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PARENTS AS EDUCATORS:
A CASE STUDY OF THREE FAMILIES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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1983

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Major Field: Early Childhood Education

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Studies in Teacher Education - Dr. C. Ray Williams
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

"The family is first in time, and in many ways, the most important teaching agency in any society" (Berger, 1981, p. 23).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of parents as educators of their children. Specifically, it is a case study of parents within the context of their home actually teaching their children. It examines the interaction behavior of family members, the relationship of home and school, and the perceptions, expectations, and aspirations parents hold.

Foremost among the many reasons for studying parents as educators are:

1) the primacy of the attachment relationship which exist between parent and child,

2) the nature of the parental role in general family living,

3) the significance of parental involvement in the early learning experiences of the child,

4) the influence of early family experiences on later relationships and learning,

5) the influence of parents establishing the foundation for appropriate societal behaviors,
6) the nature of the sustained relationship which exists between parent and child, and

7) the fact that when parents are involved with the school to educate their children, greater benefits accrue to the child, the parent, the teacher, and the school.

Because the attachment phenomenon reflects the primary parent-child relationship, the nature of what parents do when they engage in teaching their children should be studied. Janice Gibson (1983) defines attachment as "an on going durable affectional tie between caregiver and infant" (p. 146). She further states that attachment is "what most people think of as 'love'" (p. 146). The characteristics of attachment have been studied by Mary Ainsworth (1979), John Bowlby (1965), Harry Harlow (1958), and others. These researchers agree that attachment is the consequence of the nurturing relationship which results from the positive interaction between mother and child. Although the nurturing role is traditionally assigned to the mother, Gibson (1983) summarized the research on attachment and suggests that both "fathers and mothers can provide adequate caring" (p. 167). For example, she suggests that studies which compare "the ways that fathers and mothers interact with their toddlers show very few differences between the sexes" (p. 167). For example, both parents devote time to child rearing. Bonding occurs. They develop strong emotional ties with the offspring, such that an attachment relationship is formed. Both parents experience attachment.
These researchers generally agree that parents most often devote more time to child rearing than anyone else. Parents also see children as an extension of themselves which creates a strong and enduring relationship. Because of the significance of an attachment relationship, parents actually educating their children should be studied.

Sueann Ambron (1981), Barbra and Philip Newman (1983), and Dorothy Rogers (1982) discuss the role of parents in the context of the family, describing how the role of parents in general family living has traditionally reflected a division of labor. The mother serves in the homemaker child-care position and the father assumes the bread-winner family protector role. Furthermore, they explain how these traditional roles are changing. Both mother and father now serve the family in a more androgynous way. For example, both may work outside of the home, both may care for the children, both may do the housework, and both may share the responsibility for the care and protection of family members. Because parents provide for the needs of the family, and education is one of those needs, studying parents as a means to ascertain what they do to educate their children is very important.

Erik Erikson's (1963) hierarchy of human development provides a way to conceive lifespan development and the role of parents in fostering it. He suggests that later feelings of self confidence within the child are related to the quality of the attachment relationship developed earlier with the parent. He further suggests
that the role of the parents, especially the mother, is most significant in determining the quality of that relationship. From his perspective, the foundation for later life successes and failures is formed during these early learning experiences. It is because of the significant role that parents play in shaping these early years that parents as educators should be studied.

How do parents influence societal values and standards? Sueann Ambron (1981) states that "Children learn the norms of the various groups to which they belong through a process of living within these standards and being taught, largely by examples, how to behave" (p. 449). Parents are the teachers. Furthermore, these standards or values are predominantly taught during the early years of the child's life. Therefore, a study which provides knowledge concerning how parents teach these standards is another reason to investigate the role of parents as educators.

In addition, parents provide a life-long connecting link with the child and are a continuous influence throughout his or her life. Roger Gould (1978) discusses the strength and length of this parent-child relationship and describes how all children are fighting throughout their lives to free themselves from four major false assumptions about their parents. He describes these misconceptions which keep children tied to their parents as follows:

1. We will always live with our parents and be their child.
2. They will always be there to help when we cannot do something on our own.
3. Their simplified version of our complicated inner reality is correct, as when they turn the light on in our bedroom to prove there are not ghosts.

4. There is no real death or evil in the world (p. 23).

In this study, peer pressures are beginning to move the daughter who attends junior high school away from these misconceptions.

Only when the child frees himself or herself from these misconceptions will he or she become a mature adult. Gould suggests that even after successful separation, parents maintain the connecting link to the offspring. Because this link is continuous, parents have the power to exert long-term influence over the life of the child. Because of the power and the intensity of the parent-child relationship, researchers should conduct investigations which provide data about what parents do when they teach their children.

Although this study is designed to develop a deeper understanding of the role of parent educators, it, more specifically, is a case study of parents which examines the interaction among family members and the relationship of parents and school, as well as the perceptions, expectations, and aspirations parents hold for their children.

Dorothy Rich et al. (1979) consider the role of parent-educators very important and conclude that "one parent is worth a thousand teachers" (p. 26). In addition, they suggest that all parents intrinsically possess the abilities to help their child succeed in
school. Furthermore, the school is the "social institution that has contact with students over many years. This fact alone gives school the opportunity and the responsibility to reach out to the student and the family beyond the classroom walls" (p. 36).

In recent years, the role of parent educators has resurfaced. The resurgence of their importance in the educative process is due, in a large part, to the role Head Start--Home Start Programs play in preschool education. These programs provide this nation with a laboratory to study early childhood and parental education.

George Morrison (1980) discusses the premises under which Head Start was established and currently operates:

1. Children who come from low-income families often have not received the cognitive, social and physical experiences normally associated with success in first grade.
2. Many problems created by poverty can be alleviated or compensated for if children receive these experiences before they start school.
3. Generational poverty cycles can be broken by providing educational and social opportunities for children early in their lives (p. ).

These premises are reflected through such activities as
1) involvement of parents on advisory boards to administrators,
2) participation in classroom and other program activities as paid employees, volunteers or observers, and 3) working with their own children in cooperation with Head Start staff. This program provides a planned set of experiences and activities which support and enhance the parents' role as the principal influence in their child's
education and development. Furthermore, Head Start provides a program which recognizes parents as 1) responsible guardians of their children's well-being, 2) prime educators of their children and 3) contributors to the Head Start Program and to their communities. In general, Head Start Programs provides a model for parent educators. For example, parents who learn in the Head Start center that mealtime is a time for conversation are more likely to model this behavior by talking to their children at home.

The Head Start program is sometimes described as embracing a deficit model which regards citizens from the low socio-economic level of our society in a less than positive light, by defining them as inferior members of the society. However, the value of the Head Start Program is that it recognizes the important and necessary role of the parent in his or her child's education. Parent-child interactions and relationships are the hallmark of this model. The teacher only facilitates the development of their relationships and interactions. For this reason, parents as educators of their children should be studied.

Results from the various Head Start demonstration projects are reported in the works of researchers such as Lazar and Darlington (1978), Bronfenbrenner (1968), Hunt (1961), Hohmann, Bernard and Weikart (1979). These works reveal that the single most important factor to improving and sustaining children's learning and development is parental involvement—that when parents are involved, the
children learn more and the learning is retained longer. Parents be­
come more positive toward their children and about themselves.
Parents and children adopt a more positive attitude about school, and
the school becomes more supportive toward the children and family.
Leeper, Skipper, and Witherspoon (1979) suggest that "parental
involvement places stress on parents as teachers of their children
and having a decision-making role in what should be taught and by
whom" (p. 466). Head Start provides the means for parents to become
involved in their child's education and an opportunity for researchers
to study that involvement. The results of these researchers' works
comprise another reason to study how parents educate their children.

To some degree, the present body of research documents the role
of parents as educators of their own children. Furthermore, the
research explains the benefits which result from that parental involve­
ment. However, the methodology has been limited to an examination of
test score results and evaluation of other group data. The purpose
of these studies was to ascertain the cause and effect relationship
between predetermined variables. However, these studies further
seek to draw conclusions which have limited practical application.
The ultimate goal of these studies is to be able to generalize to
other similar groups or settings.

Although the results from such studies may be useful for the
purposes described, studies are needed which do not attempt to
explain average performance of subjects, but which seek to understand
the meaning of experiences, events, or objects as viewed from the perspective of the subjects. Studies are needed which provide in-depth descriptions from parents and other family members and which utilize strategies such as observation and interview, as well as resources such as documents and various forms of communication. Studies are needed which focus on the parents in the context of the home actually teaching their children and which examine the interaction of the home with the school. Essential to a thorough understanding of education which occurs within the home is an ecological approach to education. An ecological approach examines education as it occurs in a natural setting. It also examines how individual family members and families cope with education and the schooling experience. This study provides this type of indepth investigation of the role of parent educators.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study rests in its potential to provide an in-depth view of parents educating their children heretofore not provided. The research setting is the natural environment of the home and school rather than a clinical or laboratory setting. Vast amounts of data from multiple sources provide an opportunity for patterns to be observed. This study seeks to understand the meaning of the data from the perspective of the subjects. It endeavors to explain how parents educate their offsprings rather than to predict the outcome of process.
Assumptions

The following assumptions are derived from the works of various investigators in the field of human development and education, including Bronfenbrenner (1979), Gordon (1977), Hunt (1961), and Lazar and Darling (1978) and form the basis for this study. From their works the following assumptions are made:

1. Parents a) provide the first and most lasting influence upon their offspring's view of the world, b) are the primary teachers of their children, and c) have a valuable contribution to make to children's education.

2. When parents are involved positively in their children's education, the gains for the children, the family, and the school are more beneficial and longer lasting.

3. How parents view their involvement in the education of their children can be studied from an ecological perspective by obtaining data directly from the subjects.

4. What parents do when they serve as teachers of their own children has value and significance for professionally educated teachers.

5. Because parents provide formal and informal education for their children within the context of the home and beyond, parents as educators can be more effectively studied within this natural setting.

Definition of Terms

Preschool Child. George Morrison (1980), Eugenia Berger (1981), and Sarah Leeper, Dora Skipper, and Ralph Witherspoon (1979) generally describe a preschool child as one who is within the developmental period from birth to age six: those years prior to entering first
grade. Morrison (1980) specifically states that "when a public school operates a program for five year olds, and another for four year olds, the term kindergarten is applied to the former and nursery school to the latter. Some school districts will refer to their kindergarten as a preschool, while others will consider it part of their regular educational program" (p. 6).

**School-Age Child.** This term refers to children who attend the regular school program and are usually between the ages of six and eighteen or grade one through twelve (Berger, 1981; Morrison, 1980; Leeper et al., 1979).

**Early Childhood.** Morrison (1980) specifically refers to early childhood as the period "from conception to age eight. This is a standard and accepted definition by most professional educators" (p. 15).

**Parent Educators.** Dorothy Rich, James VanDien, and Beverly Mattox (1979) refer to parent educators as the adult members of a family who teach their children (pp. 26-40).

**Family.** Morrison (1980) defines the family as "a group of individuals living together, unified by such bonds as kinship, sex, friendship, economic dependence, compatibility, and legal obligations" (p. 9).

**Relationship of Parents and School.** Rich et al. generally refer to this relationship as the interaction or communication which occurs...
between the home and the school (pp. 26-40). Parents most often communicate with their child's teacher rather than the administrator.

**Expectations and Aspirations of Family Members.** This phrase refers to the hopes parents hold for their children and themselves as described by Robert Levine (1977, pp. 52-65).

**Perception.** This term refers to the level of awareness parents hold about themselves as educators and the nature and extent of the education their children receive from schooling (Rich et al., 1979 and Levine, 1977).

**An Ecological Approach to Education.** Cremin (1976) defines an ecological approach as "one that views educational institutions and configurations in relation to one another and to the larger society that sustains them and is in turn affected by them.... Relationship among institutions that constitute a configuration of education may be political, pedagogical, or personal" (p. 36). In this study, the two institutions examined are the home and the school.

**Education.** Cremin (1976) defines education as the "deliberate effort to acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort" (Cremin, 1976, p. 41).

**Schooling.** Armstrong et al. (1981) defines schooling as "whatever help an institution provides to an individual in getting an education" (p. 7).

**Successful Children.** Successful children refers to the school-aged offsprings of the parents in this study. Teachers determine
whether the children are successful in the school experience by using criteria such as the following: test scores, grades, class performance, positive relationship with peers, and positive interaction with teachers and other adults in the school setting.

**Limitations of the Study**

This research is limited by sample to three families. Because of the limited number of subjects and the type of design, it has generalizability to other studies. This study seeks to describe a small number of cases.

The study does not attempt to compare families according to geographic settings, ethnic or racial backgrounds, socioeconomic levels or to predict future performance. It does provide a qualitative and in-depth study of three families--parents--educating their children.
CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF PARENTS EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN

"The parent is the most important teacher a child will ever have" (Rich, VanDien, and Mattox, 1979, p. 33).

The focus of this study is to describe the phenomenon of parents educating their children in the context of the home. To that end, the specific foci are 1) a description of the interaction of family members, 2) the perceptions, expectations, and aspirations parents hold for their children, 3) and the relationship of parents with the schools.

A Description of the Interactions of Family Members

One way to begin to understand the effect family members have upon each other is to examine the family itself. One of the classic definitions of the family which is often referred to, even today, is given by Murdock (1949). Murdock bases his explanation upon function and describes the nuclear family structure (father, mother, child) which he believes is present in all societies. Murdock explains that the nuclear family is a universal human social grouping. Either as the sole prevailing form of the family or as the basic unit from which more complex family forms are compounded, it exists as a distinct and strongly functional group in every known society (Murdock, 1949, p. 2).
Reiss (1965) critiques Murdock's position on the universality of the nuclear family and concludes that Murdock's definition is empirically inadequate and proposes his own definition that "the family institution is a small kinship structured group with the key function of nurturant socialization of the newborn" (pp. 443-53).

Gary Lee (1982) reviews various definitions of the family and concludes that the family unit's primary role is to communicate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of the culture. Barbara and Phillip Newman (1983) also discuss the family as a context for development. They offer a definition of the family in which several distinctions are made. First, the family is "defined broadly to include all people who share a common ancestry" (p. 271). Because of ancestral ties which may influence the life choices of the offspring, they acknowledge that this definition recognizes family members both dead and alive. Secondly, they define the family "as adults who share a household and participate in raising their children" (p. 271). Although the internal operations of families may be culture specific, they explain that this definition "captures a universal function of the family system." For example, family arrangements can vary to include one, two, or more adults in the caregiving role. They can include two or more adults without children. They can include all male, all female, or male and female adults. They can include only the mother, father, and their children, or any arrangement of grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, cousins, or unrelated adults who participate in household tasks and child care.
Within each of these constellations, whether or not the group is in fact a family depends on their own definition of their relationship. Deep emotional commitment, mutual protection, a willingness to provide for one another, and interdependence of the fates of the members are four characteristics that are essential to the psychological sense of family (Newman and Newman, 1983, p. 272).

In addition, Newman and Newman (1983) describe the "family of origin" (p. 272) in which one participates as a child and which "we have our first lessons about how one enacts the adult roles of parent or spouse" (p. 272). They state that in this context, "our ideas about these important adult relationships are first formed as we observe, listen, and interact with our own parents" (p. 272). This family of origin is descriptive of all definitions previously given by Newman and Newman. Furthermore, they describe the "family of procreation" (p. 272) which is formed when the child grows and establishes his/her own family to raise the next generation.

Finally, Hope Jensen Leichter's (1977) explanation of the family provides an appropriate summary for a description of the family as an arena in which virtually the entire range of human experience can take place. Warfare, violence, love, tenderness, honesty, deceit, private property, communal sharing, power manipulation, informed consent, formal status hierarchies, egalitarian decision-making—all can be found within the setting of the family. As so, also, can a variety of educational encounters, ranging from conscious, systematic instruction to repetitive, moment-to-moment influences at the margins of awareness. Moreover, since almost everyone has had profound
experiences within one or more families, judgments of the family are often deeply felt and charged with emotion (Leichter, 1977, p. 1).

In this study, the family consists of parents, siblings, and other adults or children who reside in the immediate household and are considered by the mother and father to be a basic part of that group such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

**Traditional and Changing Family Patterns**

"In the traditional family pattern, there has been a clear division of functions along sex lines" (Newman and Newman, 1983, p. 274). The male is responsible for the economic security and physical safety of the family members. As husband and father, he is away from the home for long periods of time, to experience the larger world, to expand his career, and to have a limited role in child care. The mother's role is one of nurturant care of the offspring and spouse. Her role keeps her close to home or the neighborhood, supports her husband's career goals, involves her in community activities, religious organizations, children's school-related activities, and, last of all, provides for her own comfort.

The roles of the children, girls and boys, also are patterned along these traditional lines. Girls traditionally perform tasks that prepare them for mothering, and sons traditionally perform tasks which prepare them for fathering. For example, daughters perform such tasks as washing dishes, cleaning the house, caring for younger children, setting the table, and preparing the meals. The boys often
perform tasks which will take him outside the home, such as cutting the grass, painting the home, repairing equipment, and taking out the garbage.

Traditional roles of husbands and wives are changing and many influences effect their roles. A prime example of pervasive yet taken-for-granted influence on the total family is the television. Its effect is a constant source of discussion and controversy. Other influences which effect the role of family members are issues such as child and spouse abuse, population trends, population mobility, changing life styles, unemployment, and working mothers (Leeper, Skipper, and Witherspoon, 1979).

Newman and Newman (1983) explain how the changing roles of husbands and wives are reflected in two family types: the two wage earner type and the single parent type. In the two wage earner type family, both spouses share the responsibility of providing for the economic security of the family, whereas in the single parent type family, only one adult provides for the economic security.

They further explain that families not only differ in the distribution of work but also

differ with respect to their pattern of decision-making and the allocation of power to various family members. Three patterns have been identified: the single executive, the adult executive, and the family executive (Newman and Newman, 1983, p. 275).

For example, in the single executive pattern of changing family, one adult, usually the father, is the primary decision-maker, the
The main source of rewards and punishment and the central figure for identification among the children, he carries the responsibilities and blame for the success and failure of the family. The role of other family members is subordinate and assigned by the executive. Decisions regarding the family are made around the wishes and desires of the executive family member.

A second form of changing family organization as described by Newman and Newman (1983) is the adult-executive in which power and decision-making is shared by the adults - husband, wife, and, possibly, grandparents. Children are subordinate to this decision-making process and perceived as incapable of making decisions. Decisions are arrived at through negotiation and consensus which often takes more time but which causes less conflict because family members have agreed to the decisions and, therefore, are committed to their implementation. In addition, the responsibility for successes and failures are shared. Ultimately, children may reject exclusion from decisions and request inclusion. If the children remain excluded from full participation, this situation may become a source of conflict. Newman and Newman explain that this model theoretically represents a sharing of power and decision-making: the ideal model. However, in actual practice, it may be less than equal. For example, they state that

even if the husband and wife share in decision-making, actual decisions are divided among the adults so that the wife has her domain and the husband has his. Even in families where there is a high degree of joint decision-making, the
male is likely to be more influential in decisions about purchasing liquor, tending the lawn, or choice and use of credit cards, while the wife is likely to have major involvement in shopping for food and doing the dishes.

In other words, attitudes about the value of shared decision-making and consensus are difficult to operationalize (Newman and Newman, 1983, p. 276).

The third form of changing family pattern is the family executive pattern in which "all members of the family share, as they are able, in the assignment of responsibility for family task" (Newman and Newman, 1983, p. 277). This model seems ideal because all members share in the decision-making process. However, it too has weaknesses. Children’s access to participation in the process is often determined by their age and degree of developmental maturity, which means they are excluded from some key family decisions. As children grow older, they may demand greater participation in more important decisions. If not handled correctly, this demand may become a source of family conflict. In this study this form of family pattern is utilized. In this study, decisions are most often made by the adults and later shared with the children. The children's input is secondary to the final decision. The daughter who attends the middle school shows signs of yielding to peer pressure and pulling away from her parents’ decisions.

Each of these models provides insight into family interaction patterns. All can work effectively, given the appropriate context
and family. All provide an opportunity for family members to grow, develop, and learn. Parents learn from children, children learn from parents, parents learn from parents, and children learn from each other. Decision making patterns in this study follow the executive pattern and the adult-executive pattern. Both models are working effectively for these families.

Parents' Perceptions, Expectations, and Aspirations Relative to Their Children's Education

The literature regarding parents' perceptions, expectations, and aspirations for their children is limited to descriptions of parental involvement in school activities and the benefits which result from that involvement. For example the literature describes parental involvement in activities such as school volunteers and teacher aides but does not discuss parental teaching of children. To explain the hopes and attitudes held by parents toward their children, a brief review of the attachment relationship which exists between parent and child will be presented along with a discussion of its implications.

Parents perceive children to be an extension of themselves. These feelings begin to develop during the prenatal period and reach a climax during the first two years of life when parents and child form a special attachment relationship (Erickson, 1963; Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1965; Harlow, 1958). Parents perceive their child as
capable of achieving academically. One reason parents perceive their children this way is that parents have been teaching their offspring long before they enter formal school. For example, parents involve themselves in the processes of language development, acquisition of self care and social skills, and the development of many other skills and concepts which make these parents develop confidence in the ability of their children to do well.

Parents also expect the school to expand upon the learning which they have already started—to build upon the foundation (Their expectations are elaborated upon in Chapter IV.). They expect the school to help their children to acquire the skills necessary for success and independence as adults. Because parents perceive their children as extensions of themselves, very strong personal involvement is created, and they hold the highest aspirations for their children. For example, the dream of parents in this study is that their children will aspire to greater success than the parents have achieved.

Home School Relationship

Home and school can be viewed as overlapping worlds with boundaries which are not clear cut, but which result in much anxiety between parents and teachers (Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, 1981, p. 98). Berger (1981) shed some light on this problem when she describes an encounter experienced by some parents visiting schools. She explains
that when parents enter some schools the atmosphere invites them to come, enjoy with us this exciting business of education, while others say, 'You are infringing on my territory.' Schools are the professional's business. Send us your children. We will return them to you each evening, but, in the meantime, let's each keep to our own responsibilities (Berger, 1981, p. 92).

In the first instance, there is joy in the educational spirit; in the second, fear or avoidance overrides all sense of joy.

Berger (1981) also describes a continuum of parent responses to school: parents who avoid schools like the plague, parents who need encouragement to come to school, parents who readily respond when invited to school, parents who are comfortable and enjoy involvement in school, and parents who enjoy power and are overly active.

The ideal relationship between home and school is one of congeniality and cooperation for the good of the student. Berger (1981) describes the ideal home-school relationship as having "two major components: personnel who demonstrate acceptance of parents and school activities that allow the parents to become involved with school" (p. 96). She explains that because of the varied backgrounds, it is difficult to insure the first component. For various reasons, real or imaginary, many faculty members feel threatened by parents.

An effective school is one which promotes a positive home school relationship. What is needed, in contrast to the negative experiences and attitudes that parents and teachers experience in their interaction, are accepting attitudes from both parents and teachers.
without fear of each other's territory. Needed are parents and teachers who recognize that their worlds are overlapping and who are able to work cooperatively together. "When parents and school form a partnership, the fear disappears. When both schools and parents focus on the child's success with no thought of their own self-importance, they will make progress toward an educational partnership" (Berger, 1981, p. 97).

This study focuses on parents educating their own children in the context of their homes. The children are also educated within the school. Both home and school share the ecological environment. The main themes investigated are a description of the interactions which occur among family members, the attitudes (expectations, perceptions, aspirations) parents hold for their children, and the relationship parents have with the school. The literature suggests 1) that family members greatly influence each other, 2) that parents have hopes beyond their own present achievement level for their children, and 3) that when home and school form a partnership to educate the children, the home-school relationship works best and children achieve more.

Parents in this study are actively involved with their children's school. They attend open house, serve as room parents, serve on school and district wide committees and perform other similar tasks. In addition, they monitor on a daily basis their children's homework. When these parents perceive a problem, they make immediate contact with the school and their children's teacher.
CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The point of using qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states (Patton, 1980, p. 41).

Introduction

The design of this research is qualitative and utilizes a case study approach. A discussion of the characteristics of a qualitative approach and a description of the design is a focus of this chapter. There are four elements which characterize qualitative research: the concept of holism, the concept of culture, the use of the comparative method, and the use of fieldwork (E. Adamson Holbel and Thomas Weaver, 1979, pp. 6-9).

The concept of holism refers to the study of humanity as a whole. More specifically, it emphasizes the relationship of the parts to the whole and the whole to its parts. No part can be completely and correctly understood without knowledge of the whole, nor can the whole be understood without knowledge of its parts. Each must understand the other to accurately perceive it. For example, in this study, to understand the phenomenon of parents educating their children, it was necessary to examine the relationship of the individual family member to the whole family and the family to the
individual member. Their interaction, expectations and aspirations are intertwined and require that study be conducted about both.

The concept of culture refers to "the integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society" (Holbel and Weaver, 1979, p. 8). They explain that societies have distinct cultures. The resulting effect of separate cultures is that members from different societies exhibit behavior patterns which differ in specific ways from those of persons from other cultures. In ways important to this study, analysis of the data indicates that the families under investigation are culturally similar. For example, they hold similar values about such things as discipline of children, respect of others and belief about patriotism. The implementation of those values may appear to differ, but their basic principle was similar. For example, the bed time hour is specific to each family, but each family requires a certain amount of sleep as determined by the adults for the children. In all families bed time rules are strictly adhered to. Consistently, these families hold similar values about completion of homework. The children are required to complete homework before play. The culture of the families in this study is similar.

The comparative method is fundamental to the study of the human experience. It refers to study of the full range of the human experience. Its goal is to ascertain similarities and differences among
cultures. It allows the researcher to understand why humans behave as they do and how they became that way. To fully understand the phenomenon of parent educators, data are obtained from many sources: parents, children, teachers, daily logs, tape recordings, informal interviews, and observations. The data from all sources are compared to ascertain the most accurate facts, meaning of those facts, and understanding of the culture of the families in this study.

Field work refers to the use of "community as equivalent to the experimental laboratory" (Holbel and Weaver, 1979, p. 8). In the physical sciences, which utilizes an experimental design, results from a group given a treatment are compared to the results from a group not given a treatment. The social sciences duplicate this process by finding a community equivalent to the one under study in which to do field work. The study is conducted within the natural environment and the field notes from various sources constitute the data base. The community under study is compared with a similar community. In this study, more than one family was studied within the context of the natural environment. Field notes provided the data base and the data were analyzed to determine the similarities and differences among the families in this study. The families are more similar than different.

By using holism, a comparative method, field work and an understanding of culture, the social scientist insures validity,
representativeness, replicability and generality. In this study, validity is assured by using data from informants to verify data from other informants. Data collected from various other sources are also used to corroborate the data. In this study, representativeness is assured by obtaining subjects in an objective manner. The process for securing subjects is uncomplicated and easily replicated. A section on method delineates the process of obtaining subjects. Although, the purpose of this study is to describe the phenomenon of parents educating their children in the context of the home, the results can serve to guide the study of other families.

Data Collection

Data were collected from daily logs, interviews, family histories, communications between home and school, observations, tape recordings, and researcher's field notes. Parents kept a daily log. Prior to the data collection period, an explanation about the study was given to them. The process for recording in the daily log was also explained. To capture events when the researcher was not present, each family had access to a tape recorder. Regularly scheduled observations were made in the home. During these sessions, I assumed the role of observer as participant. In addition, family histories were collected. The histories provided information about families such as educational achievements, aspirations, expectations, and income levels. Relevant documents such as written communications
from home to school and school to home were also collected. Family members were also interviewed to provide an opportunity for the family to expand upon and clarify perceptions associated with the data. The feedback from them was used to strengthen the validity of the study by providing an opportunity for the insider's views to be presented. The data were analyzed on a systematic basis. After each visit, patterns and themes were determined.

Teachers who teach children from the subjects also kept a log. In addition to sources of data generated by the parents and teachers, I made field notes of the observations. I also kept a log of personal perceptions and feelings that are related to the research. The personal perceptions helped me to later distinguish between objective and subjective analysis.

Subjects

The subjects are parents whose children are enrolled in an elementary school in Franklin County, Ohio. Criteria for the selection of parents were 1) each set of parents has pre-school and school aged children, 2) both mother and father must reside in the same household, 3) the parents must belong to the school community which participated in an earlier study involving parents, students, teachers, and administrators regarding homework, 4) parents and teachers must agree to provide input into the data bank, and 5) parents must participate in the data gathering and analysis process: provide feedback.
With the assistance of the principal, a list of parents who met the criteria was developed. From that list, I contacted the parents by telephone, explained the study, and obtained their cooperation. Later a home visit was made to answer questions and obtain written permission. The first three families contacted agreed to participate. Just prior to the data-collecting period, one set of parents developed a personal problem and withdrew from the study. A fourth set of parents was contacted, and they agreed to participate. No other families withdrew from the study.

Each parent met the above primary criteria. In addition, the parents exhibit other characteristics. For example, one mother works within the home. She performs the traditional duties of a stay-home mother and wife and for a small fee, takes care of several neighborhood pre-school children. Another mother combines work within the home and outside the home. When this study began, she worked twenty hours a week as a receptionist for a community service agency for retarded citizens. During the last two weeks of the study, her husband obtained a higher paying job, and she gave up her job. The third mother devotes most of her time to a full-time career in the computer laboratory of the newly formed branch of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. All of the mothers are high school graduates.

The life's work of the fathers is equally diverse. The father of family number one works with computers in the transportation
department of the city government. He is a high school graduate. The second father is a senior student at a local technical college and a part time laborer with a local company. The third father has a degree in business from a local university and formerly served as a junior executive with the railroad. Due to the cutbacks, he has been laid off and is seeking other employment. Before the study was concluded, fathers number two and three obtained new jobs.

The income of the families range from fifteen to near forty thousand dollars. Two families own their own home. One family rents a three level townhouse. Each family has two cars. One family is of African descent and the other two are of European descent. All families are Protestants. Family members describe themselves as middle class.

The preschool children in the study are as follows: two boys and one girl. They range in age from 18 months to 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) years. Three girls and one boy constitute the school-aged children. They range in age from seven to twelve years and grade one through seven.

Purposeful sampling is the method employed to select the families. Michael Patton (1980) describes conditions appropriate for purposeful sampling as:

... when one wants to learn something and come to understand something about certain select cases without needing to generalize to all such cases.
... to help manage the trade-off between the desire for in-depth, detailed information about cases and the desire to be able to generalize about the program.

... to look for critical cases ... that can make a point quite dramatically or are, for some reason, particularly important in the scheme of things (pp. 100-102).

In this study, the purposeful selection of subjects is based upon the acceptance of the parents and teachers for extended observations in both the home and classroom and their willingness to actively participate in the data gathering and analysis process. In addition, each family should have pre-school and school aged children, as well as both mother and father in the same household. Furthermore, these families belong to a school community which participated in an earlier study involving parents, students, teachers, and administrators regarding homework (McCutcheon and Ashburn, 1982). The earlier study was limited to just the examination of their perceptions and expectations about homework. The scope of this research goes beyond the investigation of homework to examine in-depth the ways in which family members--with specific focus on parents--view their role as teachers of their own children.

Setting

The setting for the study is the home and school. These locations represent the two major contexts of the family educational experience which are termed the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
The mesosystem includes interactions between two or more settings within which the developing person is an active participant. Because all subjects, parents, teachers and children have associations with and interact within the home and school, study in these natural environments provides the ecological context for this research. Furthermore, study which occurs in the natural environment maximizes the opportunity for the subjects to respond in usual ways.

**Methodology**

Methodology for this study does not follow traditional procedures of using standardized tests, questionnaires, or other structured forms for eliciting responses from subjects and which are associated with quantitative measurement goals. Rather, the instruments in this study are less tangible because they are the fundamental functions and skills of participant observation (Spradley, 1980). Denzin (1978) describes the process as one in which participant observation as a field strategy "simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection (p. 183). Patton (1980) describes the process as one in which

... the participant observer is fully engaged in experiencing the setting under study while at the same time trying to understand that setting through personal experience, observations, and talking with other participants about what is happening.

In participant observation the evaluator shares as intimately as possible in the life
and activities of the program under study. The purpose of such participation is to develop an insider's view of what is happening. This means that the evaluator not only sees what is happening but feels what it is like to be a part of the program (p. 127).

Because more than one observational strategy is possible, an important distinction between them is made. Observational strategies concern the extent to which the observer is participant or observer in the activities of the program being studied. Junker (1960) developed a typology of participant observation which described four points along a continuum: complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer. In the present study the researcher's role was primarily that of observer as participant and to a lesser extent that of participant as observer. For example, the observer as participant is characterized by the researcher making known at the outset the nature of the activities to be used in the study, and the activities are approved and supported by the subjects. Although observation is my dominant role, I retained freedom to observe both inside and outside the subject groups. For example, I observed in the children's classroom. It was hoped that, as a result of the two types of observations, I would gain access to a broader range of information. The confidence level between the subjects and me was such that I almost became an insider.
Observations were limited to a minimum of one hour per session. The length of time beyond the initial hour was flexible and regularly negotiated between the subjects and observer. The length of each session was more of a function of the nature of the activities of the family and the school. The longest session was four hours.

Data Analysis

The data collected from interviews, daily logs, observations, and documents are arranged to reflect patterns and categories which emerged from analysis. These patterns and categories reflect the participants system of ordering their world: an inside-out view. Analysis and reanalysis are continuous and occur after each data collecting session. The process consists of forming and reforming categories congruent with the participants perspective. Labeling of categories and meanings generated emerge from the nature of the data itself. The subjects actively participate in the analysis. This form of analysis follows an inductive process. I look for natural variations in the data.

Developing categories are not an easy task. Guba (1978) suggests the following process. He asserts that the researcher must deal with the problems of convergence and divergence. Convergence deals with determining what things fit together. He suggests several steps for converting field notes and observations about issues for purposes of analysis. First the researcher looks for
recurring regularities or patterns in the data. The patterns can then be sorted into categories. Next Guba suggests that the categories should be judged for the extent to which they hold together in meaningful ways or for the extent to which differences among categories are bold and clear: internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. Large amounts of heterogeneity signal a basic fault in the category system. The researcher works back and forth between the data and the classification system to verify the meaningfulness and the accuracy of the categories and the placement of data in categories. Priority was established to determine which categories are more important or which classification system was more appropriate. Guba describes the process as one in which "Prioritizing was done according to the salience, credibility, uniqueness, heuristic value, feasibility, special interests, and materiality of the classification schemes" (Guba, 1978, p. 56). Finally, Guba suggests that the categories be tested for completeness:

1. The set should have internal and external plausibility, a property that might be termed "integrability." Viewed internally, the individual categories should appear to be consistent; viewed externally, the set of categories should seem to comprise a whole picture...

2. The set should be reasonably inclusive of the data and information that do exist. This feature is partly tested by the absence of unassignable cases, but can be further tested by reference to the problem which the inquirer is investigating or by the mandate given the evaluator by his
client/sponsor. If the set of categories did not appear to be sufficient, on logical grounds, to cover the facets of the problem or mandate, the set is probably incomplete.

3. The set should be reproducible by another competent judge... The second observer ought to be able to verify that a) the categories make sense in view of the data which are available, and b) the data have been appropriately arranged in the category system...

The category system auditor may be called upon to attest that the category system "fits" the data and that the data have been properly "fitted into" it.

4. The set should be credible to the persons who provided the information which the set is presumed to assimilate.... Who is in a better position to judge whether the categories appropriately reflect their issues and concerns than the people themselves (Guba, 1978, pp. 56-57).

Divergence is the process by which Guba techniquely explains how the researcher can "flesh out" the categories. He suggests that "this is done by processes of extension (building on items of information already known), bridging (making connections among different items), and surfacing (proposing new information that ought to fit and then verifying its existence" (Guba, p. 57). The process ends when sources of information have been exhausted, when sets of categories have been saturated so that new sources lead to redundancy, when clear regularities begin to emerge that feel integrated, and when the analysis begins to "overextend" beyond the boundaries of the issues and concerns guiding the analysis.
The process of forming and reforming categories is a creative and intuitive one "that requires making carefully considered judgments about what is really significant and meaningful in the data" (Patton, 1980, p. 313). That is the challenge faced by the research design which uses a qualitative approach. In this study, the process is enhanced by continually obtaining feedback from the subjects on which the research was done.

Chapter III provides a discussion of the characteristics of a qualitative approach. In addition, explanation of how the specific characteristic is related to this study is presented. An explanation of the design is also provided.
CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF PARENTS EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN

"I want the best. The best education he can get. I want a foundation that they can build from" (Richard).

This research is an account of parents teaching their children within the context of the home. It is a study of the "meaning" parents ascribe to the phenomenon of teaching.

This research had its beginnings with an earlier study conducted by this investigator about homework in which parents, teachers, students and administrators expressed strong feelings about it. The feelings parents expressed in their responses to the questionnaire about homework motivated me to want to understand more about parental involvement in the educational process. Other studies on this subject have focused on the perspective of the educator. Unlike these studies, this research sought to ascertain directly from parents the "meaning" they assigned to this phenomenon.

The primary information source is parents of three families who described themselves as Protestant and middle class. They attend church regularly. In addition, all parents are high school graduates. One parent has a college degree, another studied nursing in college for two years, and a third is completing an associate degree at a
local technical school in computer science. Two fathers and one mother work directly with computers.

The third father, a former junior executive for the railroad, was laid off but found new employment with an insurance company. At the start of this research, one mother performed the traditional duties of a stay-home wife, a second mother worked part-time as a secretary for a local community service organization, and the third mother pursued a full-time career away from the home in the computer department of the newly formed division of the national communication company, American Telephone and Telegraph. The husband of the mother who worked part-time secured a higher paying job, and she immediately terminated her employment to be home with their son, reassuming the traditional female role.

The parents range in age from twenty-seven to thirty-five. Two families are caucasian and one non-caucasian. They range in family income from fifteen to nearly forty thousand dollars. Two of the families own their own home. The third family rents a townhouse. All families maintain two cars.

The children of all three families attend school in the same district. The oldest daughter of one family attends the middle school. One child from each family attends the elementary school, and each family has a pre-school age child. In this study, there are seven children; two boys and one girl are of pre-school age.
The most difficult part of this research was getting the parents to write daily in their logs. More data were generated from them through informal conversation and informal interviews. Under less formal conditions, the informants talked freely and shared their feelings. When the tape was on, informants did not change the emphasis of their conversation. They talked freely on either occasion. Data generated from field notes, children, and teachers served to validate and to clarify data obtained from parents.

This study is a compilation of data from all parents, children, teachers, researchers field notes and school documents. To insure confidentiality, names have been changed. As closely as possible, the actual language of informants has been used. Any changes made in their comments were made only to present the informants in the best light without distorting their meaning. Although it is impossible to eliminate all biases of the researcher, to do so has been the goal. Notes which described my personal feelings about the study were kept and used to help me to maintain an objective perspective. When information is purely the researcher's opinion, the statement will indicate that such is the case.

The board categories used to investigate parents educating their children are 1) family interaction patterns, 2) perceptions, expectations, and aspirations, and 3) home-school relationships. After analysis of the data within these main categories, sub-categories
which are more descriptive of the data emerged and are presented to this chapter.

Family Interaction Patterns

In keeping with the inductive process associated with qualitative research, the following categories were generated from the data and provided the framework for the discussion of family interaction patterns:

1) major themes in parents' characterization of their families
2) rules which govern the relationships
3) the discipline of the children
4) the effect family members have upon each other

1. MAJOR THEMES IN PARENTS' CHARACTERIZATION OF THEIR FAMILIES:

Parents' descriptions of their family fall into three categories of meaning: feelings, doing things to or for others, and evaluative viewpoints (Table 1).
TABLE 1
MAJOR THEMES IN PARENTS' CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THEIR FAMILIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>Doing Things Together or For Each Other</th>
<th>Evaluative Viewpoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>Sharing of Activities</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Prayer for Each Other's Success</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Follows Daily Routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict Sense of Right and Wrong</td>
<td>Supporting Each Others' Activities</td>
<td>Possesses an Extended Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting each other</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Christian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td>Enjoying Leisure Time Together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching/holding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 illustrates the terminology used by parents to describe the various areas of family types. A narrative form is also descriptive. For example, one parent describes his family as follows: "We are a close family, based upon lots of love spread daily between us.... We believe in helping and caring for other who we can help (Richard). Because he and his wife want their children to learn to share and care for others, this parent also described how his family gave to needy causes.

Another parent describes their family as average and conservative. She stated that

we are more within ourselves.... Our circle of friends are very close.... We do not have a big association of friends.... There is a lot we do not do, and we do not want to put ourselves in the position of being caught out in a compromising situation.... We have an Atari, and we allow the family to challenge each other.... We watch TV together and read together.... We like having other people (company) in here. We have picnics, go out to dinner and watch PG movies together (Lorrie).

Another parent described his family type. The routine which he discussed is similar to that given by the other parents. He explained that his family is

... more structured than most families. For instance, what we do week to week is not identical but you can get a general pattern to it.... Sunday, the first day of the week, we attend church morning and evening.... In the afternoon after dinner, it is mostly chores and nap taking. Sometimes, on Sunday,
we will visit friends or relatives ... or Sunday drives ... Monday rolls around, and during the school year the kids are at school and I am at work. They come home. They are expected to do their homework first.... Tuesday is very little that goes on.... It's mostly everything at home.... Wednesday night we have mid-week service which is club.... Thursday is about the same.... Now Friday is a more liberal evening.... Friday is the night they are allowed to stay up late, which is the way it was when I was a kid. If there is something on TV, we watch it. We get films occasionally and have movies.... Friday is really our recreational evening.... Saturday is usually a work day for us.... The kids have to get their rooms clean in preparation of next week. They have to help us with other work that we are doing outside of their own areas (The David Father).

All of these families extend their membership beyond the nuclear household to include grandparents, sisters, and brothers of the parents, and in some cases, to include elder neighbors termed "grandpa and grandma" or "aunt and uncle." The members of the extended family have authority over the children and contribute to their education in ways that will be explained later. Parents expressed confidence in the contribution these people make to the family as a whole and specifically the children's lives. These people hold the same values, attitudes, and aspirations as do the parents of the children.

Many examples from the parents could be used to illustrate their perception of its type, but a few examples are sufficient to illustrate the understanding and meaning the families hold about themselves.
Observations by the researcher and input from children and teachers demonstrated no serious incongruencies with the parental analysis.

2. THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND RULES: Each family on some occasions reports that both mother and father share equal decision making power, while on other occasions, they describe the father as head of the house. They seem unaware of the contradiction in the description. For example one family reported:

Neil and I have, so far as how we see each other, we have equal say in things. Neither of us would ever buy anything major without discussing it with the other person. We do not separate our money, like this is his money and this is my money. Nothing is separate. It is all joint. Everything is joint and agreeably so (Valerie).

In this same family, the wife works part-time and continues to iron the husband's clothes. On other occasions, they have been observed sharing chores and child care.

The wife of another family reports that

David (the father) is the boss. When they (the children) come to me with something, I send them away. I say, don't come to me with it; you can work it out with dad. If he has said something, then you know we want to try and go with this (Lorrie).

A father describes his family in which the father is the head of the household. He stated that both mother and father are on the plateau (Richard). In this same household, the wife reports that she is the stabilizing force. She often states that society perceives
the male as the strongest but that she is the one who finds solutions to crucial problems within the family. The father in this home may implement the plan, but she is the crisis planner.

What I mean by that is I'm the head - No. (Comment to me in a teasing manner) ... I am the stable point.... Both of us share a lot of the responsibility with the kids, but I think I am the main stand.... Isn't that horrible? ... I really do think I'm the base of this whole place. If something goes wrong in this household. I have to sit down and say, 'this is what we should do?' I'm the game ... I am the plan (Leslie).

All these examples illustrate that the role of the father and husband is most often dominate in these families. The father's dominate position seems accepted, even in the case where the female stated that she is the better planner.

As far as the children are concerned, observations and parental reports indicate that both parents try to maintain a united front. These parents seem to understand the potential problem of permitting children to play one parent against the other. For example, children are not permitted to tattle to one parent about the discipline issued by the other. Even in cases where parents disagree on the degree or the type of punishment, they have been observed supporting each other. Without exception, the parents in each family let the children know that the adults are "boss." One mother stated it this way, "We both tell the kids that we are the boss." Other adults such as those in
the extended family who are approved by mother and father also acquire "boss" status.

3. DISCIPLINE RULES ARE OFTEN CLEARLY DEFINED AND ENFORCED:

Some rules generated from the data are presented in Table 2. The rules mainly follow the Puritan ethics of clean mind, body, and hard work, and are reflected in many direct or indirect teaching efforts.

For example, one parent described eating out thus:

> We will take them out to dinner on the basis of learning how to use silver - no chewing gum at the table or loudness. I mean there is just the correct way to act. We just teach the whole of class--at smaller stages. The older you get, the more class you must have (Richard).

Another parent described the use of the TV and leaving the house without permission. Courtesy is expected from the children:

> They have to answer to us. They have to stay in. They have to ask permission.... We do not normally let them come in and snap on TV on just anytime they please. There are sometimes the TV can be turned on or only with permission - changing the channels. We are going back and forth about this all the time. Nobody jumps up and runs over and flips the channels over. Its considered a courtesy to those around them and besides the wear and tear on the set (David).

Another parent emphasized the authority of the parent (adult) as follows:

> I absolutely will not stand for any back talk at all. No saying no. If you tell them to do something they cannot exercise disobedience.... A mother tries to tell the little kid to behave and he smacks her or something like that. They would know pretty quick what I thought about that! (David).
TABLE 2
RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Rules</th>
<th>School Rules</th>
<th>Self Care Rules</th>
<th>Community Property Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct use of silver</td>
<td>Special study time</td>
<td>Deffinite bed time</td>
<td>Exercise proper use of property (furniture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask permission to leave the table</td>
<td>Homework completed before play</td>
<td>Personal care of clothes - change right after school hang up clothes</td>
<td>Respect another's property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try all foods</td>
<td>Read home approved literature</td>
<td>Keep a clean body</td>
<td>Care for own property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start with small servings - more can be obtained later</td>
<td>Obey the teacher and principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Courtsey in use of family TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say grace at meal time</td>
<td>Complete school work</td>
<td></td>
<td>- permission to turn it on and off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No playing (fooling around at the table)</td>
<td>Give your best effort</td>
<td></td>
<td>- watch certain pro-grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask permission to leave the house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No running through the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No back talk to parents/ adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No slamming doors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not say &quot;No&quot; to parental instructions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### TABLE 2 (cont'd.)

**RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Rules</th>
<th>School Rules</th>
<th>Self Care Rules</th>
<th>Community Property Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolutely no hitting of parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vulgarity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of own room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- make bed daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- indepth cleaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on weekend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Saturday)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain parental approval of friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Still, another parent expressed a more flexible level of tolerance for children's disapproval, while maintaining the authority of the adult when she stated:

> If they disagree with a decision, they are allowed to discuss it with me, but they are never allowed to yell at me or argue. I want to be their friend, and I want them to love me. But I am their mother, and they owe me their respect. When I see that they are really angry and they really want to burst, I will even say, "I know you are unhappy with me. I know you think that I don't love you. You think that I hate you. I am really sorry that the decision that has been made hurts your feeling, but that is how it goes. When you grow older, you go to work, and you have a bad day, you throw a fit in the face of the boss and you will not have a job" (Lorrie).

Although the comments of some parents are used here to illustrate the authority position of the adult, examples from other parents would have been equally as graphic.

Parents in this study understand the rules to be clear and specific. Implementation of those rules is expressed as shared responsibility between parents. Procedures for disciplining or enforcing those rules may be seen on Table 3.
TABLE 3
TYPES OF DISCIPLINE METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduced Physical Contact</th>
<th>Physical Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal Message</td>
<td>Corporal Punishment Message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye-Contact-No</td>
<td>Paddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal-No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Out (Sent to another room or other space)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of Privileges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eye-Contact-No messages were frequently observed when the researcher and parent engaged in conversation. The children knew from non-verbal cues when they could or could not enter the conversation.

Verbal-No messages were also readily observed by the researcher. Parents in these families demonstrated a specific "No." For example, seldom did parents repeat the "no" to obtain the desired results. Children responded to the inflections and force of the parent's voice. One parent described the verbal "no" this way: "I guess I started off a long time ago by just talking that out with him and telling him exactly what he had to do" (Robert).
The Time-out message is also used. On one occasion, a mother described how she uses the child's room as the method of discipline for a child who continues to whine:

"Mark, I cannot understand that whining. Do not talk to me that way; use words." Then if he keeps it up I will not listen, and then one evening I sent him to his room. I said, "Well if you really want to whine, I don't like the sound of it; go to your room. When you get done, you can come back out." He came back whinning and I set back until he stopped (Valerie).

Removal of privileges is a more severe form of punishment. It is used by a parent to impress upon a child the need to stop talking in class and to complete his class work. After the teacher sent a note home in the form of a "Good Behavior Award," the privileges were restored.

Corporal punishment is the most severe form of punishment and is employed to emphasize important parental concerns. For example, a child complains to her mother that she is doing more work than her brother who is four years younger than she. The mother reports the incident this way:

I told her to do something and she was to do it. She said it wasn't fair that Mark didn't help. I told her that Mark helped me clean up the glass mess. She said if I would have given her the choice, she would have chosen to clean up the glass mess. I told Tammy that she did have an opportunity to do it in the first place, but that the point was for her to do what I say at all times and that I don't need to give her a choice of chores. I love her and would be
fair, and she must learn respect. She said (in not a very nice tone), "I don't think I'll ever learn respect." I gave her a swat and told her she would learn respect, to obey rules and be a good citizen if I had to warm her buns until it got to her brain" (Valerie).

One parent states that corporal punishment should end by age 13. But he recounts an incident in his family where his father paddled his brother at the age of 16. This father declares he would also use corporal punishment at that age, but desires not to.

To a greater or lesser degree all parents utilize the described range of methods to discipline the children. However, not all discipline is negative. Parents actively and consciously reward children for positive behavior. The range of positive discipline methods are expressed in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF REWARD METHODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hug/Kisses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents use of positive reinforcement was observed on an occasion when a mother in family number one initiated an award system to teach responsibility and respect to her daughters. I
have yet to observe a professionally trained teacher do a better job. The expected behaviors with the appropriate time lines are clearly stated. The consequences and rewards also are spelled out. The girls receive $1.00 at the beginning of the week. For "name calling," 10¢ is deducted; for "back talk," 15¢ is deducted; and for a "dirty room," 10¢ is deducted. Clearly, disrespect shown parents would cost the girls more. One reason this system is effective in this family is because the girls had not previously received an allowance. The money is to be used for important things that the girls want. The cost of the item or event will receive matching funds from the parents. Thus far, the one daughter has a total of $5.00 and the second daughter has $3.75.

This parent wrote in her log:

We wrote some chore ideas, courtsey rules, bedroom rules and fines. We've been on this now but about 2 weeks. We've heard less quarreling, and I've had less back talk. Carol has had to practically bite her lip, but I'm happy with this part. I want to teach them to do things without being told. I want them to feel responsible with me on how the house looks. I also added a new clause. We will be giving bonuses for behavior or chores done above what is expected. Jane gets a bonus this week. Carol is showing a good amount of interest in sewing. I got both of the girls an embroidery kit. They're impatient but are not doing too bad for their first effort. Carol especially, wants to start sewing, so David is going to get my machine fixed, so we can start. The girls are cooking now more than ever, too (Lorrie).
4. THE EFFECT OF FAMILY MEMBERS UPON EACH OTHER: Analysis of the data collected shows the impact one family member has on another. Their interactions on many occasions meet the criteria for education described by Cremin (1976). For example, many family members are often observed in a systematic and sustained fashion attempting to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes and values appropriate for home and school. An incidence from a daily log illustrates the effect parents feel they are having on their children's education. One mother writes in her log:

Mark knows that I frequently have breath mints or chewing gum and watches very closely so he won't miss an opportunity to get some. Mark has a sweet-tooth. This morning Mark asked for breath mints. I then asked him how many he wanted. He replied that he wanted two of them. I told him if he would count to five on his fingers, I would give him two breath mints. On the second attempt he was able to perform the assigned task without error. It was then that he was rewarded with two breath mints. The importance here is that first he continues to listen to and follow instructions, second that he understands the basics of math, third that he understands the importance of doing things completely and with a respectable amount of quality (Valerie).

Another example of how family members influence each other is illustrated below and is related to the preparation of the first child to attend school. Parents report that the second and third child is better prepared for school as a result of learning what the school expects of the first child. They use feedback from the
experiences of the older child to build the curriculum for the younger children.

Family education is demonstrated as another area in which members influence each other. On various occasions I observed older children instructing younger ones. One day an older sister said to a preschool brother, "You can't write your numbers that way when you go to school" (Mindy). The younger child inquired, "How do I do it then?" (Sam). The older sister showed him how, and he immediately changed the form of the numbers to conform to her expectations. His comment was, "There, my teacher will like that" (Sam).

Family members influence each other in many ways. One parent describes how the children influence her:

If the kids aren't here, I have a tendency to be lazy. I mean, if the kids aren't here, then I'll sleep later in the morning to before I get up to go to work. If they aren't here I might catch myself sitting there watching TV all night long, because you know I don't have any incentive. They are my motivation. They help me up. They keep me going (Leslie).

A graphic example of children's influence on parents and others is revealed in this narrative from a mother:

We'll start Mark, I guess cause he's the youngest, and he seems to have the strongest personality in this family. One way or the other Mark has a certain charm. I feel like he is able to charm his way into finding your softer side regarding it (interrupting adults). He does this with me. He does it with Neil. He does it with everybody. Tammy ends up giving into him. You know she very much gives into Mark, which doesn't help
Mark learn to control himself. Then he knows, especially with her, if he's upset, all he has to do is to be really demonstrative about it, and he'll get what he wants (Valerie).

Parents report the positive and negative effect of having older children in school on the education of younger, pre-school children.

One mother describes it this way:

It's made me more aware. I'm not sure that I'd said it has helped me cause it scared me. Tammy was far more advanced academically, well she was in every way. I mean she spoke very clearly and she even knew how to add numbers plus one at Mark's age. Now she's in school, and since I know what to expect out of her, out of school, which is more than what I anticipated that would be taught her in kindergarten and now first grade; it worries me about Mark, because he is not where, Tammy was, at the same age. I have really tried. I don't know if the difference is because I was home with her all the time.... So it's made me more aware, I know what he should know, but that scares me. I'll just have to work twice as hard (Valerie).

Observations, researcher's field notes, and teacher feedback confirm descriptions given by parents of these and many other effects family members exert upon each other. Most of all, these families demonstrate caring and concern for each other.

In this study, family interaction patterns are reflected through family types, rules which govern the relationships, discipline of children as a form of education, and effects members exert upon each other are among the areas investigated.
Perceptions, Expectations, and Aspirations

Analysis of the data reveals the aspirations and expectations of the parents. It is safe to say parents that expect for their children at least as much as they have for themselves and hope their children will attain even more. One parent expresses what he wants for his children as:

I want them to get all the academic things. The things they need to get around in the world...cultural things...social things.... They need to be aware of the technical areas - math and the other areas.... They need to know how to survive...how to be on their own...to be independent. I don't think it's good for someone to be carried through life.... I want them to be a good person (Neil).

Some of the expectations parents have for their children are also reflected by the rules and forms of discipline presented in an earlier section of this study. What parents expect of the school and their perceptions of what the school is doing for their child will be clearly presented in the section in this chapter on home and school relationship.

One parent describes the hopes expressed by all families this way:

I would like to have them prepared - you know, prepared at least that big step toward being an adult. I know that now in high school accounting is taught, home economics is taught, and home repair is taught. A lot of things that I know that I could not teach them. You know things that all schools are helping. Things that they
teach are practical - practical lessons for when they become an adult (David).

Another parent states that he had desires for his children beyond high school but those desires should not be superceded by human rights issue. He states:

His hopes and expectations for them are, when they come out of high school to have their mind in the frame of mind, to seek more education, to want to go to college. I want them to go to college. If I teach them in the household right, at the time they come out of high school, they will want more education. I want them to make more money, but seek more education and how to live and to treat people is more important (Richard).

The above quotations are representative of the feelings of the parents, their aspirations, and expectations for their children.

In support of what has been said above Robert A. LeVine (1977) contends that if one asks the question "What do parents want for their children," the answers from all human populations would include and be exhausted by the following three categories:

1. The physical survival and health of the child, including (implicitly) the normal development of his reproductive capacity during puberty.

2. The development of the child's behavioral capacities for economic self-maintenance in maturity values.

3. The development of the child's behavioral capacity for maximizing other cultural values e.g., morality, prestige, wealth, religious piety, intellectual achievement, personal satisfaction, self-realization as formulated
and symbolically elaborated in culturally distinctive beliefs, norms, and idiologies (Robert LeVine, 1977, p. 56).

**Home School Relationship**

Parents express definite ideas about what they expect of the school and the home. One parent describes it this way; her attitude is supported by data from all of the other parents.

> I think the school was always meant to reinforce what is done at home and then expanded on life, your math, your sciences, your history, your social and civil affairs. I think they (the school) are to expand (Lorrie).

To understand this phenomenon, a discussion of 1) the role of the home, 2) the role of the school, 3) what parents teach, 4) how parents teach, 5) the home as a learning environment and 6) home school cooperation will be presented.

**THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY**, as expressed by all families, is amply described in the narrative from two parents. One parent states that
The second parent is equally as descriptive when she states that:

I think a great deal of the responsibility or the majority of the responsibility lies on the home. If there are anything that they (the children) need help with or anything that they're not really getting at school or don't understand, I think it's the responsibility of the parents to step in. Because I really don't think that school is not there really to raise a child. You know school is there to push it (the child) along its way. But the home is the base. The home points the way. I think it is wrong when I give up my responsibility to the school (Valerie).

Presented in Table 5 is a graphic view of many more activities and ideas that parents in this study use to explain the role of both the home and school.
### TABLE 5
PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF HOME AND SCHOOL TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Role of the Home</th>
<th>The Role of the School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send the child to school in good condition</td>
<td>Reinforce what is taught at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed the child</td>
<td>Expand upon academic areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properly cloth the child</td>
<td>Teach what the home cannot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send a disciplined child to school</td>
<td>Provide sufficient, moral efficient and qualified staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach respect</td>
<td>Offer basic academic course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the teacher's authority (when she is right)</td>
<td>Offer courses in the arts (if money is available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide security and help</td>
<td>Provide stricter discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a place to study</td>
<td>Teach not indoctrinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with homework</td>
<td>Teach patriotism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide tools for school</td>
<td>Be considered of the developmental level of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach humility</td>
<td>Teach manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set standards</td>
<td>Teach good grooming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach values and attitudes</td>
<td>Enforce attendance rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become knowledgeable about school/education</td>
<td>Motivate learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand respect and equality from school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach academics to their children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL** is clearly perceived by the parents as a support system for the family. Parents generally feel that public education is absolutely necessary but that it needs significant improvement. For example, it needs qualified teachers who are moral and who understand children. They admit that more money must be secured to get capable staff but lament having to pay more taxes. In the school district where this study occurred, a levy was on the ballot. It failed. Parents express the hope that the quality of education will not decline as a result of failure of the levy.

3. **WHAT DO PARENTS ACTUALLY TEACH THEIR CHILDREN?** Parents in this study often refer to two categories of teaching: "home teaching" and "school teaching." Home teaching consists mainly of intangibles such as values attitudes and self care -- domestic skills. Parents feel that academic skills are also their responsibility, but because the school has trained personnel and better technology, it is more capable of teaching the academics. Parents explain that they devote a lot of time to academic studies when preparing their pre-school child for school. Once the child goes to school their role shifts to assisting and guiding the children through completion of their homework. When the child reaches the upper grades and takes subjects in which the parent can not help them, the parent accepts the responsibility of finding someone who can help the child. Parents never expressed the attitude that complete responsibility
for academic education belonged to the school. They do not abdicate their responsibility to the school. They accept the complete responsibility for instilling correct values such as respect for others, love of family and country, desire for hard work, and many others. What parents teach is presented in a more graphic form in Table 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intangibles: Attitudes and Values</th>
<th>Academics Plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love of family first</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to relate to others, things, events</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family traditions</td>
<td>Science--the world around them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation toward a career-goals for living</td>
<td>Reading--language arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence - value of completing a task well done</td>
<td>Telling time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of leisure time</td>
<td>Money management -- budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of family members</td>
<td>Community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline/Self control</td>
<td>Business techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self care skills</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role status - sexism, classism</td>
<td>Domestic chores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of property</td>
<td>Importance of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for acceptable behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of right and wrong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. HOW PARENTS TEACH: Parents utilize a variety of methods such as role modeling (by examples), giving or withholding of tangible and intangible rewards, and verbal and non-verbal communication to teach their children.

Direct responsibility for the education of the children in these families is more heavily carried by the mothers, but, clearly, fathers are involved. Changing economic patterns in two of the families provide more time for the fathers to be home with the children. In these situations, the fathers as well as the mothers provide direct teaching time. For example, one father described one of the sessions in which he tried to teach his son to count:

I've been trying to work very hard with him on counting. He is willing to count 1, 2, 3--7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. He can't seem to remember or doesn't remember 4, 5, 6 -- well, then I'll say we are big boys and big boys have to count. So then he'll count. Sometimes it will take him twice, but he can do it if he wants to apply himself. But by nature, he does not want to bother. He just wants to go to the end. So that's what happened today (Neil).

5. THE HOME AS A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: Each of the homes in this study exhibits many qualities of a positive learning environment. For example, the organization of the home provides space for study. In two of the homes, each child had his/her own room. In the third home, two sisters share a room which is scheduled to have a book case partition installed to separate their sections of the room. The partition will provide needed storage, a desk for study,
and privacy for each. In addition, their mother explained that the partition will reduce the quarreling about cleaning the room.

Secondly, the rooms of all the children, as well as other areas of the homes, contain various materials such as books and educational games and toys. Every child can identify books that belong specifically to him or her.

Thirdly, time for study is specifically scheduled in each home. After school, the child's basic routine generally follows this pattern: arrive home from school, change clothes, get a quick snack, clean their room (especially make the bed), complete homework and then play. Homework is always completed before play. In some cases, the homework before play rule seems to be flexible for older students who are earning B's and A's in school.

In addition, each family provides many opportunities to extend and to expand the children's knowledge and skills through involvement in field trips. For example, children are taken to the zoo, museum, ice capades, amusement parks, career sights such as radio stations, newspaper, and many other such experiences.

The educational level of these parents enables them to adequately provide those basic skills, knowledge, and attitude which prepare the pre-school children to make the transition from home to school. The parents readily admit that as the children progress through the grades, they feel less prepared to teach them. Beyond pre-school,
parents primarily see their role as monitoring homework, providing study space, assuring adequate health for study, providing materials and supplies, and supporting the efforts of the school.

Finally, each home promotes a positive attitude for learning and education. One parent expresses the sentiment of the others when he declares the children in his family will graduate from high school. This father admits that his parents were not high school graduates, but they expected him to graduate from high school. The family does not support exceptions to this rule. Now this father instills within his children the belief that they too must graduate from high school. He wants his children to seek higher education, but he will not force them to do so. This father's attitude toward learning and education is shared by all the parents. When the children are asked about their career aspirations, they confirm these parental goals. All children expect to graduate from high school. A few express a desire for schooling beyond high school.

6. HOME-SCHOOL COOPERATION is evident throughout the three families. One family describes an elaborate reward system designed by a teacher to help students to develop self discipline and to provide feedback to parents. For example, the teacher devises a checklist of accepted classroom behaviors. At the end of the day, children who reach criteria receive a happy face to take home. At the open-house, the parents are introduced to the reward system. They are told to ask each day for the happy face. When a child does not bring
home a happy face, it is a signal to the parent to call the teacher. This family religiously asks to see the happy face and will call the teacher immediately to see what is wrong if the child does not have it. Fortunately, their daughter almost always earns a happy face.

In another family, the parents describe the routine the teacher taught them to help their child with his spelling words. Each night this family helps their son with his spelling and other homework. After the work is completed, they sign the note for the child which is a signal that they have seen the work.

The other families have similar contact with the school. This family is especially pleased with the elementary school but is very disappointed with cooperation and communication with the middle school. This mother feels that the children lack discipline and that the teachers are not understanding of the needs of children of this age which are brought on by normal adolescent changes. She feels that middle-school age children are a contradiction of adulthood and childhood. For example, "one minute they are helpful and cooperative and the next they are brats." She feels that teachers and counselors in the middle school are unempathetic to this stage and demonstrate little consideration for the confusion the students are experiencing. Her daughter, for example, is having some difficulty adjusting to peer pressure at this level. One father explains home school cooperation this way:
We've never experienced a conflict between us and the school, but I know if there ever was, it would not be handled over the phone or through no notes. I would go directly, personally go to the source, face to face. We would sit down and analyze and discuss any ways to come to an agreement to the point where we would know exactly where we are standing. Everybody would understand each other. They understand what type of education I want my child to have (Richard).

Summary

In this chapter, a straightforward presentation of the parents' insights concerning their education of their children is presented under the following headings: 1) Family Interaction Patterns, 2) Perceptions, Expectations and Aspirations, 3) Home-School Relationship. These perceptions are elaborated upon throughout the report. One of the original purposes of this study was to present these insights from the parents' perspective. To remain true to that purpose, the actual language of the parents was frequently used throughout. The researcher's comments serve only to provide the logical ordering and presentation of the data.
CHAPTER V
MEANINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ideally, it will be possible to understand the special features of education within the family, while at the same time using this understanding to enlighten and extend our fundamental theory of educational encounters as they occur over the entire range of educative institutions and settings (Hope Jensen Leichter, 1977, p. 3).

Chapter IV consists primarily of descriptions from the parents' perspectives of parents educating their children. In recognition of the importance of the role of parents as educators this study employs a qualitative method to examine and describe that phenomenon: the interaction behavior of family members, the relationship of parents and the school, and parents' perceptions, expectations, and aspirations for their children. Information from observations, interviews, logs kept by the participants, researcher's field notes, and documented communication between the home and school provide the data base.

The meaning behind those descriptions and the conclusions which can be drawn from them, along with recommendations for further study, are discussed in this chapter.
Meaning: The Parents' Perspective

All parents in this study express confidence in their ability to teach correct values and attitudes to their children. They express confidence in their ability to communicate appropriate value. For example, a father describes how he taught caring, sharing and love to his young daughter who is less than two years old. The father explains:

I taught her love everyday. "No"—things not to do—things not to put in her mouth—hot from cold. "Yes"—clapping my hands to show approval and hugging her when she does something that's right. Today I taught her how and why to share. I gave her two cookies and told her to take one of the cookies to her brother. She can't walk the stairs but she crawled up the stairs and gave her brother a cookie (Richard).

This example illustrates the confidence parents often express in their ability to teach their children. Moreover, these parents talk with assurance about the values which they consider important. In Chapter IV, a list of things parents feel they can and should teach is presented. Among the list are such things as family traditions, persistence, the value of education, love of family first, religious attitudes, and self care skills. Values are an area which parents do not delegate to the school. The school may have taken over many of the duties of the home such as lunch preparation, health care, and technical training, but these parents maintain that they determine which values are important and should be taught. For
example, a parent describes how the fifth grade teacher of her older daughter taught reincarnation as "the" correct religion. This parent did not seem to mind the teacher informing the class that reincarnation is a form of worship for some people. She could appreciate a teacher during social studies lesson instructing children about the social, political, and economic life of a people, religion being one aspect of their living. But this mother feels the teacher oversteps her bounds when she presents reincarnation as "the" way to salvation. Her older daughter, who loves horses, informed her parents that she would return as a horse (Lorrie). At first, the parents thought she was playing. But when they realized she had fixated on preparation for returning as a horse, they did not hesitate to thwart the influence of the school. As a result of this incident, for the first time, this mother and father withheld their support to the school by teaching their daughter to not believe everything the teacher told her (David, Lorrie).

Parents also state that it is their right to teach values. They separate and describe what is considered to be the school curriculum from the home curriculum. Parents may not actually use the term curriculum, but they discussed what the school and what the home should teach. At the pre-school level, parents confidently teach academic subjects to their children. They feel that the
school has the trained staff and other resources to do a better job in the upper grades. Not once did parents express the belief that the school was more capable of teaching what they perceive to be correct values. In fact, they believe that the school is doing an inadequate job of instructing values, such as patriotism and respect for authority.

In addition to teaching values, parents strive to let their children know that a certain level of achievement is expected. The children are expected, without question or exception, to graduate from high school. These parents also communicate their desire for the children to obtain education beyond high school, although they allow more freedom of choice about the post high school area of education: technical or professional training. While different parents use different ways to explain it, on many occasions, they express the belief that education is the most important way to fulfill the American dream -- education is seen as the most significant way to "get ahead." More than once parents commented that "you can't get anywhere without a good education." A parent describes education as

the process of learning everything that it takes to not only be independent and self-sufficient and capable but also, just being a good person--you know being kind to others--considerations, manners--you know, in other words, I don't think it's just a matter that you hold down a job and can read well.... I
think it's farther that you learn to respect other people's property, other people's feelings and you be a good citizen (Neil).

Conversation with the children confirm that they all expect to graduate from high school and, perhaps to attend college. Teachers also confirm that children from these homes have more direction for their lives and are more highly motivated than most. These families are described by the teachers as stable, cooperative, involved, and concerned about their children's education. It appears that these parents have communicated their expectations and desires regarding education and careers.

The parents also express and demonstrate that they have greater control over their children's behavior than anyone else. Most of the children in this study are in elementary school, where peer pressure has only begun to exert itself. Even in these conditions, parents describe how the teaching they do in the early years provides the foundation for later actions. This belief does not differ from the work of Erik Erikson (1963), Roger Gould (1978), Mary Ainsworth (1979), and others regarding the nature of the enduring attached relationship of parents and child.

Moreover, this group of parents believe they know what is best for their children. To these parents, the school enhances and supports what is taught at home. But these parents reserve the right to determine the education which best suits the needs of their
children. They express this belief in many ways. For example, (and prior to entering his present school) one family enrolled their son in a private school. They became unhappy with that school and removed him from it. They are now happy with the new setting. Another set of parents are contemplating removal of their daughter from the middle school. These parents feel that the middle school has a less capable administration and, therefore, less control over the children. The mother reports that children attend under the influence of drugs and alcohol, curse in class, and display more than an accepted amount of affection in the halls. She even reports teacher indiscretion. For example, male teachers reportedly openly discuss the maturity level of female students. Whether these accusations are true or not is not the issue. What is the issue is that parents know the type of education they want for their children and are willing to take action to get it.

The parents in this study measure the success of the school by the achievement of the students. Schools may argue that they can only educate the child to the level of his/her ability and that may be a valid argument. But parents in this study feel they send normal children to school, provide their economic and spiritual support, and expect their children to graduate with functional skills--prepared for independence.
Interacting with these families confirms that:

An important education agency in every culture is the family. Here is to be found both formal and informal education. Parents teach their children by merely living with them in the family group. They are examples which children follow instinctively. They also teach directly by telling and showing, by praising when the children conform and punishing when they fail to measure up to the standards set by the family group (Frost, 1966, p. 12).

And the ultimate meaning that parents in this study hold about education is that they are actively engaged in the education of their children.

Conclusions: An Educator's Perspective

Sometimes research confirms that which is already known or suspected. Sometimes it uncovers new knowledge. Conclusions described in this study are more closely related to the first. Whichever is the case, the following conclusions are presented.

1. Parents have well defined and systematic structure for educating their children.

Although parents educating their children within the context of the home may appear unstructured and unsystematic, that is not the case. Discipline procedures are but one way parents enforce family standards in a systematic fashion. Teaching discipline to the children is organized, problem specific, and consistent. Children learn early the range of responses which parents will exhibit toward them
under certain conditions. In addition, parents also enforce other
rules such as those for completing homework and relating to others.

2. Parents are competent educators of their children.

Before entering school, each child in these families completed
four full years of education taught to them by their parents. From
these early experiences, children learn who they are, whom to trust,
what to value, what is supposed to be good for them, readiness for
academic learning, self-esteem, and goals for living.

3. Parents have specifically defined rights for the school
and home.

Sara Lightfoot (1981) contends that differences exist between
the family and school which grow out of their differences in structural
properties, cultural purposes, and power. She asserts that the
"differences are endemic to the very nature of families and schools
as institutions, and they are experienced by all children as they
traverse the path from home to school" (p. 98). For instance, she
describes how, within the family, interactions are functionally diffuse
in the sense that the participants are intimately and deeply
connected—unlike the school where the interactions are functionally
specific because the relationships are more circumscribed by the
technical competence and individuality of the participants.

4. Parents feel an obligation to support the school but will
withhold their support when a conflict of values arises.
Parents in this study generally report a positive relationship with the school (referring to their child's teacher). Only on rare occasions do they thwart in any way the teacher's authority. More often than not, parents were heard explaining to the children how the teacher was concerned about their well being and was looking after their best interests.

5. The governance structure of the home defined the role of the adults in educating the children.

Children in these families learn early that the parent is the authority. Moreover, they learn to respect the authority of the adults in the extended family and school. Hope Jensen Leichter (1977) contends "that parents do exert a powerful and, to some extent, a lasting influence upon their children (p. 9). Using their authority, parents in this study communicate to the children that parents are the most important educators. In addition, parents uphold the authority of the school and teacher. Parents were often observed encouraging children to share with them what they learned in school.

6. There is a family curriculum.

Parents refer to it as what is taught at home and what is taught at school. The parents make a clear distinction between the "academic part of the curriculum and the value parts" (Lorrie). One parent describes the curriculum as follows: "The school should
teach reading, math, science - you know - the three R's - the academics and the home should teach values and morals" (Neil). Another parent declared:

I think parents have to understand that they absolutely mold personality. Every child is born an individual, but whatever it is that the parents are doing at home, they have to know that when that child grows up, it's what the parents are doing at home - they (the children) are going to do things the way they were taught at home. That's going to be their basis, and then they (the children) grow from that. That's the foundation. (Lorrie)

Values and morals are generally described by the parents as a) respect for others, b) responsibility, c) self-discipline and d) a belief of God.

7. Parents hold specific goals for their children and in various ways impart them to their children.

In many ways and in many situations, parents in this study reinforce the children when they perform in ways which conform with the parents' goals for them. For example, Jane often did extra homework in math. She wanted a career in which she could use the calculator and computer. She wanted an office calculator now. The mother in this family used Jane's desires to reinforce her career goals. This mother decided she would help pay for half of the office-size calculator which Jane wanted. Part of Jane's incentive was then for her to earn the allowance associated with the behavior system.
8. To a large measure, children model their behavior after their parents.

Parents are the child's first models of human behavior. For example, I observed in small ways, and in more important ones, the parents' methods of modeling behavior. They are polite, concerned about others, persistent, hard workers and hold education in high esteem. The teachers reported that in many ways, their children exhibit those same behaviors.

9. Standards of the home are the yardsticks by which children gauge their behavior.

Because of the primary relationship which children have with their parents, they most often, and particularly in the early years, will do what parents want.

10. Children enter the school with a set of values learned early within the family.

One of the purposes of parents is to instill within the young the traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of the unit. Parents begin this process at or before birth. For example, in American culture, little girls begin to learn the role of girls from the time the pink clothing is selected for her. The selection may even have begun before birth. Names, which are also often selected before birth, are masculine or feminine. In this study, parents began early to instill values, as witnessed by the father's description of teaching sharing to his young daughter.
Recommendation: The Educators Guide for Change and Future Research

What do the conclusions mean for educators and how can the data be used to strengthen teach-r education programs?

Sara Lightfoot (1981) contends that

the sad irony is that education for the majority of children will only be successful when there is trust, accountability, and responsibility shared between families, communities, and schools. Mere rearrangements in curriculum, teaching style or staff patterns, however will not produce significant changes in family-school relationships and community-school accountability (Lightfoot, 1981, p. 100).

She proposes that in order to bring about a successful relationship between the home and the school an equitable sharing of power must exist. The balance of power between home and school, the sense of responsibility and accountability teachers feel for the educational success of children, and the parents sense of entitlement in demanding results from the school must be assured. Lightfoot argues the need for sharing power between home and school.

The recommendations in this study are proposed as ways to demonstrate 1) Parents can share power with teachers, 2) Parents are entitled to respect and 3) Parents are competent educators. To that end, twelve imperatives for working with parents are proposed. The imperatives are developed to address parents' perceptions about their role as educators.

TEN IMPERATIVES FOR TEACHERS COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

1. Take time to know each family. Find out their concerns, problems, likes and dislikes, desires, aspirations and expectations.
2. Make the school environment one which invites parents to enter and to participate. As educational leaders, the school personnel (teacher, principal) can initiate and maintain regular contact with parents. This contact can be beyond the normal reporting of student progress via report card. The parents in this study were happy with their children's education because the teachers had devised a system of feedback which kept parents informed and implied that their help was needed.

3. Be positive. Talk about the successes the school is having with the children and how the specific assistance from parents was helpful. Reassure parents that their assistance is valuable, useful, and needed.

4. Refrain from use of professional jargon. Use language that graphically describes the event or activity. There is no need to demonstrate the size of the educator's vocabulary.

5. Be an empathetic listener. Let parents know that you understand their feelings and needs and will do whatever is in your power to be helpful.

6. Let parents talk. There is no need to overpower parents with what the educator knows. Listen and learn from them.

7. Be truthful about the progress of the children. Share with parents your best judgments of their child's progress. Share your goals for the child and encourage parents to also share their goals. Plan together what each can do to accomplish them.

8. Provide adequate time and contact for the relationship between home and school to develop. It takes time to develop a trusting and cooperative relationship.

9. Be Observant. Notice the incongruency between what parents say and do. Non-verbal communication may be sending a message that differs from the verbal communication.

10. Be flexible. Remember that only the 10 commandments are written in stone. Flexibility is a sure way to demonstrate cooperation.
11. Always remember that the parents taught the children four to five years before you. They are competent educators whose influence with their children can make your job easier and more effective.

12. Remember that among friends there are only solutions. If children are to receive the best education, parents and educator must function together as friends not adversaries.

The framework for teachers to establish a workable relationship with parents might include the four propositions about human development proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1981):

**Proposition I.** In order to develop normally, a child needs the enduring, irrational of one or more adults in care and joint activity with the child.

**Proposition II.** The developmental impact of emotionally involved care and joint activity with the child is enhanced by the participation of adults of both sexes in this process.

**Proposition III.** The developmental potential of a setting depends upon the extent to which third parties present support (or undermine) the activities of those actually engaged in interaction with the child.

**Proposition IV.** The involvement of one or more adults in care and joint activity in support of child rearing requires public policies and practices that provide opportunity, status, resources, encouragement, example, stability, and above all, time for parenthood, primarily by parents but also by other adults in the child's environment, both within and outside the home.

The 12 imperatives are presented to smooth communication between the home and school and to provide a framework for teacher education programs to prepare new teachers to work with parents. Activities to
operationalize each imparative can be developed. In a student teacher program, these twelve imparatives can constitute the parent component of their training program. In conjunction with the student teacher's cooperating teacher, one or more families could be selected with which to interact and apply the imparative. The student teacher could keep a diary of the positive effects which resulted from their use. Ways to improve the less effective imparatives could be explored.

Future research grows out of the use of the imparative. One set of student teachers could be taught to use the imparatives with a set of families. A comparable set of students and parents would selected to determine which group developed a more cooperative relationship.

Other research can be structured around this same design. In each study, the methodology could remain the same while changing the subjects in each of the specific ways listed below. Over all, each new population would form a broad data base by which to analyze parents teaching their children.

The population selections might be the following:

1. Study parents from different social economic levels.
2. Study separately different racial groups.
3. Study only single parents.
4. Study only fathers as single parents.
5. Study only mothers as single parents.
6. Study inner city parents.
7. Study suburban parents.
8. Study rural parents.
9. Study working mothers.
11. Study families who had their children late in life (after 35) or early in life.
12. Study parents from the various groups above from different areas of the country.
13. Study families whose children are not considered successful by the school.
14. As much as possible, make each study a longitudinal study by contacting each family every five years.

Presented in this chapter are the meanings parents brought to the research, conclusions drawn by the researcher about those meanings, and guidelines and future research activities for the educator. The specific purpose of this research was to study the phenomenon of parents educating their children in the context of the home: What was the nature of the interaction of family members? What were the expectations, aspirations and perceptions of parents? What was the nature of the home-school relationship? Descriptions from the parents' point of view comprised this study.
A second and implied purpose of this study was to determine how data from the parents perspective contribute to teacher education programs. Twelve imperatives in addition to future research activities are presented to meet this goal.

Although the sample in this study is small, this study makes a contribution because it presents the parents' view and can serve as one of the doors in the walls of misunderstanding which exist between the home and the school. The evidence presented is suggestive of how parents influence teacher and learner behavior by 1) directly teaching their children, 2) influencing their child's attitudes and values, 3) determining what curriculum ideas will be reinforced within the home, 4) seeking to make their expectations and aspirations for their children a reality and 5) cooperating or not cooperating with the school.
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APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECT MATERIAL
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

FAMILY #

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to participating in (my family and me) research entitled:

PARENTS AS EDUCATORS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE FAMILIES.

Exie B. Ashburn or his/her authorized representative has (Principal Investigator)

explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my (my child's) participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am (my child is) free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me (my child). The information obtained from me (my child) will remain confidential unless I specifically agree otherwise by placing my initials here ________.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ____________________ Signed: ____________________

Signed: ____________________

(Principal Investigator or his/her Authorized Representative) Signed: ____________________

(Person Authorized to Consent for Participant - If Required)

Witness: ____________________

HS-027 (Rev. 12-81)--To be used only in connection with social and behavioral research.
Mr. and Mrs. John Doe  
000 Avenue  
A Town, Ohio 43228  

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Doe:

Thank you for so graciously agreeing to participate in the study of parents as educators. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

The fall quarter at The Ohio State University is coming to an end, and I am finally able to begin the study. Thank you for your patience.

Based upon our conversation in your home, I have drawn up the enclosed schedule. I would like to begin the observations in your home on Monday, December 13, 1982 from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. If this date and time or any other date and time on the schedule is not convenient for you, please call me at home (459-1038) or at work (422-2942 or 422-2943). If Monday is all right for the first visit but other dates and times are not all right, let us correct them when we meet together on Monday.

On our first visit, we shall again discuss what will happen for the other visits.

I look forward to working with you. If you have any questions about the visits or study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Exie B. Ashburn
KEEPING THE DAILY LOG

Thank you for participating in this study about parents as educators of their own children. Your assistance and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Because it is important to this study to learn directly from parents about their role in the education of their children, you are asked to keep a daily log of the experiences in which you participate that facilitate your child's education.

Please do the following things:

1. Each day record your ideas and beliefs about what you did that day to educate your child and help him/her to learn about the world in which he/she lives.

2. Explain why you did what you did.

3. Make other comments you feel are needed and important to help me to understand your role in the education of your child.

4. Mother and Father please keep a separate log. Your separate opinion is valuable.

5. Each day
   a. Place the date at the beginning of the new entry.
   b. Skip a line as you write--it will be easier to read.
   c. Do not write on the back of the page.
   d. Do not let spelling and grammar stop you from writing. Write the best you can. Only you and I will see it. What you think is more important than whether you use correct grammar or spelling.
6. Please start the log by writing a biography of your life. Introduce yourself to me. The biography can be as long or as short as you wish.

DOCUMENTS
Keep any communication which you receive from school such as homework, letters, or notes from the teacher, principal, PTA or other information related to your child's education. Telephone communication to and from school is important.

TAPE RECORDING
Tape recording is another way to share information. When you are unable to write and prefer to tape, please do so.
1. Tape record information about events, ideas or activities which are important to understanding education in your family, especially how you educate your child.
2. State the date and time of the event which you are recording.
3. Tell who is involved, what is happening, why it is happening.