the results of the time samples taken in the nursery school. Each child was paired with his mother and his father for the purpose of this analysis.

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient[1] was used throughout. Since no a priori predictions were made as to the direction of possible relationships, significance of correlations was evaluated through two-tailed tests. A rank order correlation coefficient equal to or greater than $\pm$.55 attains significance at the 5% level of confidence; a correlation coefficient equal to or greater than $\pm$.48 attains significance at the 10% level of confidence. Because the small sample size demanded high correlations for statistical significance and because the homogeneity of parental attitudes tended to reduce correlations, those obtained may very well be underestimates. Therefore, it was decided to accept correlations at the 5% level as statistically significant and those at the 10% level as suggestive of relationships.

Table 3 includes 36 correlations showing the relationships between various categories of nursery school behavior and the scores of both mothers and fathers on the three factors of the PARI. It may be seen that three of the correlations are significant at the 5% level, one

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$$[1] \quad r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum_{i=1}^{n} d_i^2}{n^3 - n}$$

Table 3

Correlation between Parental Scores on PARI and

Nursery School Behavior of their Respective Children

Behavior Categories	Factor I Maternal Control	Factor II Maternal Hostility	Factor III Democratic Attitudes
Social Isolation			
Maternal	-.04	+.50*	-.07
Paternal	+.17	-.34	+.05
Parallel Play			
Maternal	+.25	+.37	+.57**
Paternal	-.34	-.52*	-.07
Cooperation			
Maternal	-.09	-.59**	-.06
Paternal	-.04	+.34	-.25
Aggression			
Maternal	-.29	+.06	-.28
Paternal	+.55**	+.14	-.41
Total Contact with Children			
Maternal	-.14	-.54*	+.03
Paternal	+.02	+.40	-.25
Total Contact with Adults			
Maternal	+.27	+.44	+.23
Paternal	+.25	+.02	+.36

*p = .05-.10, 2-tailed-test

**p = .05, 2-tailed-test

approximates the 5% level, and two are significant at great-er than the 10% level but less than the 5% level of confid-ence.

Inspection of Table 3 indicates that Factor II (expression of maternal hostility) is involved in several significant correlations. Mothers' attitudes in this factor correlate positively with social isolation (+.50), negatively with cooperation (-.59), and negatively with total social contact with children (-.54). Fathers' atti-tudes in this factor correlate negatively with parallel play (-.52).

Factor I (maternal control) plays a part in only one significant correlation, that of fathers' attitudes toward maternal control and aggressive behavior in nursery school (+.55). A positive correlation exists between mothers' attitudes on Factor III (democratic attitudes toward child-rearing) and parallel play (+.57).

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This study was concerned with three distinct, but interrelated problems: the behavior of children in nursery school, parental attitudes toward child-rearing, and the relationship between these two factors.

An initial concern was with the behavior of children in nursery school. This phase of the study was designed to observe the characteristic aspects of free-play behavior of preschool-age children. The second phase of the study was concerned with parental attitudes toward child-rearing. Emphasis here was on stated attitudes of the father and mother with respect to child-rearing practices. The third part of the study concerned the relationship between the attitudes of the parents and the nursery school behavior of their children.

Nursery School Behavior

Previous studies of nursery school behavior have indicated that children of preschool-age exhibit dependent tendencies toward the teachers, that is, they seek out the company and attention of adults in the school. Girls are said to be more prone to this type of behavior than boys

(Sears, Whiting, Nowlis, & Sears, 1953). Such dependent
behavior is said to be the reaction of the child to the
first prolonged separation from home and the parents. More
complex social interactions of preschool children were re-
vealed in a study by Walters, Pearce, and Dahms (1957).
These investigators reported that children were more coop-
erative than they were aggressive in nursery school. Boys
were reported to show more aggressive behavior than girls.
It was further stated that with respect to both cooperation
and aggression, boys tended to choose other boys as objects
of their behavior and girls too chose members of the same
sex as objects.

The present study agrees with previous investigations
that more cooperative than aggressive behavior was evidenced
by the children. Boys in this study spent slightly more
time in aggressive behavior than did the girls. It was also
noted that boys' behavior was characterized by greater
variability than the girls'. Several differences, however,
were noted in this study. First, there was relatively
little dependency shown; the children of our group spent on-
ly a small part of the time with adults. It should be noted
here that boys, and not girls as shown in the other studies,
spent more time in the company of adults. Although the
present study bears out the conclusion of Walters, et. al.
that children were more cooperative than aggressive in
nursery school, our children did not discriminate between

boys and girls as objects for either cooperative or aggres-
ive behavior. This latter observation may be attributed
in part to the policies of the nursery school. Choice of
playmates was not influenced by adults; aggressive behavior
was allowed to continue within the bounds of safety with no
attempt on the part of the teacher to suggest that perhaps
boys should not fight with girls.

<div align="center">Parental Attitude Research Instrument</div>

The interpretation of the attitudes evidenced by
parents in the present study would be aided through com-
parison with appropriate norms. Such norms, unfortunately,
are not available (Schaefer, 1959). It seems reasonable to
suppose, however, that the parents of this study were rep-
resentative of parents whose children attend university
nursery schools.

Factor I, maternal control of the child, was defined
in the present study as the domination of the child by his
mother, although not necessarily in a strict or punitive
manner. A mother having such an outlook is characterized
by her wish to be the major influence in the development
of her child and by her insistence upon undivided loyalty
from the child. Typically, she is an intrusive mother,
that is, she wants to know all about what her child is
thinking and doing. Her role in the home is determined by
her desire for ascendency; it is her belief, or at the
least her wish, that the family could not be maintained

without her continued guidance and direction. Maternal control, then, represents an attitude continuum ranging from the extremely dominating type of mother described above to the mother who does not place a high value on maternal control or, in fact, strongly rejects such practices. In the present study both maternal and paternal mean scores were similar; both groups showed moderate disagreement with the attitudes of maternal control. It may be supposed that the parents of our sample represent the current trends in child-rearing that have been discussed by Bronfenbrenner (1958) which seems to be a rather moderate, middle-of-the-road approach. From an early emphasis upon strict food scheduling, early toilet training, suppression of infantile sexuality, and other rigid controls, methods of child-rearing went to the other extreme, that of extreme permissiveness. Parents were prone to place very few limits upon the kinds of behavior their children exhibited; toilet training and feeding were left to the whim or wish of the child. As viewed by today's critics, neither of these methods of child-rearing is satisfactory, especially when taken to extremes. Thus, we would expect the parents of this study who are well-educated and apparently concerned with the welfare of their children, to reflect the current moderate attitudes toward child-rearing.

Factor II, expression of maternal hostility, represents a set of maternal attitudes expressed in irrita-

bility, rejection of the homemaking role, marital conflict, and strictness with the child. A woman expressing these attitudes shows dissatisfaction with her role as wife and mother. She may be prone to outbursts of temper and expressions of resentment toward her husband. The stringent limits set upon the behavior of her child may reflect her own frustrations. Further, she rationalizes her strictness by claiming that it develops for the child a "strong character" for which he will be grateful in later years. Mothers and fathers in this study agreed in these attitudes, but only to a moderate degree. This agreement may reflect a general tendency toward an awareness of the problems of American women who, having been educated for a career, find themselves restricted to the home and the care of children. These problems have been intensively discussed in the popular periodicals, e.g., Ladies' Home Journal, McCalls, and Good Housekeeping, and mothers no longer feel ashamed to admit to these feelings. Fathers are, perhaps, becoming more accepting of these attitudes in their wives.

Factor III, democratic attitudes toward child-rearing, concerned attitudes reflecting a desire to treat the child as an equal member of the family group. The mother who holds such attitudes encourages the child to express his ideas and suggestions in family discussions; his contributions are considered and often accepted. Emphasis is placed on playing with the child; sharing fun, activities,

and interests is regarded as necessary to the child's future happiness. The parents of our sample held the attitudes expressed in Factor III and there was very little difference between maternal and paternal groups. It is likely that this group's high educational level and their familiarity with accepted patterns of family interaction (Wolfenstein, 1958) led them to express current notions about child-rearing.

Relationships between Nursery School Behavior and Parental Attitudes

In the third and main phase of the study, the attitudes of parents were correlated with the behavior of their children. In utilizing this method of research it has been assumed that parental attitudes are the indirect cause of childrens' behavior in the nursery school.

This phase of the study yielded six significant relationships, four of which concerned Factor II (expression of maternal hostility). Four of the significant relationships involved mothers and two involved fathers. All behavioral categories except "Total Social Contact with Adults" were involved in at least one correlation with parental attitudes suggesting the general relevance of attitudes measured on the PARI with play behavior of preschool children.

A significant relationship was found between fathers' approval of maternal control and childrens' aggression in

nursery school. It is not surprising to find a positive relationship between parental control and aggression -- this has long been a prominent hypothesis of psychology. What is complicating here is that only the fathers' attitudes correlated significantly with the aggressive behavior of the children. This finding may be explained by assuming that the father is dominant in the home and consequently that his attitudes determine the extent of control over the child. If the father advocates maternal control or conversely, opposes such control, his attitudes would be a major factor in influencing the mother's behavior toward the child even though her own attitudes may differ from her husband's. The suggested relationship, therefore, is between the father's expectations with respect to degree of control to be exerted by the mother and the aggressive behavior of the child in nursery school.

The majority of significant relationships obtained in the present study involved the expression of maternal hostility (Factor II) and thus suggests the importance of such attitudes. Mothers who approved highly of these hostility-rejection attitudes had children who were the social isolates of the nursery school group. These children were neither aggressive nor cooperative but spent most of their time in solitary play or aimless wandering around the room. On the other hand, the mothers in this sample who did not express such attitudes, that is, who were

neither hostile nor rejecting, tended to have children who were highly sociable and who spent most of the time in cooperative play activities. The evident conclusion is that mothers who express strong hostility and dissatisfaction have not adjusted adequately to the role of wife and mother. Their personal discontent and anxiety may have been an important factor in the maladjustive behavior of their children in nursery school. Data were available for the mothers of this sample on the Taylor Anxiety Scale, a test of clinical anxiety. The significant correlation found between scores on the Taylor Scale and attitudes involving maternal hostility ($r_g = +.49$, $p = .05$, one-tailed-test), suggests that maternal hostility, as measured by the PARI, involves a strong component of neurotic anxiety.

Two of the significant correlations involved the behavioral category of parallel play. The first relationship was between fathers' attitudes about expression of maternal hostility (Factor II) and parallel play. The correlation was in a negative direction; paternal approval of wives' expression of hostility being associated with a low degree of parallel play while paternal disapproval was associated with a somewhat higher incidence of this behavior. The second relationship involved mothers' democratic attitudies toward child-rearing (Factor III) and the parallel play of children. This positive correlation associates democratic attitudes with a high incidence of parallel play.

Rejection of democratic attitudes was associated with a low incidence of parallel play. It is difficult to set forth any explanation for these relationships since the reasons for parallel play are not fully understood. This kind of behavior falls somewhere between complete social isolation, in which the child has no contact with others, and social interaction, in which there is complete communication with others. In parallel play there is, at the least, a minimum of contact, with the child being near others, but having no verbal or physical contact with them. Therefore, we can only make note of these relationships at this time and must postpone any generalizations until a better understanding of the genesis of parallel play is available.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

This study was concerned mainly with the effect of the socialization process upon childrens' behavior in their first sustained social experience away from the home, that is, in the nursery school setting. In order to determine the kinds of child-rearing methods employed by their parents, an investigation of the parents' attitudes toward child-rearing was conducted. A comprehensive and effective scale, Schaefer and Bell's Parental Attitude Research Instrument was employed for this purpose and administered to 12 mothers and 12 fathers. The behavior of their 13 children in the nursery school setting was observed each day for one minute over 30 consecutive days during the free-play period. A behavior check list which placed specific acts in broad behavioral categories was constructed by the experimenter for this phase of the study.

Significant relationships were found to exist between several of the parental attitudes and major categories of nursery school behavior.

Two major trends are apparent in these data. First, advocation of strict maternal control was associated with

aggressive behavior by children, and second, expressions of
dissatisfaction with the maternal role by either parent were
related to tendencies toward social isolation by their
children. It was concluded that the free-play behavior of
children in nursery school reflects certain attitudes about
child-rearing held by their mothers and fathers although
the precise nature of parental influence requires further
investigation.

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APPENDIX 1

Nursery School Behavioral Check-list

	1st 15-sec			2nd 15-sec			3d 15-sec			4th 15-		
	C	A	O	C	A	O	C	A	O	C	A	C
A. Far (no contact, social isol)												
1. Plays alone												
2. Wanders												
3. Sulks, cries												
B. Near												
1. Parallel play												
2. Social interaction												
a. COOPERATIVE, VERBAL												
1) Nonsense talking												
2) Yells, sings happy												
3) Asks permission, advice												
4) Gives advice, orders												
5) Offers to share, compromise												
6) Conversation												
7) Gives compliments, praises												
8) Seeks praise, compliments												
b. COOPERATIVE, PHYSICAL												
1) Approaches group												
2) Looks and listens												
3) Follows direction												
4) Shares, helps another												
5) Holds hands												
6) Hugs, kisses												
c. AGGRESSIVE, VERBAL												
1) Argues, yells												
2) Tattles												
3) Taunts, teases												
4) Screams												
5) Curses												
d. AGGRESSIVE, PHYSICAL												
1) Pinches												
2) Takes toy from another												
3) Strikes with hand												
4) Pushes, pulls, drags												
5) Kicks												
6) Throws or mishandles property												
7) Strikes with obj.												
8) Bites												

APPENDIX 2

INVENTORY OF ATTITUDES ON FAMILY LIFE AND CHILDREN

Read each of the statements below and then rate them as follows:

A	a	d	D
strongly agree	mildly agree	mildly disagree	strongly disagree

Indicate your opinion by drawing a circle around the "A" if you strongly agree, around the "a" if you mildly agree, around the "d" if you mildly disagree, and around the "D" if you strongly disagree.

There are no right or wrong answers, so answer according to your own opinion. It is very important to the study that all questions be answered. Many of the statements will seem alike but all are necessary to show slight differences of opinion.

	Agree		Disagree	
1. Children should be allowed to disagree if they feel their own ideas are better.	A	a	d	D
2. A good mother should shelter her child from life's little difficulties.	A	a	d	D
3. The home is the only thing that matters to a good mother.	A	a	d	D
4. Some children are just so bad they must be taught to fear adults for their own good.	A	a	d	D
5. Children should realize how much parents have to give up for them.	A	a	d	D
6. You must always keep tight hold of baby during his bath for in a careless moment he might slip.	A	a	d	D
7. People who think they can get along in marriage without arguments just don't know the facts.	A	a	d	D
8. A child will be grateful later on for strict training.	A	a	d	D

9. Children will get on any woman's nerves
   if she has to be with them all day.   A a d D

10. It's best for the child if he never gets
    started wondering whether his mother's
    views are right.   A a d D

11. More parents should teach their children
    to have unquestioning loyalty to them.   A a d D

12. A child should be taught to avoid fight-
    ing no matter what happens.   A a d D

13. One of the worst things about taking
    care of a home is a woman feels that
    she can't get out.   A a d D

14. Parents should adjust to the children
    some rather than always expecting the
    children to adjust to the parents.   A a d D

15. There are so many things a child has
    to learn in life there is no excuse
    for him sitting around with time on
    his hands.   A a d D

16. If you let children talk about their
    troubles they end up complaining even
    more.   A a d D

17. Mothers would do their job better
    with the children if fathers were
    more kind.   A a d D

18. A young child should be protected from
    hearing about sex.   A a d D

19. If a mother doesn't go ahead and make
    rules for the home the children and
    husband will get into troubles they
    don't need to.   A a d D

20. A mother should make it her business to
    know everything her children are thinking. A a d D

21. Children would be happier and better be-
    haved if parents would show an interest
    in their affairs.   A a d D

22. Most children are toilettrained by 15
    months of age.   A a d D

23. There is nothing worse for a young mother than being alone while going through her first experience with a baby.   A   a   d   D

24. Children should be encouraged to tell their parents about it whenever they feel family rules are unreasonable.   A   a   d   D

25. A mother should do her best to avoid any disappointment for her child.   A   a   d   D

26. The women who want lots of parties seldom make good mothers.   A   a   d   D

27. It is frequently necessary to drive the mischief out of a child before he will behave.   A   a   d   D

28. A mother must expect to give up her own happiness for that of her child.   A   a   d   D

29. All young mothers are afraid of their awkwardness in handling and holding the baby.   A   a   d   D

30. Sometimes it's necessary for a wife to tell off her husband in order to get her rights.   A   a   d   D

31. Strict discipline develops a fine strong character.   A   a   d   D

32. Mothers very often feel that they can't stand their children a moment longer.   A   a   d   D

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

34. The child should be taught to revere his parents above all other grown-ups.   A   a   d   D

35. A child should be taught to always come to his parents or teachers rather than fight when he is in trouble.   A   a   d   D

36. Having to be with the children all the time gives a woman the feeling her wings have been clipped.   A   a   d   D

37. Parents must earn the respect of their children by the way they act.   A   a   d   D

38. Children who don't try hard for success will feel they gave missed out on things later on.　　A　a　d　D

39. Parents who start a child talking about his worries don't realize that sometimes it's better to just leave well enough alone.　　A　a　d　D

40. Husbands could do their part if they were less selfish.　　A　a　d　D

41. It is very important that young boys and girls not be allowed to see each other completely undressed.　　A　a　d　D

42. Children and husbands do better when the mother is strong enough to settle most of the problems.　　A　a　d　D

43. A child should never keep a secret from his parents.　　A　a　d　D

44. Laughing at children's jokes and telling children jokes makes things go more smoothly.　　A　a　d　D

45. The sooner a child learns to walk the better he's trained.　　A　a　d　D

46. It isn't fair that a woman has to bear just about all the burden of raising children by herself.　　A　a　d　D

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

48. A child should be protected from jobs which might be too tiring or hard for him.　A　a　d　D

49. A woman has to choose between having a well-run home and hobnobbing around with neighbors and friends.　　A　a　d　D

50. A wise parent will teach a child early just who is boss.　　A　a　d　D

51. Few women get the gratitude they deserve for all they have done for their children.　A　a　d　D

52. Mothers never stop blaming themselves if
their babies are injured in accidents.　　A　a　d　D

53. No matter how well a married couple love
on another, there are always differences
which cause irritation and lead to argu-
ments.　　A　a　d　D

54. Children who are held to firm rules
grow up to be the best adults.　　A　a　d　D

55. It's a rare mother who can be sweet and
even tempered with her children all day.　　A　a　d　D

56. Children should never learn things out-
side the home which make them doubt their
parents' ideas.　　A　a　d　D

57. A child soon learns that there is no
greater wisdom than that of his parents.　　A　a　d　D

58. There is no good excuse for a child
hitting another child.　　A　a　d　D

59. Most young mothers are bothered more by
the feeling of being shut up in the home
than by anything else.　　A　a　d　D

60. Children are too often asked to do all
the compromising and adjustment and
that is not fair.　　A　a　d　D

61. Parents should teach their children that
the way to get ahead is to keep busy and
not waste time.　　A　a　d　D

62. Children pester you with all their little
upsets if you aren't careful from the
first.　　A　a　d　D

63. When a mother doesn't do a good job with
children it's probably because the father
doesn't do his part around the home.　　A　a　d　D

64. Children who take part in sex play become
sex criminals when they grow up.　　A　a　d　D

65. A mother has to do the planning because
she is the one who knows what's going
on in the home.　　A　a　d　D

66. An alert parent should try to learn
all her child's thoughts.   A a d D

67. Parents who are interested in hearing
about their children's parties, dates
and fun help them grow up right.   A a d D

68. The earlier a child is weaned from its
emotional ties to its parents the better
it will handle its own problems.   A a d D

69. A wise woman will do anything to avoid
being by herself before and after a new
baby.   A a d D

70. A child's ideas should be seriously con-
sidered in making family decisions.   A a d D

71. Parents should know better than to allow
their children to be exposed to difficult
situations.   A a d D

72. Too many women forget that a mother's
place is in the home.   A a d D

73. Children need some of the natural
meanness taken out of them.   A a d D

74. Children should be more considerate of
their mothers since their mothers suffer
so much for them.   A a d D

75. Most mothers are fearful that they may
hurt their babies in handling them.   A a d D

76. There are some things which just can't
be settled by a mild discussion.   A a d D

77. Most children should have more discipline
than they get.   A a d D

78. Raising children is a nerve-wracking job.   A a d D

79. The child should not question the
thinking of his parents.   A a d D

80. Parents deserve the highest esteem and
regard of their children.   A a d D

81. Children should not be encouraged to box
or wrestle because it often leads to
trouble or injury.   A a d D

82. One of the bad things about raising
children is that you aren't free enough
of the time to do just as you like.   A   a   d   D

83. As much as is reasonable a parent should
try to treat a child as an equal.   A   a   d   D

84. A child who is "on the go" all the time
will most likely be happy.   A   a   d   D

85. If a child has upset feelings it is best
to leave him alone and not make it look
serious.   A   a   d   D

86. If mothers could get their wishes they
would most often ask that their husband
be more understanding.   A   a   d   D

87. Sex is one of the greatest problems to
be contended with in children.   A   a   d   D

88. The whole family does fine if the mother
puts her shoulders to the wheel and takes
charge of things.   A   a   d   D

89. A mother has a right to know everything
going on in her child's life because her
child is part of her.   A   a   d   D

90. If parents would have fun with their
children, the children would be more
apt to take their advice.   A   a   d   D

91. A mother should make an effort to get
her child toilet trained at the earliest
possible time.   A   a   d   D

92. Most women need more time than they are
given to rest up in the home after going
through childbirth.   A   a   d   D

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

94. Children should be kept away from all
hard jobs which might be discouraging.   A   a   d   D

95. A good mother will find enough social
life within the family.   A   a   d   D

96. It is sometimes necessary for the parents
to break the child's will.   A   a   d   D

97. Mothers sacrifice almost all their own
fun for their children.   A   a   d   D

98. A mother's greatest fear is that in a
forgetful moment she might let some-
thing bad happen to the baby.   A   a   d   D

99. It's natural to have quarrels when two
people who both have minds of their own
get married.   A   a   d   D

100. Children are actually happier under
strict training.   A   a   d   D

101. It's natural for a mother to "blow her
top" when children are selfish and
demanding.   A   a   d   D

102. There is nothing worse than letting a
child hear criticisms of his mother.   A   a   d   D

103. Loyalty to parents comes before any-
thing else.   A   a   d   D

104. Most parents prefer a quiet child to a
"scrappy" one.   A   a   d   D

105. A young mother feels "held down" because
there are lots of things she wants to
do while she is young.   A   a   d   D

106. There is no reason parents should have
their own way all the time, any more
than that children should have their
own way all the time.   A   a   d   D

107. The sooner a child learns that a wasted
minute is lost forever the better off
he will be.   A   a   d   D

108. The trouble with giving attention to
children's problems is they usually
just make up a lot of stories to keep
you interested.   A   a   d   D

109. Few men realize that a mother needs
some fun in life too.   A   a   d   D

110. There is usually something wrong with a child who asks a lot of questions about sex. A a d D

111. A married woman knows that she will have to take the lead in family matters. A a d D

112. It is a mother's duty to make sure she knows her child's innermost thoughts. A a d D

113. When you do things together, children feel close to you and can talk easier. A a d D

114. A child should be weaned away from the bottle or breast as soon as possible. A a d D

115. Taking care of a small baby is something that no woman should be expected to do all by herself. A a d D