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The extent and nature of Ohio school psychologists' work with parents of children in regular and special education programs

Telfer, Deborah Marie, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1987

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THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF OHIO
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' WORK WITH PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN
REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

DISSERTATION

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

By
Deborah Marie Telfer, B.S., M.A.

******
The Ohio State University
1987

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To My Fathers
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

### I. INTRODUCTION ............................................. 1

### II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ............................. 9

  - Family Systems Intervention/Family Therapy ............. 10
  - Consultation with Parents .................................... 21
  - Conferencing with Parents .................................... 29
  - Parent Education and Parent Training ....................... 33
  - Counseling/Therapy with Parents ............................. 44

### III. METHOD ................................................. 49

  - Objective ..................................................... 49
  - Procedure .................................................... 51
  - Instrumentation .............................................. 52
  - Research Design ............................................. 52
  - Definitions .................................................. 54

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION ............................ 55

  - Results ....................................................... 55
  - Limitations .................................................. 94

### V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .... 97

  - Summary ...................................................... 97
  - Conclusions .................................................. 98
  - Recommendations ........................................... 102
APPENDICES

A. Cover Letter, OSPA Letter of Endorsement .......... 104
B. Survey .............................................................. 107
BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................... 111
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Frequencies of Demographic Variables for Total and Secondary Sample</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Attitudinal Variables for Total and Secondary Sample</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Frequency of Attitudinal Variables for Total and Secondary Sample</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Results of Within Subjects Analysis of Variance for the Total Sample and the Secondary Sample</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Results of Within Subjects Analysis of Variance for the Total Sample and the Secondary Sample with Outlier Eliminated from the Samples</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Means for Type and Nature Variables for Total and Secondary Samples with Outlier Removed</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Means for Type X Nature Interaction for the Total and Secondary Samples with Outlier Removed</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Frequency of Source Variables for Total Sample and Secondary Sample</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Differences of Means for Total and Secondary Samples, With and Without Outlier, Among the Various Natures of Intervention with Parents</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Graph of Interaction Between Total Sample (N = 234) Means for Type and Nature Variables</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Graph of Interaction Between Type and Nature Variables for Total Sample Means with Outlier Removed (N = 233)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Graph of Interaction Between Secondary Sample (N = 80) Means for Type and Nature Variables</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Graph of Interaction Between Type and Nature Variables for Secondary Sample Means with Outlier Removed (N = 79)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Apparently, it is axiomatic that parental involvement, by almost any definition, seems to improve student achievement (Henderson, 1981). For children "at risk" (e.g., those in need of special education), parental involvement in children's schooling is a necessary element for them to receive the help they need (Hobbs, 1978). Particularly, the need is evident in light of the drastic changes that have occurred in family patterns over the last 25 years. Bronfenbrenner (1980) cites factors such as the increase in single parenthood, the growing number of unwed mothers, the changing characteristics of neighborhoods, the increased reliance on substitute care, the advent of latch-key children, and the dependence on television as among the factors that have contributed to undermining the parent's role and stifling meaningful communication between children and adults.

Similarly, Glick (1979) predicted that by 1990 only 56 percent of children under 18 years of age would be living with both natural parents; as many as 50 percent of all children would live with one parent and up to 15 percent would live in step-families.
As society increases in complexity and the task of educating children becomes more difficult, it is imperative that close working relationships exist between the school and the family, however "family" is defined. Despite this most obvious need, experts may convey the belief that they know what is best for a parent's child, rather than view that parent as a partner or ally in the educational process.

J. William Rioux, Senior Associate of the National Committee for Citizens in Education, has described the "open conflict" that is certain to grow if working relationships are not developed between parents and educators (1978). Citing numerous examples of the public's dissatisfaction with the public schools (e.g., increasing failure of bond issues), he documents educators' historic disregard and lack of commitment to parents which has led to situations correctable only through litigation and legislation.

One such piece of legislation was Public Law 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act). Enacted in 1975, P.L. 94-142 mandated parental participation in all phases of the handicapped child's educational program, thereby setting the stage for the development of working relationships between parents and educators. Educational agencies, for the first time, had to provide parents with the opportunity to voice complaints concerning the education of their children, and when such complaints were received, an opportunity for an impartial due
process hearing to resolve the conflict. In the absence of close working relationships between parents and educators, the mechanism for dealing with disagreements often is a formal due process hearing.

The Ohio Department of Education acknowledged the need for parental involvement by designating 1985-86 the Year of Family Involvement in Education, underscoring the critical role that families play in the educational process. Since only about one-ninth of a student's total time is spent in school, there is the realization on the part of educators that schools cannot be solely responsible for educating children (Ohio Department of Education, 1985).

More specific to special education, parents and educators have identified training needs at both the preservice and inservice levels regarding the development of true partnerships and the relationship that these partnerships have in the development of appropriate educational programs for handicapped children. Further, the need for this kind of collaboration has been recognized statewide by the inclusion of Goal 4, "strengthening the parent-educator partnership in IEP (Individualized Educational Program) development through the provision of inservice training" in Ohio's Initiatives in Special Education (Ohio Department of Education, 1983).

Ohio's goal of strengthening parent-educator partnerships was again highlighted in a report of the State Superintendent's
Council for Special Education to the Ohio State Department of Education entitled, **Recommendations to Assist School Districts to Enhance the Provision of Quality Educational Services to Handicapped Children in Ohio** (Schipper, 1982).

In this report, 72 perceived impediments to quality education were analyzed using group consensus techniques known as likelihood/impact analysis and cross/impact analysis. Of the 72 impediments, four (4) barriers were identified and, if overcome, were judged to have high power or the ability to facilitate the resolution of other barriers. One of these four was, "the majority of parents are not sufficiently informed, trained or educated to participate meaningfully in the IEP process." (p. 2)

These reports reflect the continuing need for parent-educator partnerships. They also make clear the fact that the goal of true parental involvement in the educational process, almost ten years after the enactment of P.L. 94-142, has not yet been achieved. While the procedural safeguards built into P.L. 94-142 specifically call for parental participation in the identification and placement of handicapped children, the scope of that "participation" is subject to the discretion of local education agency personnel. No doubt, as Yoshida, Fenton, Kaufman and Maxwell (1978) suggested, the attitude of school personnel toward parents plays a major part in determining their (the parents') role in placement team meetings.
A second, more recent piece of legislation provides renewed impetus for the development of true parent-educator partnerships. Public Law 99-457 (The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986), referred to as the most significant piece of education legislation since P.L. 94-142, was signed into law by President Reagan on October 8, 1986 (NASDSE, 1986). In addition to providing incentives to States to serve handicapped youngsters aged three to five, the law also promises to address the needs of handicapped infants and toddlers (birth to age two) and their families.

In a report accompanying P.L. 99-457, submitted by the House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Labor, the family was acknowledged as "the primary learning environment for children under six years of age." Additionally, the Committee heard "overwhelming testimony pointing out the critical need for parents and professionals to function in a collaborative fashion." (p. 20). The Committee further stated that, based on this testimony, it "expects that whenever appropriate, and to the extent desired by the parents, the pre-schooler's IEP will include instruction for parents so they can be active and knowledgeable in assisting their child's progress." (p. 20).

Incorporated into P.L. 99-457 (New Section 677 of the Act) is the establishment of the Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP). Similar to the Individualized Education Program (IEP), the IFSP must include: a statement of the child's present levels
of development, major outcomes to be achieved, specific early intervention services necessary, projected dates for initiation of services and anticipated duration of services, and the persons responsible for implementing the plan. Unlike the IEP, the IFSP requires assessment of the entire family and its "strengths and needs relating to enhancing the development of the family's handicapped infant or toddler." (p. 12).

Among the many implications of P.L. 99-457, one relates directly to the relationship between parents and educators. Professionals must be prepared to look beyond the individual child in assessing and planning that child's educational program. They must also be prepared to take the steps necessary to form meaningful partnerships with parents. Evidence seems to indicate that this has not yet happened, suggesting that the fundamental skills necessary to build working relationships are lacking on the part of both educators and parents. In light of the enactment of P.L. 99-457, these skills will be more in demand than ever before and will require professionals who are able to work with others in a collaborative fashion.

School psychologists have been referred to as the natural mental health specialists in schools (Stephens, 1982) and traditionally viewed as expert in the areas of communication and human relations (Greenbaum, 1982). As such, school psychologists practicing in public schools are in an ideal position to help
bridge the gap that continues to exist between parents and educators.

In Ohio, for example, the services provided by school psychologists must include consultation with parents regarding the education and/or mental health of handicapped children and individual and group counseling with handicapped students and/or their parents (Ohio Department of Education, 1982, p. 85). Additionally, school psychologists often assume key roles in all phases of the differentiated referral process, from obtaining parental consent for evaluation through the actual multifactored evaluation procedure to IEP development and special education placement (Ohio Department of Education, 1983). Thus, by virtue of their role and function, they are ideally suited to maximize parental involvement to the benefit of those children with whom they come in contact.

Conceptualizing a system, or set of procedures, for facilitating parental involvement through the use of the school psychologist, or other professionals, as liaison between home and school is a valid, but premature goal. This study is viewed as a prerequisite step. Its purpose is to begin to provide information about the relationships that Ohio school psychologists have with parents. Further, it investigates the extent and nature of the school psychologists' involvement with parents of students in special and regular education programs.
Types of Involvement With Parents

Among school personnel, school psychologists have a unique role with respect to parents and their children. They provide the diagnostic services and often coordinate the total special education planning effort.

A review of the literature concerning school psychologists' work with parents identified five categories of activities:

1) Family Systems Intervention/Family Therapy
2) Parent Consultation
3) Parent Conferencing
4) Parent Education/Training
5) Parent Counseling/Therapy

A more extensive review of the literature within each of these five categories of activities is presented in Chapter 2. The scope of the review is limited to literature directly related to or based on the work and/or activities of school psychologists.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Five categories were identified in the literature concerning school psychologists’ work with parents:
1) Family Systems Intervention/Family Therapy
2) Parent Consultation
3) Parent Conferencing
4) Parent Education/Training
5) Parent Counseling/Therapy

There is much overlap in defining these categories, as well as differences among activities. These differences are more of degree than nature of service (Petrie & Piersel, 1982). Variables such as: severity of problem; behavior and training of the school psychologist; goals and purposes of the activity or intervention; directness of service; and primary target of intervention are typically cited or implied where distinctions between types of service are made (Petrie & Piersel, 1982).

Two limitations were placed on the scope of the literature reviewed. First, only literature directly related to or based on the work of school psychologists was reviewed. Secondly, only literature dealing with parents was reviewed, except in the category of consultation where none was found.
Within each category of activity, the following factors and/or issues were considered:

a) definitions/assumptions;

b) models, types of approaches used by school psychologists;

c) research in school psychology; and

d) training needed by school psychologists.

**Family Systems Intervention/Family Therapy**

**Definitions and assumptions.** Family systems intervention, a term used interchangeably with family therapy, is defined by its focus or target of change, rather than by any universally accepted set of procedures, techniques, or theoretical viewpoints. In family systems intervention/family therapy, the family system, rather than individual members, is viewed as the "client." Petrie and Piersel (1982) emphasize that "the hallmark of family therapy is the near universally recognized purpose of deterring the system of interactions within the family unit . . . the interactions of the family members are the focus of therapy ..." (p. 582). Similarly, Olson (1970) believes that any approach or intervention that attempts to alter the family system instead of the individuals within that system falls under the rubric of family therapy. And, there are a great many diverse approaches that, according to Olson's definition, can be called family therapy.
General systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) serves as a conceptual foundation for the vast array of family therapies currently in existence. According to the Dictionary of Behavioral Science (Wolman, 1973), systems theory refers to:

An approach to knowledge in which a unit is seen as being a subsystem of a larger and more comprehensive system and also seen as being comprised of various and smaller subsystems. The interactions of the various systems, subsystems, and components of subsystems are focused upon, resting on the assumption that a unit cannot be studied with no understanding of how that unit fits into other larger and smaller systems (p. 367).

Von Bertalanffy (1968) defined a system as "... complexes of elements standing in interaction ..." (p. 33) and described three properties of open (e.g., a family) systems. These properties include: (a) wholeness (i.e., a system is more than just the sum of its parts due to the interaction between the parts); (b) relationship (i.e., a system cannot be understood without analyzing in what way the parts relate); and (c) equifinality (i.e., the final system state is not dependent on the initial condition of the system).

The assumptions of family system theory are the assumptions that generally underlie family therapies (however they are defined). These assumptions, outlined by Petrie and Piersel (1983), include:
1) the individual responds to changes in the family system;

2) the family system resists drastic change;

3) there is a definite structure to the family;

4) an individual will more readily change if the family system changes;

5) family interactions play a crucial role in maintaining equilibrium of the system;

6) identified problems and problem individuals are a part of the family system; and

7) family systems have implicit and explicit rules that govern the family members' behaviors and their relationships to each other (p. 583).

Models and approaches. Foley (1986) classified the four major theoretical schools of family therapy according to the importance each places on the role of history in treatment, stating that the main issue is a struggle over whether or not one needs to examine history to produce change (p. 167). More specifically, "Object Relations" therapists (e.g., Framo, Zuk, Skynner) and "Generational" therapists (e.g., Bowen, Nagy) believe that a thorough understanding of the past relationships of and among family members is requisite to treatment in the present. On the other hand, "Structural" and "Strategic" therapists (e.g., Minuchin, Haley) operate under the assumption that interactional patterns within a family system can be altered without delving into the pasts of the family members.
There are several ways in which family therapy can be conducted irrespective of the school from which the therapist operates. Foley (1986) described four distinguishable methods or approaches which include: 1) conjoint family therapy, 2) multiple impact therapy, 3) network therapy and 4) multiple family therapy.

The first approach, conjoint family therapy refers to work with a family that focuses on a pattern of interaction, although the entire family need not be present. In multiple impact therapy, several members of a team work with individual members and subgroups of the family system for an intensive period of time (usually two or three days). The focus of therapy in network therapy is, again, the family system; however, that system is expanded to include other people, such as neighbors, friends, and so forth. Lastly, multiple family therapy as the name implies, involves work with a number of families at the same time.

This overview of the major theoretical schools and approaches of family therapy is not intended to be inclusive. Rather, it is offered as an indication of the diversity among those who call themselves family therapists. The realization that family therapy/family systems intervention is not a discrete entity is important when evaluating its usefulness and relevance to school psychology.
Research in school psychology. The school psychology literature contains few references regarding the use of family systems intervention/family therapy by school psychologists. It would be fair, however, to say that, as a category of "working with parents," family therapy/family systems intervention has received more attention than other categories (e.g., parent training).

There is little empirical evidence to support the efficacy and/or effectiveness of family therapy and no studies addressing the use of family therapy/family systems intervention from a school-based perspective (Petrie and Piersel, 1982). It is not surprising then that no data in the school psychology literature exist to support the use of family therapy/family systems intervention by school psychologists.

Individuals who advocate for family therapy in the schools discuss the implementation of such an approach in terms of activities, strategies, and/or questions typically asked within a systems perspective. However, as Anderson (1983) notes, "significant gaps exist in specifying theoretical and practical models for implementing such an orientation . . ." and, more importantly, "... the incorporation of a family perspective into the usual range of school psychological services has not been conceptualized." (p. 180). Similarly, Petrie and Piersel (1982), in discussing the rationale for family therapy and family systems intervention advanced by some of the major theorists
state that "they do not provide a set of procedures that guides one through the process of altering the family system." (p. 584).

Generally, the proponents of family systems intervention/family therapy in the provision of school psychological services, adhere to the assumptions of systems theory. Consequently, they believe the student's problem results from structural and interactional problems within the family and that the family is the appropriate target for change (Fine & Holt, 1983; Green & Fine, 1980; Lombard, 1979; Loven, 1978). Further, the child's problem is viewed as a symptom of the dysfunctional family, a symptom which is often supported by the other family members because it serves to maintain the family's equilibrium (Green & Fine, 1980; Smith, 1978).

Fine and Holt (1983) propose that family systems theory necessitates a holistic, interactive viewpoint on the part of the school psychologist, rather than one which is linear and cause-effect, thus allowing for the involvement of family members as collaborators. Although there is no agreement on what should constitute the training of psychologists who practice family therapy and systems intervention, it is believed that these school psychologists will be able to vary their conceptualization of the problem, making available new modes of intervention (Green & Fine, 1980). Similarly, while no method or approach is unique to family therapy, knowledge of family dynamics and systems
theory is believed by some to be essential for effective consultation and school-based intervention (Wendt & Zake, 1984).

Training needed by school psychologists. As stated above, what the practicing school psychologist does when intervening from a family systems perspective has not been explicated and the relationship between the various theories and their actual implementation is vague and poorly defined. Nevertheless, its advocates seem to agree that the use of family systems theory requires additional specialist training (probably at the doctoral level), supervised practice in the field (Fine & Holt, 1983; Green & Fine, 1980; Wendt & Zake, 1984) and a more expansive role definition for school psychology (Lombard, 1979).

Although there are no guidelines for implementing family therapy/family systems intervention in the schools, several authors have suggested a "problem-solving approach" for intervening from a family systems perspective. For example, Fine and Holt (1983) propose a problem-solving process that includes the following steps: (a) conceptualize the problem systematically, (b) collect experimentally-based data (usually from an initial interview with the child, parents and school personnel), (c) form tentative hypotheses based on data collected, (d) develop specific strategies (referred to as experimental probes) based on hypotheses and (e) confirm original hypotheses or develop new ones. The initial interview may result in short-term family counseling or consultation with teachers and
the family separately. The authors conclude that within this approach, "... the interventions are much less routinized than from other theoretical frameworks." (p. 65).

Petrie and Piersel (1982) also suggest a problem-solving approach, which involves five phases, for school psychologists conducting family therapy/family systems intervention:

Phase I: Joint meeting between school and family to identify problems, responsibilities of each system and inventory skills and resources of each.

Phase II: Focus is on refined problem identification and tentative goal setting.

Phase III: Specific identified problems are analyzed within system's context.

Phase IV: New patterns of interaction are implemented.

Phase V: Program appraisal.

Within this model, the school psychologist functions as a member of two systems (i.e., school and home) with the goal of ultimately improving the learning and well-being of the child (Petrie & Piersel, 1982). As Petrie and Piersel (1982) summarize, the common elements of all problem-solving approaches include: initial contact, problem identification, development and implementation of a behavior change program, and termination-evaluation (p. 588).

Others have discussed family systems intervention in terms of strategies used or questions that need to be asked and/or
answered by the therapist or school psychologist, rather than in procedural terms. For example, Smith (1978) describes how "family process data" can be gathered through observation, focusing on the "here and now" and working toward closure during interview sessions. Bowman and Goldberg (1983) suggest the use of reframing in working with families and Green and Fine (1980) purport that a knowledge of family dynamics will "give some clues as to where and how to intervene" (p. 242).

The problem-solving approach to family systems intervention/family therapy provides a structure or framework for intervention; however, it represents an alternative role for the typical school psychologist.

**Family systems theory vs. family-oriented school psychology.** Anderson (1983) differentiates family-oriented school psychology from family systems intervention/family therapy, referring to the former as "a knowledge base and perspective that pervades all of the school psychologist's activities" (p. 181), rather than an additional or alternative role. In doing so, she proposes ecological developmental theory in combination with social learning theory as a viable theoretical alternative to family systems theory, because it is (a) more comprehensive, (b) more consistent with the training of school psychologists, and (c) ultimately focuses on the individual as the target for change.

In essence, ecological developmental theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) has a broader contextual base than family systems theory,
viewing the individual as a member of many systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem), emphasizing the relationship between systems and the child's perception of reality as those perceptions change and develop through interaction with the environment. Bronfenbrenner defines the system levels in the following way:

(a) microsystem: a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics (p. 22).

(b) mesosystem: the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (p. 25).

(c) exosystem: one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that effect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the person (p. 25).

(d) macrosystem (e.g., school): consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro, meso, exo) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies (p. 26).
A corresponding knowledge of social learning theory consistent with training and activities of many school psychologists can aid the school psychologist in developing and implementing specific interventions in response to measurable goals and objectives. These interventions are not restricted to family members or settings.

Anderson (1983) imposed an ecological framework upon the traditional roles of the school psychologist (e.g., assessment, intervention, research, etc.) and provided examples of family-oriented activities across each system level. The progression of activities from micro to macro reflects the extent of psychologist involvement with the family. For example, during assessment, the school psychologist at the most involved level of activity might conduct a formal family assessment and make home visits as part of the standard psychoeducational evaluation. The lowest or most basic level of involvement in this area might be consideration of family cultural factors affecting assessment results (Anderson, 1983, p. 184).

Instead of making a case for specialized, advanced training to perform activities for which no guidelines exist, Anderson's (1983) model encourages the adoption of a perspective that could be incorporated into the standard assignment of many school psychologists.

In summary, family systems intervention, family therapy and/or family-oriented school psychology recognizes the
importance of the family in child development and the appropriateness of the school psychologist to assume the critical role of family/school liaison (Loven, 1978).

Consultation With Parents

Definitions and assumptions. Consultation generally has been defined as interaction between two individuals (the consultant and consultee) for purposes of mutually solving a client's problem (Smith & Lyon, 1984). Similarly, Curtis and Meyers (1985), emphasizing a "systems model", define school-based consultation as "a collaborative problem solving process in which two or more persons (consultant(s) and consultee(s)) engage in efforts to benefit one or more other persons (clients) for whom they bear some level of responsibility, within a context of reciprocal interactions." (p. 80).

As was the case with family therapy/family systems intervention, disparate theoretical orientations (e.g., behavioral, psychodynamic) have provided the foundations for various models of consultation and have contributed to the proliferation of the term "consultation" in reference to a wide range of school psychology activities. In fact, the label "consultation" has been "applied indiscriminately to a diverse collection of psychological activities" (Medway, 1979) and has been used to refer to almost any "interaction between two individuals (Curtis & Meyers, 1985) and "practically any form of service." (Reschly, 1976).
Despite the murkiness of the term, "consultation", Reynolds, Gutkin, Elliott and Witt (1984) outlined what they believed to be the elements common to all consultative approaches (pp 78-84). These nine elements are listed and, when necessary, briefly discussed below.

1. focus on professional problems: personal issues, unless they relate to the presenting work related problem, are excluded from the consultation process.

2. indirect service delivery: the school psychologist's primary contact is not the client (or student) but rather the consultee (usually a teacher) who works with the client. However, Curtis (1983) notes that direct and indirect service delivery systems are not mutually exclusive and elements of consultation should be involved in the provision of direct service.

3. a dual set of goals encompassing both the remediation and prevention of problems.

4. a coordinate status between consultant and consultee emphasizing equal authority: the consultee is viewed as having equal authority in the decision making process.

5. active involvement of the consultee in the consultation process.

6. the right of the consultee to reject consultant suggestions.
7. the voluntary nature of the consultative relationship.
8. an assurance of confidentiality between consultant and consultee.
9. consultant attention to both process and content variables: the consultant must have expertise in the content area, as well as expertise in problem solving and interpersonal relations (i.e., process variables).

Curtis and Meyers' (1985) definition of consultation (see page 21) contains an additional emphasis that reflects its "system" orientation, namely, that of "reciprocal interaction." The inclusion of "reciprocal interaction," they say, is valuable in two ways: (1) it helps the consultant understand that many variables interact to affect the consultative process, and (2) it provides a framework for viewing the child as one force within the environmental setting which is both affected by and able to affect that environment (p. 84).

Models and approaches. The systems approach to consultation described above is reflected in the Organization Development (process) (ODC) model, one of the three major consultation models in the literature. The other two major models are the mental health (MHC) model and the behavioral (BC) model (Reschly, 1976). Although advocates of the three models agree on the long-term outcome of consultation (i.e., increased competence on the part of the consultee dealing with similar problems), their definition of the problem, as well as their goals and intervention methods,
differ. For example, MHC, based on a clinical perspective, may be concerned with helping consultees better understand their feelings toward clients; whereas, BC intervention is designed to alter the environmental contingencies contributing to and/or maintaining the client's identified target behavior.

An example of behavioral consultation is presented in an article by Stephens (1970) in which he describes a system for developing instructional strategies (both social and academic) based on observation of student behavior. Within this model the school psychologist (i.e., the consultant) has a systematic way to provide consultation regarding any school-related behavior.

A consultative approach analogous to BC, but found in the special education literature, is referred to as collaborative consultation (Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Nevin, 1986). Derived from the triadic model of consultation (Tharp & Wetzel, 1969), collaborative consultation includes three components: the target, the mediator and the consultant. The model contains the elements basic to consultative approaches but focuses on teamwork for the purpose of assisting the handicapped student in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The role of consultant is not defined by professional position or title, but rather cuts across school-related disciplines. Similarly, although the mediator is typically the classroom teacher, a parent can easily assume that role and receive direct assistance in implementing home management programs.
The collaborative consultation model seems especially timely and appropriate given the federal directive to maintain mildly handicapped or "at-risk" students in regular education programs. Also, as an increasing number of school psychologists redefine their role as one of team member, rather than sole decision-maker with regard to special education placement decisions, the skills needed to work in a collaborative and cooperative fashion will become more important.

In addition to skills, a positive attitude toward cooperation and collaboration would appear to be an essential ingredient for effective consultation. However, in a survey of 234 practicing school psychologists across the country, Smith and Lyon (1984) found that school psychologists did not view the collaborative aspects of the consultative effort as critical to the success or failure of the interaction. Instead, success or failure (especially failure) was most often attributed to acts or characteristics of the consultant or consultee (p. 15).

Certain advantages seem inherent in a consultative, or more accurately, an indirect approach to service delivery. Smith and Lyon (1984) cite two such advantages: (a) a greater number of clients can be served, and (b) the potential for prevention of future problems increases as the consultee masters new skills.

Research in school psychology. Although the advantages listed above seem to be common sense, research on the effectiveness of consultation is marred by several methodological
problems. The first of such problems, agreement on the
definition of consultation, is not unique to consultation. On
the contrary, it is equally evident when discussing family
therapy/family systems intervention. Additional methodological
problems more specific to consultation have been outlined by
Medway (1979) in a review of 29 studies published between 1972
and 1977. These problems include: 1) the failure to include a
control group (in 11 of the 29 studies reviewed) or the use of
inappropriate (e.g., volunteer) control groups, 2) limited
control of the number and characteristics of consultation
participants, 3) the consultants are often the authors, a factor
which may increase the likelihood of experimental bias effects,
4) limited attempts to obtain homogeneous samples of consultees,
5) long-term follow-up or evaluative data was collected in only
five of the 29 studies reviewed. In the other 24 studies,
evaluative data was generally collected from consultants or
clients alone.

Medway (1979) concludes that although school consultation
appears to be effective (i.e., 76% reported at least one or more
positive effects of consultation), "any general conclusion
regarding its virtues must be highly qualified." (p. 279).
Further, the specific consultant behaviors were usually not
described in the article reviewed, so even if labelled
"effective", what the school psychologist actually does when
consulting cannot be discussed. Awareness of the theoretical
orientation of the author/researcher probably wouldn't help in identifying specific activities because, as Medway (1979) states, "often the variety of consultation approaches among those who subscribe to similar theoretical models is nearly as great as the difference among those consultants who endorse contrasting models." (p. 279).

No publications dealing exclusively with parent consultation were found through additional review of the school psychology literature.

Training needed by school psychologists. Ohio school psychologists are required to consult "with teachers, parents and other educational personnel on matters relating to the education and/or mental health of handicapped children to insure the provision of the most appropriate education program." (Ohio Rules for the Education of Handicapped Children, p. 84).

Rather than portray the school psychologist as consultant or tester or counselor, it makes sense to attempt to define the skills he/she needs to consult effectively, regardless of whether that consultation is provided in a traditional sense (i.e., indirectly) or in relation to direct service activities. The problems in terminology coupled with the fact that school psychologists (at least in Ohio) are required to consult seems just cause for moving toward defining the skills and competencies needed for effective consultation. Discussing the activity of
consultation in vague procedural terms is not sufficient for evaluative purposes.

Curtis and Meyers (1985) may provide movement toward this goal by suggesting four areas of expertise needed by school-consultants. These areas, referring more to general knowledge than specific skills, include: (a) knowledge of interpersonal process including a "technology of communication," (b) a strong foundation in the area of professional content related to the consultant (e.g., human behavior in the case of the school psychologist or consultant), (c) expertise in problem solving and a corresponding ability to facilitate the problem-solving process, and (d) knowledge of systems theory (pp. 84-85).

Despite the growing need for refinement of and training in consultation skills, as of 1981, the majority of school psychology training programs in the United States did not offer a course in consultation (Meyers, Wurtz, & Flanagan, 1981). In a national survey of 203 school psychology training programs, 40% of the programs which responded offered at least one course in consultation, while 60% offered no course. Additionally, doctoral programs offered significantly more courses in consultation than did sub-doctoral programs. Expectedly, the programs were described in terms of their theoretical orientation: 47 percent of the responding programs reported that their program was based on a combination of mental health, organization development, and behavior modification as compared
to the 39 percent reporting one model only. Further, doctoral programs relied on the mental health and organization development models more than did the subdoctoral programs (Meyers, Wurtz & Finnagan, 1981).

**Conferencing With Parents.**

**Definitions and assumptions.** A parent conference can be described as a meeting between parent(s) and a school psychologist concerning a student in which information is shared and recommendations may be made.

Wise and Ginther (1981) caution against underestimating the importance of parent conferences, relating the success of such contact to the effective provision of services to children and the public's view of the school system in general and of school psychologists in particular. Indeed, future contacts with a given parent can be greatly influenced and are to an extent determined by the degree to which the school psychologist effectively communicated with that parent during the conference.

It is the local education agency's responsibility to involve parents in two ways: (1) parents must be notified about proposed changes in their child's educational status and program and must give consent to changes; and (2) parents must be invited to the planning and placement team (PT) where decisions are made about eligibility, program, and placement for the handicapped child (Hoff, Fenton, Yoshida, & Kaufman, 1981, p. 351). These activities most likely occur in the form of a conference between
school officials (including a school psychologist) and parent(s). The likelihood that parents will become truly involved in their child's education is dependent upon the school's commitment to the intent of P.L. 94-142 and their skill and effectiveness in parent conferencing.

Research in school psychology. Despite the obvious need for professionals skilled in parent conferencing, there is a striking dearth of information contained in the literature and a corresponding lack of attention in training institutions (Losen & Diament, 1978). The literature that does exist tends to highlight the importance of parent conferencing and is not empirically based.

The importance of parent conferences was documented as early as 1959 (NEA Research Division report, April, 1959, Vol 37[2]). Summarizing the NEA report, Hirst (1963) stated that parent conferences were more often held at the elementary level, and although only 39.7% of the NEA respondents reported using parent-teacher conferences, 99.2% of those respondents felt they contributed to improved relations (p. 177). Parent conferences, she states, are the "natural habitat of the school psychologist." (p. 176).

Maves (1958), attempting to identify what factors contributed to the effectiveness of parent/teacher conferences, classified the performance of conference participants into two groups: "high-level" and "low-level" performances. High-level
conferences were characterized foremost by the establishment of rapport between the parent and teacher. In contrast, low-level conferences are dominated by one conference participant.

Hirst (1963) reports some "findings" with regard to effective conferences, which she believes are consistent with Maves (1958) characterization of "high-level" performers:

1. Begin with some general conversation, perhaps even personal visiting,
2. Start with something good about the child,
3. Teacher keeps the conference focused on the child,
4. Give specific examples,
5. Plan for future,
6. Leave door open for further contacts,
7. A conference is more than a child's progress report. It is a laboratory in human relationships (p. 178).

Training needed by school psychologists. These "findings" or suggestions are incorporated in more recent publications concerning parent conferencing skills. In a book specifically focusing on the role of the school psychologist in parent conferences (probably the only one of its kind), Losen and Diament (1978) emphasize the need to establish partnerships and describe various types of parent contact, how to use cumulative records, how to communicate test data, and how to deal with various parental responses encountered in conferences.
Wise (1986) developed a manual for conducting parent conferences specifically for use by school psychologists. The manual includes worksheets for self-evaluating conferences, practice role-play scenarios, and questions to "ponder and discuss", all designed to improve the school psychologists' parent conferencing skills.

Stephens and Wolf (1980) developed a useful model for conducting parent conferences that describes those competencies or sets of behaviors needed to communicate effectively with parents. Within this model a framework or structure for conducting conferences in provided which embodies the following four steps: (1) rapport building, (2) obtaining information, (3) providing information, and (4) summarizing and making recommendations. In addition to providing a structure, Stephens and Wolf (1980) describe and provide examples of specific tactics or skills needed to accomplish the steps listed above and thus effectively communicate with parents. These specific skills include: active listening, reflecting stated feelings, clarifying stated feelings and questioning.

Others have focused on the need to be aware of the perceptions of parents who have a handicapped child (Kaplan, 1971; Behmer, 1976), conferencing with specific populations (Hersch & Amon, 1975; Dembinski, 1977), and tips for organizing conferences to increase productivity (Goetz, 1975).
In summary, the P.L. 94-142 mandate for parental participation provides an impetus for conducting conferences and thus an ideal forum for the development of partnerships with parents. The importance of conferencing is highlighted in the literature that does exist on the subject. However, that recognition is diminished by the overall dearth of school psychology literature on parent conferencing and the lack of emphasis given to conferencing in training programs.

Conferencing, as a category of school psychologist's involvement with parents, should be central to their training and work because the skills needed to conference effectively are the same skills needed to work with people and are probably the same skills needed to provide effective consultation, family systems intervention/family therapy, and counseling/therapy.

**Parent Education and Parent Training**

A fourth category of school psychologists' involvement with parents is parent education and/or parent training activities. Although an abundance of literature exists on this topic, there again are few empirically-based studies in this area in relation to school psychologists.

**Definitions and assumptions.** Kramer (1985) defines parent education as lecture and discussion meetings designed to provide information, heighten awareness, and change attitudes (p. 263). Similarly, Fine (1980) describes parent education programs as "a systematic and conceptually based program, intended to impart
information, awareness, and skills to the participants on aspects of parenting." (p. 6).

Parent training, in comparison to parent education, refers to programs designed to train parents to perform a certain set of skills (Edge, Strenecky, McLoughlin, & Edge, 1984). Mastering these skills is expected to produce changes in parental attitude and behavior as well as concomitant changes in the behavior and adjustment of children (Kramer, 1985, p. 264).

Petrie and Piersel (1982) also differentiate between parent training and parent education referring to "training" as programs for parents who have a problem child, while "education" which is more preventative in nature, refers to work with any interested parents whether or not they have problem children.

Assumptions underlying parent group education which are also applicable to parent training programs were outlined by Auerbach in 1968. These assumptions, briefly stated, include:

1) parents can learn,
2) parents want to learn,
3) parents learn best what they are interested in learning,
4) learning is most significant when the subject matter is closely related to the parents' own immediate experiences,
5) parents can learn best when they are free to create their own response to a situation,
6) parent group education is as much an emotional experience as it is an intellectual one,
7) parents can learn from one another,
8) parent group education provides the basis for a remaking of experience, and
9) each parent learns in his own way (p. 23-28).

More specific to parent training is the assumption that parents who are trained to interact in a more healthy fashion with their children will become effective change agents, better able to prevent and deal with adjustment problems in the future (Henry, 1981).

Parent education and parent training models. Penelope Pollaczek stated in 1964 that school-based parent education deals with two things: self-understanding and understanding the child. Beyond these themes, which are basic to all approaches to training and/or educating parents, various models can be described in terms of the theoretical orientation from which they are derived. For example, the most widely used parent training programs have been categorized by Henry (1981) as behavioral, Adlerian, and interpersonal communications oriented. Each will be discussed below.

Regardless of the program's emphasis due to theoretical or philosophical orientation, Meyers and Wulf (1979) suggest that school psychologists follow these steps when conducting a parent education program:
1. Assess parent concerns (via self-report, observation or cognitive tests),
2. Prepare topics in child development from assessed concerns and share these with parents,
3. Use a combination of lecture/discussion format, stressing group dynamics, rather than training,
4. Allow openness through the use of humanistic-phenomenological, non-directive, encounter, behavioral or psychoanalytic methods,
5. Administer pre/post instruments (both cognitive and affective) and plan to validate new instrument,
6. Conduct statistical analysis,
7. Follow up with behavioral measures in dealing with the child, and
8. Report the results to program participants.

Behavioral models. Behaviorally-based parent education and training programs have been used to address a wide array of problem behavior, ranging from mild to severe (Berkowitz & Graziano, 1972; O'Dell, 1974). As recipients of the training, parents are taught to modify their children's behavior by changing the environmental contingencies operating in the child's natural environment. Specifically, the behavioral approach assumes that: (1) a child's maladaptive behavior has been acquired in his natural environment and can best be changed by modifying that environment, and (2) the maintenance of newly
developed adaptive behavior also depends upon successful modification in the natural environment (Berkowitz & Graziano, 1972, p. 298).

Advantages of behaviorally-based models over other approaches have been outlined by O'Dell (1974). They include:

1. It is possible for unskilled persons to learn the principles of behavior modification and implement treatment programs,
2. Behavior modification is based on empirically derived theory,
3. Many persons can be taught at one time,
4. Only a short training period is usually required,
5. A minimum of professional staff can have more impact than in one-to-one treatment programs,
6. Behavior is not viewed as "sick" as it is in the medical model,
7. Many childhood problems are conducive to behavioral treatment, and
8. Problems are easily treated in the natural environment.

Reviews of the literature conducted by Berkowitz and Graziano (1972) and O'Dell (1974) clearly demonstrate that functional relationships exist between parent and child behavior and indicate the effective applicability of behavioral change techniques to a diverse array of child behaviors (e.g., enuresis, tics, severe crying, school phobia, nightmares, elective mutism,
aggressiveness, firesetting, etc.) through parent training. Weaknesses identified by the authors center around the issue of generalization and maintenance of parent change and the sparsity of comparative group research to "help define the content and training techniques that are most effective with various types of parents and different child problems." (O'Dell, 1974, p. 430).

Successful implementation of a behaviorally-based training program requires the school psychologist to be sensitive to the parent's motivation for change; be skilled at identifying the appropriate target behaviors and measuring their change; select consequences; and analyze correctly the environmental context in which the behavior occurs (Simpson & Poplin, 1981).

Adlerian models. In contrast to behavioral approaches, which assume that behavior is a function of its consequences, parents are taught within an Adlerian model to view children's behavior as goal-oriented. For example, parents who participate in a Systematic Training for Effective Parenting - STEP (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1982) program are taught that children misbehave to achieve power, revenge, and/or a sense of adequacy (Dreikurs, 1950)). The focus is on understanding the child's feelings in order to effect behavior change, rather than directly focusing on concrete, observable behavior (Tavormina, 1974).

Interpersonal communications oriented models. As the title implies, models subsumed within this category focus on training parents to communicate more effectively with their children and
appear to have less substance than the behavioral or Adlerian approaches (Henry, 1981). One popular program based on the interpersonal communications model is PET or Parent Effectiveness Training (Gordon, 1976). Consistent with this model, PET's goal is improved relationships rather than any specific behavior change (Rinn & Markle, 1977). Participants learn to actively listen, to send I-messages to their children, and to involve their children in decision making.

In a review of the research literature on parent effectiveness training, Rinn and Markle (1977) found that the effectiveness of PET with regard to prevention or intervention was not supported. Furthermore, the research was judged to be limited in scope and inadequate in design (p. 105).

Additional models. Henry (1981) identified two additional forms of parent training, namely "parenthood education" and bibliotherapy.

According to Henry (1981), parenthood education is "the process of preparing persons of all ages to assume the role of a parent." (p.9). This process is usually attempted by incorporating information about parenting into traditional school curricula. For example, Flood, Greenspan, and Mundorf (1985) describe a curriculum originally developed for pregnant adolescents which can be incorporated into school curricula for use with a broader student population.
Bibliotherapy relies on imparting information through the use of written material and can be used effectively in combination with other aspects of parent training/parent education programs.

In summary, behavioral approaches far outnumber the other types of parent training programs and whereas little research has been done using Adlerian (e.g., Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) or interpersonal communications oriented (e.g., Parent Effectiveness Training) programs, empirical data does exist to support the efficacy of behaviorally-based approaches (Henry, 1981; Simpson, 1981; Simpson & Poplin, 1981).

Research in school psychology. The many studies in the area of parent education and training are matched by a dearth of empirically-based studies specifically focusing on school psychologists and parent education/training activities.

In one such study, Zarske (1982) described how the parent of a five-year-old cerebral palsied boy was taught to reduce temper tantrums by using paradoxical intervention.

Similarly, Cox and Matthews (1977) examined the school behavior of 58 children whose parents participated in the Downing Program for Parent Training in Family Relationship and Management Skills, a program emphasizing reinforcement and modeling procedures. The authors do not specify in what way the behavior of the children changed. Instead, they state that significant changes were evident in classroom behavior, supporting "the
assumption that parent education programs result in measureable changes in the extra-familial behavior of the children of participating parents." (p. 361).

A third study found in the school psychology literature examined (1) the effects of parent training on 49 parents' ability to apply behavioral principles during instruction and (2) the effects of the parents' training on the children's learning of two intellectual skills (Bergan, Neumann, & Karp, 1983). Results indicated a difference in the parents' skill in applying various strategies (i.e., prompting, modeling, etc.) as a result of training. However, results of a regression analysis procedure indicated a significant difference in child performance between children in the control and treatment groups on only one of the two tasks targeted for instruction. The authors attributed this finding to variations in parent teaching behavior in both groups across the two tasks.

Training needed by school psychologists. There are no recognized standards that specify the skills and competencies needed by the school psychologist to conduct parent education and/or parent training activities (Kramer, 1985). For example, leader qualifications for conducting STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting, Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1977) groups are described in the Leader's Manual as follows:

"A STEP parent education group can be led by a person trained in the helping professions - psychology, social
work, counseling, the ministry, pediatrics, education, nursing, psychiatry. It can also be led by a lay person who is willing to study this manual intensively and has the ability to lead discussion groups. A STEP leader doesn't have to be an authority on child training. The leader arranges the program for each session, starts each lesson, and facilitates group discussion. The program itself serves as the authority."

Miller (1987), in describing a program for parents of children with "conduct disorders," outlined what she viewed as critical parent training skills. They include:

1. Begin with labeling and tracking skills.
2. Broaden the focus to include prosocial behaviors.
3. Teach positive interaction skills.
4. Improve teaching and methods of decreasing unwanted behaviors.
5. Train self-control and/or relaxation (for parents).
6. Expect fluctuations in resistance.
7. Assess competing stressors.
8. Teach maintenance and generalization skills.

These skills, although couched somewhat in behavioral language, seem to cut across theoretical approaches and form a beginning of a general taxonomy of parent educator/parent trainer skills. Rather than rely on "packaged" programs, it makes sense for the school psychologist to plan intervention based on an
assessment of the competencies needed by the parents (Turnbull & Leonard, 1980).

If commercially available programs are to be used, however, Henry (1981) advises that school psychologists thoroughly understand the underlying concepts of the particular program to be used (e.g., STEP, PET). Further, Henry (1981) advises that school psychologists undergo an apprenticeship prior to conducting the group on their own.

In summary, the worthiness of parent group education and parent training activities clearly has been established. The advantages of working with parents in groups (i.e., awareness and expression of feelings, learning new ways to respond to and interact with their children, etc.) probably exist regardless of the type of program employed. School psychologists, because of their traditional role and position within the school system, seem ideally suited to initiate and conduct parent education and/or parent training activities. The school psychology literature, however, contains few references on the topic and even fewer studies that are empirically-based. As the profession of school psychology continues to debate and discuss the role and function of its members, expansion of school psychologists' typical responsibilities should include work with parents. This work could easily be in the form of parent education and parent training activities.
Counseling Therapy with Parents

Definitions and assumptions. Individual and/or group counseling therapy is another form of school psychologists' involvement with parents. Although the terms therapy and counseling are often used interchangeably, distinctions have been made according to the severity of the client's (in this case the parent's) problem. For example, Petrie and Piersel (1982) describe "psychotherapy" as work with maladjusted individuals who have more serious problems, the goals of which would be to alter the individual's attitudes, beliefs and/or values. Likewise, Kramer (1985) refers to parent therapy as efforts, often individualized and of unspecified duration, to work with parents who come to therapy because of pervasive, long-term family problems.

The term counseling, on the other hand, is more often used in reference to individuals who are relatively adjusted as compared to those who may be described as receiving therapy. The focus of counseling is more immediate in nature, with less emphasis placed on the client's history as it relates to his/her current problem situation.

The Dictionary of Behavioral Science (Wolman, 1973) defines counseling and therapy as follows:

counseling: a form of therapeutic aid offered to individuals to help them understand and resolve their adjustment problems. A variety of diverse techniques are
used including the giving of advice, mutual discussion, and administration and interpretation of tests (p. 82).

**therapy**: 1. Activities undertaken to cure diseases and to ameliorate suffering, e.g., psychotherapy, chemotherapy. 2. The curative effects of such activities (p. 384).

In addition to the problems in defining and differentiating the terms counseling and therapy, ambivalence with regard to the role of the school psychologist in these activities has existed over the years (Webster, 1977). For example, whether or not a school psychologist should conduct parent counseling and/or therapy has been said to depend on the intensity of counseling needed, the competence and/or interest of the school psychologist, and the school system or institutional policies within which the school psychologist must operate (Ruzicka, 1958, 1967; White, 1961). As early as 1958, school psychologists were viewed as the school professional most likely with training to conduct counseling activities. For example, Ruzicka (1958) stated that although school psychologists are not adequately trained to counsel parents, they have the "greatest potential" for attaining competence as counselors because of the following factors:

1. they have training in both education and psychology,
2. they have training and/or experience in special education and with exceptional children,
3. they have training and/or experience in dealing with teachers and parents as well as with the children, and
4. the medical and social service aspects of counseling can easily be instituted as part of their training.

Counseling models and approaches. Models or approaches to counseling may be best described in terms of the theoretical orientations from which they are derived (e.g., behavioral, Adlerian, psychoanalytic, etc.). However, knowledge of theoretical orientation tells us little about how to operationalize the provision of counseling and/or therapy as a school psychological service. McWilliams (1976) transcends theoretical orientation and views counseling within a broader context, believing that "every professional person who interacts with parents and children becomes a counselor." (p. 27). Further, McWilliams asserts that there is no counseling blueprint that can be followed in all cases. Rather the counseling approach will vary according to the goals, clinical insights, available services and identified parental needs.

With this in mind, McWilliams (1976) identified several forms or aspects of the counseling process: (a) information-giving, (b) parent intervention, (c) parent literature-bibliotherapy, (d) parent groups, (e) parent consultation, and (f) referral to other agencies. Critical to information-giving is the ability to listen. McWilliams (1976) states, "the failure to be informed about parents before informing them about their child is a frequent explanation for clinical failure." (p. 43).
Connolly (1978) also believes that no one set of answers exists to the question, "How does one counsel?" He states that effective counseling involves affective, factual and outcome variables and encompasses three basic factors: 1) a sharing of factual information, 2) a sharing of feelings, and 3) a plan of positive action for change (p. 116).

Group counseling. As early as 1958, Ruzicka stated that the purpose of group counseling was to help parents understand their problems and provide them with an opportunity to watch others deal with similar problems. Further, the use of group counseling is appropriate when the focus is both educational and therapeutic or mainly therapeutic (e.g., when the psychologist is concerned with the child's problem as one aspect of the entire counseling process with parents) (Ruzicka, 1960, p. 133).

In Ohio, school psychologists are required to provide counseling individually and in groups with handicapped students and/or their parents (Ohio Rules for the Education of Handicapped Children, 1982, p. 85). In view of this requirement, the use of group counseling for parents of handicapped children would seem to be a particularly useful and much needed service. Huber (1981) cites two advantages of such an approach with parents of handicapped children:

1. parents are provided with a framework to understand and conceptualize the emotions they had been experiencing but could not sort out, and
2. parents can experience a sense of relief arising from the idea that they were not alone or maladjusted in how they were responding to their situation (p. 323).

Research in school psychology. No empirically based studies in the area of counseling/therapy with parents by school psychologists were found in the school psychology literature. As was the case with family systems intervention/family therapy, little data exists with respect to the efficacy and/or effectiveness of such approaches (Petrie & Piersel, 1982).

Training needed by school psychologists. Discussing parent counseling/therapy in terms of procedures (e.g., information-giving) as most authors do, rather than specific interventions, makes the identification of the skills and competencies needed by the school psychologist difficult at best.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Objective

The objective of this study was to determine the extent and nature of Ohio school psychologists' involvement with parents of children in regular and special education programs by investigating the following research goals:

1. The extent to which practicing school psychologists work with parents. Specific questions encompassed by this goal include:
   a. How many times per month do they engage in family systems intervention with parents of special education students?/ regular education students?
   b. How many times per month do they formally engage in consultation with parents of special education students?/ with regular education students?
   c. How many times per month do they hold scheduled conferences with parents of special education students?/ with parents of regular education students?
   d. How many times per month do they provide parent education programs for parents of special
education students?/ with parents of regular education students?

e. How many times per month do they provide parent training programs for parents of special education students?/ with parents of regular education students?

f. How many times per month do they provide counseling/therapy on a formal basis to parents of special education students?/ to parents of regular education students?

g. How many times per month do they formally engage in other activities with parents of special education students?/ with parents of regular education students?

2. The nature of Ohio school psychologists' work with parents (work is defined by the categories listed in 1a through 1g).

3. The extent to which Ohio school psychologists believe they are qualified to work with parents.

4. The difference in Ohio school psychologists' level of involvement with parents of special education students as compared to parents of regular education students.

a. Is there a difference in their level of involvement?
b. Is there a difference in the nature of their involvement?

Procedure

Information for this study was obtained from the results of a survey mailed to 1,047 Ohio school psychologists whose names appeared on the 1986 mailing list of the Ohio School Psychologists Association (OSPA). Excluded from the mailing were university trainers and state-level school psychologists, whose names may have also appeared on the OSPA mailing list. The OSPA mailing list was used for several reasons: (1) it represented the most effective and efficient (in terms of time and expense) way to access the largest number of Ohio school psychologists; and (2) no other method was available for assessing the population of Ohio school psychologists.

The following items were mailed on March 30, 1987 to recipients of the survey:

1. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey (See Appendix A),

2. A letter written by Michael Curtis, OSPA President, expressing OSPA's endorsement of the survey form (See Appendix A),

3. One copy of the survey form (See Appendix B).

Additional survey respondents included 43 intern school psychologists who attended the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Special Education's annual internship conference.
Instrumentation

A survey developed for this study (See Appendix B) was the only instrument used in the study. The survey was pilot-tested with the Ohio State University school psychology intern students to determine the average amount of time needed to complete the survey and to ensure that survey items were stated clearly. The average amount of time needed to complete the survey was approximately 15 minutes.

The survey items can be categorized into three groups: demographic questions (item 1.0 through 9.8), attitudinal questions (items 10.0 through 13.2) and items (14.1 through 14.7) designed to obtain quantitative information regarding the respondents' professional involvement with parents. Item 14.0 (14.1 through 14.7) represents the categories of school psychologists' involvement with parents. These categories were drawn from a review of related literature.

Research Design

In order to determine the degree to which the total number of respondents were representative of the population of school psychologists, a secondary sample was drawn using the random sampling technique. The secondary sample is a logical extension of multi-stage (Weisberg & Bowen, 1977; Stephan & McCarthy, 1958) or two-stage sampling (Cochran, 1963) wherein each unit in the population is divided into smaller units or elements, the intent being to determine the degree to which elements within a selected
unit yield results similar to those from the larger or primary sample.

Therefore, a comparison of two analyses was conducted in this study. First, responses obtained from the total number of respondents (N = 234) were analyzed. Secondly, responses from a simple random sample of the respondents (N = 80) were analyzed and compared to the results of the first analysis.

The sample size of 80 was chosen to approximate an initial target sample of 10 percent of the population (i.e., 1000 x .10 = 100), and the widely accepted 80 percent response rate (i.e., 100 x .80 = 80) (Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 1983).

The random sample was obtained by using a random number chart extracted from the Rand Table (Blalock, 1972). This source for obtaining random digits was chosen because in the Rand Table the frequency with which the digits 0 through 9 occur "... vary from 9.93% for digit 9, to 10.06% for the digit 2, indicating no significant deviation from randomness." (Rossi, Wright, & Anderson, 1983, p. 165).

Response analysis for the demographic items was descriptive. Percentages of respondents answering questions in a particular manner were reported. Similarly, descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions subsumed by the first three goals (see pages 49-50).

A two-way within subjects design was used to answer the research questions subsumed by the fourth goal (see page 50).
The variable "type of programming" has two levels: (1) regular education and (2) special education. The variable representing nature of school psychologists' involvement with parents has six levels: (1) family systems intervention; (2) consulting with parents; (3) conferencing with parents; (4) parent education; (5) parent training; and (6) counseling/therapy with parents. The variable, nature of involvement, is repeated within the type of programming.

Definition

1. School psychologist: refers to individuals who are employed as school psychologists in Ohio's public school.

2. Students in special education programs: refers to students who have a current individualized education program (IEP) as defined in the 1982 Ohio Rules for the Education of Handicapped Children (p. 7).

3. "Work" with parents: refers to engaging formally in any of the following activities with parents (see page 108 for definitions):
   a. family systems intervention
   b. consultation
   c. conferencing
   d. parent education
   e. parent training
   f. counseling/therapy
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA ANALYSIS

The investigation of the extent and nature of Ohio school psychologists' involvement with parents of children in regular and special education programs was conducted through a questionnaire mailed to 1,047 Ohio school psychologists whose names appeared on the Ohio School Psychologists' Association (OSPA) mailing list (See Appendix B).

The OSPA mailing list was viewed as the most efficient and only available means of tapping the population of Ohio school psychologists. Two hundred and thirty-four of the 1,047 surveys were returned and the responses analyzed to answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 3. Additionally, a secondary sample was randomly selected (N = 80) from the 234 respondents and the responses from those surveys analyzed and compared to the results based on the total sample.

Results

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic (items 1.0 through 9.8) and attitudinal (items 10.0 through 13.2) survey items. Results of this analysis are presented in Tables 1 through 4. The attitudinal questions were included on the
Table 1

Frequencies of Demographic Variables for Total and Secondary Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Sample N = 234</th>
<th>Secondary Sample N = 80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intern</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificated</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of School District</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Certificated as School Psychologist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1987</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1960</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
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Table 1 (cont.)

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Sample N = 234</th>
<th>Secondary Sample N = 80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Licensed as School Psychologist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1987</td>
<td>34 77.3%</td>
<td>13 68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>10 22.7%</td>
<td>6 31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>190 --</td>
<td>61 --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Licensed as Psychologist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1987</td>
<td>6 18.7%</td>
<td>1 7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>25 78.2%</td>
<td>13 92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>1 3.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>202 --</td>
<td>66 --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree Earned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1987</td>
<td>105 45.7%</td>
<td>29 36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>99 43.0%</td>
<td>37 46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>20 8.7%</td>
<td>9 11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1960</td>
<td>6 2.6%</td>
<td>4 5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>4 --</td>
<td>1 --</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree Earned</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1987</td>
<td>15 53.6%</td>
<td>3 50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>10 35.7%</td>
<td>3 50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>2 7.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1960</td>
<td>1 3.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>206 --</td>
<td>74 --</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 1 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Secondary Sample N = 80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Experience</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
questionnaire are for two reasons: (1) to describe the sample, and (2) the data collected in response to the items may be useful in future research.

Inferential statistics were used to answer questions subsumed by the fourth research goal. Results of this analysis are presented in Tables 5 and 6. Table 5 presents the results of the analysis of the total (N = 234) and secondary (N = 80) sample. This analysis revealed the presence of an outlier. During the course of analysis, it became obvious that one subject was responding erroneously, his or her data being so different that he/she fit Barnet and Lewis' (1984) definition of an outlier: an observation which appears to be inconsistent with the remainder of that set of data. To more accurately answer the fourth research goal, the outlier was removed from the samples after which a second analysis of both the total and secondary samples was conducted. These results are presented in Table 6.

Descriptive data for total sample. A description of the respondents in terms of demographic variables is included in Table 1. Of the total number of respondents (N = 234), 81.2 percent were certificated school psychologists while 18.8 percent were interns. Approximately 24 percent of the respondents reported being employed by urban (e.g., Cleveland City Schools) school districts, approximately 50 percent by suburban districts and 27.6 percent by rural school districts (e.g., Licking County
Schools). Regarding gender, the respondents were approximately one-third male and two thirds female.

Within the total sample, 44.9 percent of the respondents received their school psychology certification between 1980 and 1987; 45.9 percent between 1970 and 1979; 6.8 percent between 1960 and 1969; and only 1.0 percent prior to 1960. Similarly, of the 44 respondents with school psychology licensure, 77.3 percent became licensed between 1980 and 1987, and the remaining 22.7 percent between 1970 and 1979. Of the total number of respondents, only 32 reported being licensed as a psychologist. Of those, 18.7 percent became licensed between 1980 and 1987; 78.2 percent between 1970 and 1979; and, 3.1 percent between 1960 and 1969.

With regard to educational experience, 45.7 percent of the respondents earned their M.A. degree between 1980 and 1987; 43 percent between 1970 and 1979; 8.7 percent between 1960 and 1969; and 2.6 percent prior to 1960. Of the total number of respondents, 28 reported to having earned a doctoral degree the majority of which (i.e., 53.6%) were earned between 1980 and 1987. Of the 28 respondents, 35.7 percent earned doctoral degrees between 1970 and 1979, while 7.1 and 3.6 percent earned doctoral degrees between 1960 and 1969, and prior to 1960, respectively.

The majority of the respondents (i.e., 57.7%) reported having some amount of teaching experience. Of those, 43.6
Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Demographic Variables

for Total and Secondary Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Secondary Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 234</td>
<td>N = 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 9810.3$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 9916.5$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 16,209.8</td>
<td>S.D. = 17,769.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 270 - 76,000</td>
<td>Range = 270 - 76,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in Years</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 37.5$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 39.2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 8.41</td>
<td>S.D. = 9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 23 - 64</td>
<td>Range = 24 - 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as School Psychologist</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 8.45$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 9.58$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 6.08</td>
<td>S.D. = 7.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 0 - 38</td>
<td>Range = 0 - 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Teaching Experience</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 4.86$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 5.1$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 4.24</td>
<td>S.D. = 4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 1 - 22</td>
<td>Range = 1 - 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching Regular Education at Elementary Level</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 4.28$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 5.2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 4.18</td>
<td>S.D. = 5.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 1 - 22</td>
<td>Range = 1 - 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching Regular Education at Middle School Level</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.54$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.55$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 3.41</td>
<td>S.D. = 3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 1 - 15</td>
<td>Range = 1 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching Regular Education at Secondary Level</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>$\bar{x} = 4.78$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 4.06$</td>
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<td>S.D. = 4.62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Range = 1 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Special Education Teaching Experience</td>
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<td>78</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x} = .81$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = .67$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 1.95</td>
<td>S.D. = 1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 0 - 10</td>
<td>Range = 0 - 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
percent taught regular education and 23.5 percent taught special education.

Additional demographic variables are best described by reporting the means, standard deviations and ranges for those variables (see Table 2). Respondents were asked to indicate the enrollment of the school district in which they were employed. Reported enrollment ranged from 270 to 76,000 students with the mean enrollment being 9810.3.

Respondents ranged in age from 23 to 64 years; the average age of respondents was 37.5 years.

The respondents' years of experience as a practicing school psychologist ranged from zero full years (for interns) up to 38 years, with the mean number of years equal to 8.45 years.

The mean number of years of teaching experience prior to becoming a school psychologist was 4.86 years. Responses ranged from 1 to 22 years of experience. This experience was more often gained in regular ($\overline{X}$ number of years = 3.54) rather than special education ($\overline{X}$ number of years = .81). Within regular education, the number of years of experience ranged from 1 - 22, 1 - 15, and 1 - 20 at the elementary, middle school and secondary levels, respectively. The mean number of years of experience at each of those levels was 4.28, 3.54, and 4.78, respectively.

An analysis of survey responses to the attitudinal items is presented in Tables 3 and 4. A little over half (i.e., 55.3%) of the respondents felt that the majority of their preparation in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Secondary Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 234</td>
<td>N = 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>$\bar{X} = 4.96$</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 4.88$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 1.38</td>
<td>S.D. = 1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 1 - 7</td>
<td>Range = 1 - 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adequacy of</td>
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<td>Preparation</td>
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<td>S.D. = 1.40</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement - Special</td>
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<td>$\bar{X} = 4.3$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>S.D. = 1.07</td>
<td>S.D. = 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 1 - 7</td>
<td>Range = 2 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement - Regular</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 3.7$</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 3.77$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = .82</td>
<td>S.D. = .81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 2 - 6</td>
<td>Range = 2 - 6</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 4
Frequency of Attitudinal Variables for Total and Secondary Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Secondary Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 234</td>
<td>N = 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservice</td>
<td>119 55.3%</td>
<td>36 49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inservice</td>
<td>87 40.5%</td>
<td>35 47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>9 4.2%</td>
<td>2 2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of Special Education Students are more/less Involved Than Parents of Regular Education Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>173 82.0%</td>
<td>59 80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>38 18.0%</td>
<td>14 19.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
working with parents occurred at the preservice level. On the other hand, 40.5 percent believed their preparation to be mainly the result of experiences at the inservice level. Four percent credited their preparation to both inservice and preservice level activities. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 7 the adequacy of their preparation to work with parents, with "1" signifying inadequate and "7" signifying adequate. The mean response to this item was 4.74.

An overwhelming majority (i.e., 82%) of the respondents believed parents of special education students to be more involved in their children's educational program than parents of students in regular education programs. Further, respondents were asked to rank on a scale of "1" (not involved) to "7" (greatly involved) the level of involvement of parents of both regular and special education students. The mean level of involvement of parents of special education students was 4.3, while the mean level of involvement of parents of regular education students was 3.7.

Lastly, respondents were asked to rank on a scale of 1 to 7 the extent to which their school district's policies affect parents' level of involvement. On this scale "1" represented "hinder", while "7" represented "facilitate." The mean responses to this item was 4.96.
Descriptive data for secondary sample. Descriptive data for the secondary sample (N = 80) are presented in Tables 1 through 4 alongside total sample data for ease of comparison.

Similar to the total sample, 80.0 percent of the respondents in the secondary sample were certificated school psychologists, as compared to the 20 percent who were interns.

Virtually no difference was found between the total and secondary sample in terms of the type of school district in which the respondent was employed. The mean enrollment of students reported by secondary sample respondents was 9916.5 as compared to a mean of 9810 reported from the total sample.

The average age of the respondents was 39.2, ranging from 24 to 62 years. Approximately 42 percent of the respondents were male; whereas, 58.2 percent were female.

The mean number of years as a practicing school psychologists was 9.58 years; the range was zero to 38 years. Respondents most often earned their school psychology certificate after 1970. For example, 36 percent earned their certificates between 1980 and 1987, and 53.8 percent between 1970 and 1979. Only 7.5 percent and 3.0 percent earned certificates in school psychology between 1960 and 1969, and prior to 1960, respectively.

Similarly, the 19 respondents who indicated that they were licensed school psychologists obtained that license after 1970.
Specifically, 68.4 percent became licensed between 1980 and 1987; 32.6 percent became licensed between 1970 and 1979.

Fourteen respondents reported being licensed as psychologists, 92.9 percent of whom received that license between 1970 and 1979 and the remaining 7.1 percent between 1980 and the present.

Data concerning the educational experience of secondary sample respondents was similar to that of the total sample. Almost 37 percent of the respondents earned their masters degree after 1980 and 46.8 percent between 1970 and 1979. Only 11.4 percent earned their masters degree between 1960 and 1969; 5.1 percent earned their degree prior to 1960. Six respondents indicated that they had a doctoral degree. Fifty percent earned their advanced degree between 1980 and 1987, and 1970 and 1979, respectively.

Sixty percent of the respondents reported having teaching experience prior to becoming a school psychologist; the mean number of years of that experience was 4.86. Approximately, 50 percent of the respondents indicated that their teaching experience was in regular education, as compared to the 25 percent in special education.

The mean number of years teaching experience across the elementary, middle school, and secondary level was 5.2, 3.55, and 4.06, respectively. Years of experience ranged from 1 to 22 at
the elementary level, and 1 to 10 at the middle school and secondary levels.

The mean number of years of special education teaching experience was .67, and ranged from zero to 18 years.

Tables 3 and 4 present the secondary sample responses to the attitudinal survey questions. As was the case in the total sample analysis, 49.3 percent of the respondents felt that the majority of their training occurred at the preservice level; 47.9 percent at the inservice level; and, 2.7 percent at both the inservice and preservice level. The mean rank on a scale of "1" (inadequate) to "7" (adequate) of respondents' beliefs about the adequacy of their preparation was 4.92.

Most respondents (i.e., 80.8%) believed that parents of students in special education were more involved in their children's program than parents of regular education students. Mean responses to items requiring respondents to rank (on a scale of 1 to 7) the level of involvement of parents of the regular and special education students were nearly identical to results based on total sample responses (see Table 3).

Likewise, a mean score of 4.88 was evident on the item requiring respondents to rank, on a scale of 1 to 7, the effect of their school district's policy on parental involvement.

Inferential Data for the Total and Secondary Samples. In order to determine differences among the categories of school psychologists' work with parents (e.g., family systems
Table 5

Results of Within Subjects Analysis of Variance for the Total Sample and the Secondary Sample

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<tr>
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<td>.3802</td>
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Table 6
Results of Within Subjects Analysis of Variance for the Total Sample and
the Secondary Sample with Outlier Eliminated from the Samples

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type &amp; Nature</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>300.3</td>
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<td>390</td>
<td>157.1</td>
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</table>
intervention) and between parents of special and regular education students, an analysis of variance (Myers, 1979) was applied to the data obtained through survey item 14.0 (see Appendix B). A within-subjects model was employed because the same group of individuals responded to all levels of each of the two categorical variables.

To answer the fourth research question (see page 50) related to differences in type of programming (i.e., special education versus regular education), the ANOVA revealed that there were significant differences in the total sample (N = 234). The differences indicate that the mean number of interactions for special education was higher than regular education (X special education = 74.7; X regular education = 56.0). This finding did not change when the outlier was removed from the samples as indicated in Table 7. The means were 70.4 and 56.0, again indicating that the mean number of interactions was higher for parents of special education students than it was for parents of regular education students.

Unlike the total sample, there appear to be no differences in type of programming using either N = 80 or N = 79 (i.e., with outlier removed). Tables 5 and 6 reveal that significance levels for both secondary samples (i.e., with and without the outlier) were nonsignificant. This is evidenced by the mean scores for special and regular education (X special education = 77.3; X regular education = 63.9). Means more closely approximated each
### Table 7
Means for Type and Nature Variables for Total and Secondary Samples with Outlier Removed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
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<th>N = 79</th>
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<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSI</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWP</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>CNF</td>
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<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEP</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>PCT</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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</table>
other with the removal of the outlier (See Table 7). This is probably because the outlier represented the highest score in the range of scores (range = 0 to 99) and when removed the range became much more narrow.

Differences among frequencies of interactions based on the nature of the interaction must also be examined to answer the fourth research goal (see page 50). The ANOVA reveals that differences among nature of work do exist for the total sample as evidenced by the probability (P) level of .0000 (see Table 5). To better understand these differences, the means for each level of nature must be reviewed. They include: X family systems intervention (FSI) = 17.3; X consultation (CWP) = 41.3; X conferencing (CNF) = 60.5; X parent education (PEP) = 4.4; X parent training (PTP) = 3.1; and, X parent counseling/therapy (PCT) = 4.1. Further, to determine what differences among the means were significant, post hoc analyses were performed.

Analysis of nature differences for total and secondary samples. In general, post-hoc analyses enable the comparison of all means while controlling experiment-wise error, (i.e., error resulting in significant findings that are due to chance). The control of experiment-wise error is an advantage of the post-hoc over some other types of analyses such as the t-test. The Scheffe was chosen as the most appropriate method of conducting the post-hoc analyses because it allows a determination of significant differences among means in a within subjects design.
to be made with no a priori notions regarding which means should be compared (Myers, 1979).

Kennedy's formula 5.44 (1978) for calculating Scheffes provides the least significant difference (LSD), or allows the difference between two means that must be attained to result in significance, to be determined.

Based on Kennedy's formula the LSD for the total sample (N = 234) required for statistical significance was 5.08 (see Table 10). Note that the Scheffes indicate that school psychologists perform the following activities in the assigned rank order: (1) conferencing (CNF); (2) consultation (CWP); (3) family systems intervention (FSI); (4) parent education programs, parent training programs and parent counseling/therapy (PEP, PTP, PCT) were performed at about the same rate.

Significant differences among frequencies of interactions based on the variable nature were also present when the outlier was removed from the total sample as evidenced by a probability level of .0000 (see Table 6). The means for each level of nature are displayed in Table 7 and include: \( \bar{x} \) FSI = 17.2; \( \bar{x} \) CWP = 37.9; \( \bar{x} \) CNF = 60.5; \( \bar{x} \) PEP = 3.5; \( \bar{x} \) PTP = 3.1; and, \( \bar{x} \) PCT = 3.8. A post hoc analysis was again performed to identify the existence of significant differences among the means.

The LSD for the total with the outlier removed (N = 233) was 4.59 (see Table 10). Again, respondents engaged in conferencing with parents at a significantly higher rate than any other
activity. They engaged in consultation most frequently after conferencing and in family systems intervention as the third most frequent nature of interaction with parents; these too represented significant differences. They engaged in the remaining activities (i.e., PEP, PTP, and PCT) at a lesser and virtually equivalent rate of interaction.

ANOVA applied to secondary sample data again revealed significant differences ($P = .0000$) among the various levels of nature of work (see Tables 5 and 6). Those differences occurred when the outlier was both included and excluded from the analysis. A review of the means for each level of nature for the secondary sample before and after the exclusion of the outlier revealed the following mean values. Secondary sample ($N = 80$) mean values included: $\bar{X}_{FI} = 15.9; \bar{X}_{CWP} = 47.2; \bar{X}_{CNF} = 65.9; \bar{X}_{PEP} = 5.6; \bar{X}_{PTP} = 2.9; \text{ and } \bar{X}_{PCT} = 3.7$. Following removal of the outlier ($N = 79$), secondary sample mean values included: $\bar{X}_{FI} = 15.5; \bar{X}_{CWP} = 37.4; \bar{X}_{CNF} = 66.2; \bar{X}_{PEP} = 3.0; \bar{X}_{PTP} = 2.9; \text{ and } \bar{X}_{PCT} = 3.1$. To determine what differences among means were significant, a post hoc analysis was again conducted.

The LSDs for secondary sample data with ($N = 80$) and without ($N = 79$) the outlier were 6.17 and 7.60, respectively. Significant differences, similar to the ones noted under previous description of the results of post-hoc analyses, were again found (see Table 10).
Interaction effects for total sample. Differences between the interaction of the variables "type" and "nature" must also be investigated to answer completely the fourth research question (see page 50). Significant differences were evident for the total sample when the outlier was included in the sample (N = 234, P = .0003) and also when it was excluded from the sample (N = 233, P = .0000).

Again, an illustration of the type by nature means may help to explain existing differences. Within the total sample (N = 234), the values of the means include: $\bar{X}$ Special Ed (FSI) = 9.7; $\bar{X}$ Special Ed (CWP) = 23.1; $\bar{X}$ Special Ed (CNF) = 35.4; $\bar{X}$ Special Ed (PEP) = 2.8; $\bar{X}$ Special Ed (PTP) = 1.5; $\bar{X}$ Special Ed (PCT) = 2.2; $\bar{X}$ Regular Ed (FSI) = 7.6; $\bar{X}$ Regular Ed (CWP) = 18.2; $\bar{X}$ Regular Ed (CNF) = 25.1; $\bar{X}$ Regular Ed (PEP) = 1.6; $\bar{X}$ Regular Ed (PTP) = 1.6; and $\bar{X}$ Regular Ed (PCT) = 1.9.

Figure 1 (see page 77) illustrates the extent of interaction between the "type" and "nature" variables. Data represented in Figure 1 can be described as disordinal. The following systematic differences were observed: (1) The differences between the frequency with which respondents engage in conferencing is much larger than for the other levels of nature of interaction with parents, and conferencing occurs more often with parents of special, rather than regular education students, (2) Similar frequencies were observed for consultation (CWP) and family systems intervention (FSI)--both occurred at a slightly
Figure 1. Graph of Interaction Between Total Sample (N = 234) Means for Type and Nature Variables.
higher rate for Type 1 (special) than for Type 2 (regular); and (3) the graph indicates that the only nature of interaction occurring more frequently with parents of regular education parents was PTP (parent training); however, the difference was so slight that the only major interactive finding was shown by CNF.

As noted above, significant differences were evident for the total sample when the outlier was removed (N = 233, \( P = .0000 \)). Following removal of the outlier the values of the means included:

- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Special Ed (FSI)}} = 9.6 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Special Ed (CWP)}} = 19.8 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Special Ed (CNF)}} = 35.4 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Special Ed (PEP)}} = 1.9 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Special Ed (PTP)}} = 1.5 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Special Ed (PCT)}} = 2.2 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Regular Ed (FSI)}} = 7.6 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Regular Ed (CWP)}} = 18.1 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Regular Ed (CNF)}} = 25.2 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Regular Ed (PEP)}} = 1.5 \);
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Regular Ed (PTP)}} = 1.6 \); and
- \( \bar{X}_{\text{Regular Ed (PCT)}} = 1.9 \) (see Table 8).

Figure 2 (see page 79) portrays the differences due to interaction of type and nature variables and demonstrates a pattern almost identical to that of Figure 1, with the exception that the CNF interaction is even more dramatic.

**Interaction effects for the secondary sample.** Unlike the total sample, a significant difference was not found between the variables "type" and "nature," even after exclusion of the outlier (see Tables 5 and 6). Mean values for type by nature variables for the secondary sample (with and without the outlier) included:
Type 1 = 

Type 2 = 

Figure 2. Graph of Interaction Between Type and Nature Variables for Total Sample Means with Outlier Removed (N = 233).
\(N = 80\)  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (FSI) = 8.9;  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (CWP) = 26.4;  
\(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (CNF) = 35.4;  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (PEP) = 3.7;  
\(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (PTP) = 1.4;  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (PCT) = 1.5;  
\(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (FSI) = 7.0;  \(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (CWP) = 20.8;  
\(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (CNF) = 30.5;  \(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (PEP) = 1.9;  
\(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (PTP) = 1.5;  \(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (PCT) = 2.2.

\(N = 79\)  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (FSI) = 8.6;  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (CWP) = 16.7;  
\(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (CNF) = 35.3;  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (PEP) = 1.2;  
\(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (PTP) = 1.5;  \(\bar{x}\) Special Ed (PCT) = 1.5;  
\(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (FSI) = 6.9;  \(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (CWP) = 20.6;  
\(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (CNF) = 30.9;  \(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (PEP) = 1.8;  
\(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (PTP) = 1.5;  \(\bar{x}\) Regular Ed (PCT) = 2.2.

Figures 3 and 4 represent the differences due to the interaction of type of programming and nature of school psychologists' work with parents. According to Table 5, interaction was not significant. Nevertheless, Figure 3 was included for comparative purposes. According to Table 6, interaction between type and nature variables was not significant for the secondary sample with the outlier removed \((N = 79)\); however, the interaction approached significance. Given that it approaches significance it is noteworthy that: (1) the frequency of consulting with parents occurred more frequently with parents of regular education students, while conferencing (CNF) occurred more often with Type 1 (special) parents; (2) the frequency of occurrence of family systems intervention was virtually the same
Figure 3. Graph of Interaction Between Secondary Sample (N = 80) Means for Type and Nature Variables.
Frequency of Interaction

Type 1 = _____.
Type 2 = _____.

Figure 4. Graph of Interaction Between Type and Nature Variables for Secondary Sample Means with Outlier Removed (N = 79).
for Types 1 and 2; and, (3) the frequency of occurrence of PEP, PTP and PCT was virtually equivalent. Although the finding was not significant, it approaches significance to such an extent that the highlighting of this interaction was warranted, especially in view of its unique characteristics as compared to the other graphs.

In order to illustrate the potential differences and similarities, a parsimonious representation of the results of ANOVAs is given. This representation is restricted to analyses from which the outlier was removed (i.e., N = 233 and N = 79) since that individual's data were suspect.

The results of the ANOVAs for the variable type reveal a somewhat higher mean (X = 70.4) for special education (i.e., Type 1) for the total sample than for the secondary sample (i.e., X Type 1 = 64.9). The standard deviation for both the total and secondary sample were virtually equivalent with values of 82.4 and 82.5, respectively.

In contrast to special education programming, or Type 1, the mean for regular education (i.e., Type 2) was higher for the secondary sample (X = 63.9) than for the total sample (X = 56.0). Standard deviations for both samples were more disparate, with the total sample standard deviation equal to 65.4, while the secondary sample standard deviation equalled 70.9.

For the variable nature of school psychologists' work with parents, the results of ANOVA for the total sample (N = 233) and
Table 8

Means for Type X Nature Interaction for the Total and Secondary Samples with Outlier Removed

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>N = 233</th>
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<td>PCT</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
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</table>
secondary sample (N = 79) were very similar. The means for several levels of the variable nature, namely family systems intervention (FSI), consultation with parents (CWP), parent education programs (PEP), parent training programs (PTP), and parent counseling/therapy (PCT) were slightly higher for the total sample (N = 233) than for the secondary sample (N = 79) (see Table 7). In contrast, the mean for one level of nature, conferencing with parents (CNF), was higher for the secondary sample than for the total sample (i.e., $X = 66.2$ as compared to $X = 60.5$).

The standard deviations (S.D.) for CWP, CNF, PTP, and PCT were higher for the secondary sample than for the total sample indicating more variability in secondary sample scores (see Table 7). Standard deviations were somewhat larger for the total sample variable levels of FSI and PEP.

The third and last analysis made possible by the ANOVA is the analysis of differences based on the interaction of the variables type and nature (see Table 8). Within Type 1 (special education), the means and standard deviations for each level of nature (e.g., FSI, CWP, etc.) can be compared across the total and secondary sample. Specifically, for the level FSI, CWP, and PCT means and standard deviations were slightly higher for the total sample than for the secondary sample. The means and standard deviations were almost identical in both samples for the level CNF. In the level PEP, the mean for the total sample ($X =$
1.9) was slightly higher than the mean for the secondary sample ($\bar{X} = 1.2$); however, the standard deviation was noticeably large for the total sample (S.D. = 8.5) and expectedly, larger than that of the secondary sample (S.D. = 3.1). The means for the level PTP were identical for both the total and secondary samples, with the standard deviation being slightly larger in the secondary sample.

Within Type 2 (Regular Education), means and standard deviations are slightly higher in the secondary sample as compared to the total sample for the levels of nature: CWP, CNF, PEP, and PCT (see Table 8). In the level FSI, the mean for the total sample is slightly larger than that for the secondary sample; the standard deviations are nearly equivalent (i.e., S.D. = 16.7 and 16.8). Likewise the mean for PEP is a bit higher for the total sample, but the standard deviation is higher for the secondary sample.

**Descriptive data for source variables.** Table 9 outlines the source of the data given in response to survey item 14.0 (see Appendix B). Almost 66 percent of the total respondents used estimation to respond to survey item 14.0, as compared to 69.3 percent for the secondary sample. Another 29 percent in both the total and secondary samples relied on their log or appointment book to complete the survey. Only 4.2 percent in the total sample and 1.3 percent in the secondary sample used a combination of estimation and log book in responding to the survey.
Table 9

Frequency of Source Variables for Total Sample and Secondary Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th></th>
<th>Secondary Sample</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 234</td>
<td>N = 80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Data for Tables 5 and 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimation</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log/Appointment Book</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission to Contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Differences of Means for Total and Secondary Samples, With and Without Outlier, Among the Various Natures of Intervention with Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Total Sample with Outlier Removed</th>
<th>Secondary Sample</th>
<th>Secondary Sample with Outlier Removed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSI - CWP</td>
<td>24.0*</td>
<td>20.7*</td>
<td>31.3*</td>
<td>21.9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNF</td>
<td>43.2*</td>
<td>43.3*</td>
<td>50.0*</td>
<td>50.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEP</td>
<td>12.9*</td>
<td>13.7*</td>
<td>10.3*</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>14.2*</td>
<td>14.1*</td>
<td>13.0*</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCT</td>
<td>13.2*</td>
<td>13.4*</td>
<td>12.2*</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWP - CNF</td>
<td>19.2*</td>
<td>22.6*</td>
<td>18.7*</td>
<td>28.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEP</td>
<td>36.9*</td>
<td>34.4*</td>
<td>41.6*</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>38.2*</td>
<td>34.8*</td>
<td>44.3*</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCT</td>
<td>37.2*</td>
<td>34.1*</td>
<td>43.5*</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNF - PEP</td>
<td>56.1*</td>
<td>57.0*</td>
<td>60.3*</td>
<td>63.2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>57.4*</td>
<td>57.4*</td>
<td>63.0*</td>
<td>63.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCT</td>
<td>56.4*</td>
<td>56.7*</td>
<td>62.2*</td>
<td>63.1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEP - PTP</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCT</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP - PCT</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Least Significant Difference

5.08  4.59  6.17  7.60

*Significance Difference, p < .05
Respondents were questioned regarding their willingness to be contacted by the investigator at a later date. A little over half of the respondents in both samples indicated that they would be willing to be contacted. Forty-one percent and 43.4 percent in the total and secondary samples respectively indicated that they did not want to be contacted at a later time.

Discussion of Data

Overview of results. The data presented in this dissertation were obtained through a survey (see Appendix B) mailed to 1,047 Ohio school psychologists whose names appeared on the mailing list of the Ohio School Psychologists' Association (OSPA). Results are based on (a) an analysis of the total number of respondents, referred to as the "total sample" (N = 234) and (b) an analysis of a secondary sample (N = 80) randomly drawn from the total sample. Analyses were compared before and after exclusion of an outlier.

The extent and nature of respondents' involvement with parents of regular and special education students have been determined by answering research question number four (see page 50) and is addressed in the discussion related to the results of the fourth research goal.

Respondents indicated that the adequacy of their preparation to work with parents ranked, on a scale of "1" (inadequate) to "7" (adequate), a score of 4.7 in the total sample and 4.9 in the secondary sample.
In the total sample, 55.3 percent of the respondents believed the majority of their preparation occurred at the preservice level. Forty percent believed their preparation to have occurred at the inservice level, and four percent attributed their preparation to both inservice and preservice training experiences. In the secondary sample, 49.3 percent and 47.9 percent of the respondents indicated that the majority of their preparation occurred at the preservice and inservice levels, respectively.

Reasons for the overall "moderate" rating in terms of adequacy of preparation are probably related to a lack of widespread importance attached to the topic of working with parents among training programs. The fact that only about half of the respondents received the majority of their preparation at the preservice level demonstrates that the attention devoted to the topic of working with parents varies among school psychology training programs in Ohio.

This study required survey recipients to respond in a retrospective fashion. That, combined with the lack of standard reference for the terms "adequate" and "inadequate," may also have contributed to these results.

A two-way within subjects design was used to answer the research questions subsumed by the fourth goal (see page 50). During the course of analysis, it became obvious that one subject was responding erroneously; therefore, a second set of analyses
were conducted with this outlier removed. Results will be discussed in terms of significant differences due to (a) type of programming (i.e., special versus regular), (b) nature of school psychologists' involvement with parents, and (c) interaction between type and nature variables.

Significant differences due to type of programming were found in the total sample, even after removal of the outlier. That the mean number of interactions with parents was higher for parents of special education students is not surprising. Most Ohio school psychologists are funded by special education monies and are permitted to work with regular education students and their parents only "after all handicapped or suspected handicapped children have received appropriate psychological services" (Ohio Rules for the Education of Handicapped Children, 1982, p. 86).

In contrast, differences depending on type of programming were nonsignificant in the secondary sample. In other words, respondents did not report significantly higher rates of involvement with parents of special education students, as compared to parents of regular education students. Reasons posited for this discrepancy were: (a) the secondary sample is not representative of the total sample; or, (b) biases inherent in the total sample were minimized in the secondary sample, leading us to believe that the secondary sample is more representative of the population.
Differences among frequencies of interactions based on the nature of that interaction were significant for both the total and secondary samples. According to the post-hoc analyses, school psychologists engage in parent conferencing more often than any other type of interaction with parents. They engage in consultation and family systems intervention second and third most frequently, respectively. They conduct, at about the same rate, parent education, parent training and parent counseling/therapy infrequently (see Table 10). Because of school psychologists' role and function, some activities such as conferencing and, to a lesser extent consultation, are more easily incorporated into the more performa aspects of the job. For example, prior to and after psychoeducational evaluation, it is typical for school psychologists to meet with parents. Others, such as parent education and/or training, are more divergent and less easily incorporated into routine duties.

The last analysis of differences, differences due to the interaction between type of programming and nature of school psychologists' work with parents, revealed significant differences for the total sample (N = 233 with outlier removed) and differences that approached significance for the secondary sample (N = 79). In the total sample, interactions that were found regardless of the presence of the outlier, were disordinal only when using the strictest definition of the term. But, the direct intersection necessary for a disordinal interaction was so
minimal and occurred in parts of the graph where the intersection was close to being parallel, that the rest of the graph is and must be interpreted as ordinal. Making such a claim allows us to interpret both the interaction and the main effect (See Kennedy, 1978). For all intents and purposes, Figure 2 reflects an ordinal interaction. The fact that conferencing is vastly different in its frequency of occurrence is not surprising given that the school psychologists' role dictates more structured conferences with parents of special education students. Further, with regard to the finding that the occurrences of consultation were higher for special than regular, the probability that school psychologists meet and consult with parents of regular education students is likely, given the fact that there are more parents of regular education students than special education students in the schools. Thus, the reason that differences in magnitude between frequency of consultation with parents of special and regular education students is much less than the same magnitude for conferencing is easily understood.

This argument can be made even more strongly based on the secondary sample data. In Figure 4, the interaction approaches significance and the nature of the interaction is disordinal. In other words, the disordinal interaction more clearly illustrates the interaction (i.e., ordinal) that was alluded to in Figure 2. As reflected in Figure 4, school psychologists are more likely to engage in consultation (which can be used to describe a variety
of activities) with regular education parents (Type 2) than with special education parents (Type 1). Haphazard interaction (such as consultation) more likely characterizes interactions with parents of regular education students; whereas, structured interaction (such as conferencing) more likely characterizes interaction with parents of special education students. Consultation, by definition, can refer to a myriad of events, thus accounting for the finding that it occurs more often when school psychologists work with parents of regular rather than special education students.

To explain this point one should note that, unlike the total sample, differences between type and nature only approached significance in the secondary sample. Further, the type of interaction in the secondary sample (i.e., disordinal) more strikingly represented an interaction than did the pattern reflected in the total sample (i.e., ordinal). Given this discrepancy, it seems logical that secondary sample data reflect more accurately the reality of school psychologists' interactions with parents. Also, the secondary sample, because it was randomly drawn from the opportunity sample, should have a greater likelihood of reducing or minimizing biasing factors inherent in the total sample.

**Limitations of this Study**

Use of an opportunity sample, the OSPA mailing list, to access the population of Ohio school psychologists, has obvious
implications for the credibility and generalizability of the results of this study. Time and cost factors provided ample justification for using the OSPA list; however, its use resulted in potential biases (e.g., membership bias) that most certainly limit the extent to which findings can be generalized to the population of Ohio school psychologists. Another biasing factor relates to response bias. In other words, whatever factors may influence some persons to respond would systematically bias the results. Randomly drawing the secondary sample and comparing it to the total sample was an effort to address biases believed to be inherent in the total (i.e., opportunity) sample.

A second limitation involves the source of the data provided in response to survey item 14.0 (see Appendix B). The majority of the respondents (i.e., 66% in the total sample; 69% in the secondary sample) relied on estimation to complete the survey (see Table 9). The extent to which their responses would have differed had they used an appointment/log book is unknown. The results of the study arm limited to the perceptions of the respondents and not based on records. Thus, limitations of retrospective studies are a limitation of this study.

Lastly, although definitions were provided for each category of interaction with parents (see Appendix B), respondents could have interpreted differently the behaviors and activities subsumed by each category. In fact, the overlap in terminology, so apparent in the literature, more than likely contributes to the
lack of universally accepted criteria and dearth of empirical evidence to support that school psychologists engage in substantially different activities. Thus, the results of this study are again, in part, a representation of respondents' perceptions about the nature of their actions.
Summary

This study investigated the extent and nature of Ohio school psychologists' work with parents of children in special and regular education programs. A review of the school psychology literature indicated that school psychologists most often work with parents in the following ways: (1) family systems intervention; (2) consultation; (3) conferencing; (4) parent education and/or parent training; and (5) counseling/therapy. Beyond general categories, little definitive or practical information was found concerning working with parents. Yet, the development of meaningful partnerships between educators and parents is believed to be critical to the provision of appropriate educational services for all children. Further, the school psychologists, because of their role and function, are recognized as the professionals who could most likely serve as liaison between the home and school. Therefore, this study was undertaken to investigate how school psychologists in Ohio work with parents.

Data for this study were obtained through a survey mailed to 1,047 school psychologists whose names appeared on the mailing
list of the Ohio School Psychologists' Association (OSPA). Survey respondents provided information in response to (a) demographic variables, (b) attitudinal variables, and (c) items designed to obtain quantitative information regarding their involvement with parents (see Appendix B). From the 234 completed surveys, a secondary sample was randomly drawn (N = 80), the results from which were compared to results based on total sample data. Initial analyses revealed the presence of an outlier; therefore, a second analysis was conducted on both total and secondary sample data following exclusion of the outlier from both samples.

Conclusions

This study was designed to determine the extent and nature of Ohio school psychologists' work with parents of children in regular and special education programs by investigating:

1. How often respondents formally engaged in each of the categories listed on page 54 with parents of (a) special and (b) regular education students,

2. The extent to which respondents felt adequately prepared to work with parents,

3. The existence of significant differences in the extent of involvement with parents due to the type of programming (i.e., special versus regular education programs).
4. The existence of significant differences in the extent of involvement with parents due to the nature of that involvement, and
5. The existence of significant differences in the extent of involvement with parents due to the interaction between type of programming and the nature of the involvement.

In examining how adequately respondents felt they were prepared to work with parents, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Overall, respondents felt their preparation in working with parents to be moderately adequate.
2. Preparation to work with parents was attributed almost as often to inservice experiences as it was to preservice training programs.
3. The importance placed on the topic of working with parents, and/or the amount of time devoted to the topic, varies greatly among school psychology training programs.

In examining the extent to which significant differences in working with parents depended on the type of parent (i.e., parents of students in special versus regular education programs) with whom the school psychologists worked, the following conclusions can be drawn:
1. Total sample data indicated that respondents interacted at a significantly higher rate with parents of special education students as compared to parents of regular education students.

2. A significantly higher rate in working with parents of special education students was not evident based on secondary sample data.

3. The secondary sample (N=79) is not representative of the total sample or, biases inherent in the total sample were minimized in the secondary sample increasing the likelihood that it is more representative of the population.

In examining the extent to which significant differences in working with parents depended on the nature of that work, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Respondents engaged in parent conferencing much more frequently and at a significantly higher rate, than they did other categories of working with parents.

2. After conferencing, the activities that respondents engaged in most frequently were (a) consultation and to a lesser extent, (b) family systems intervention (see Table 10).

3. The respondents engaged in parent education, parent training, and parent counseling/therapy at about the same rate and at a significantly lower rate than
conferencing, consultation and family systems intervention.

In examining the extent to which significant differences in working with parents depended on the interaction between type of programming and nature of work, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Based on total sample data \((N = 233)\), respondents to a significant extent, more often engaged in conferencing, consultation and family systems intervention when working with parents of special, rather than regular, education students.

2. Secondary sample \((N = 79)\) data not only minimized the magnitude of the difference between the frequency of occurrence of CNF and the other natures of interaction, but indicated that consultation occurs more frequently when respondents worked with parents of regular (not special) education students.

3. It is believed that secondary sample data portrays more realistically the nature of school psychologists' interactions with parents of regular and special education students.

4. It is probable that the secondary sample, because it was randomly chosen, comes closer to representing the population of Ohio School Psychologists than does the total sample.
Recommendations

Based on the above results and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made:

1. A methodological study on sampling is warranted in which a random sample drawn from an opportunity sample (i.e., a secondary sample) is compared to a sample randomly drawn from the population. Comparing results of the true random sample with those of the secondary sample could validate or invalidate the use of a secondary sample, such as the one used in this study, for a given population.

2. In general, the topic of working with parents is of sufficient importance to warrant its inclusion in school psychology training programs. It is noteworthy that the category of working with parents in which respondents spent the most amount of time (i.e., conferencing with parents--CNF) received the least amount of attention in the school psychology literature.

3. Incorporating the topic "working with parents" into school psychology training programs should first involve the development of a taxonomy of skills needed to work effectively with parents. Merely applying a label to the activity (e.g., consultation) is not sufficient for preparing individuals to perform that
activity, nor is it sufficient for evaluating the effects of that training.
APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER

OSPA LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT
March 30, 1987

Dear Colleague:

I am conducting a study on the extent and nature of Ohio school psychologists' work with parents of children in special and regular education programs.

Enclosed is a survey form that I would appreciate your taking some time to complete. Please return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. This form took approximately 15 minutes to complete in a pilot test.

Please also complete and return the bottom portion of this page if you would like a summary of the results of the study. Your envelope is coded so that you may possibly be called for more information if you respond "yes" to item 16.0 (see page three of the survey). If you check "no" your responses will not be keyed to your name, thus assuring your anonymity.

Your cooperation in completing this survey form would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Deborah Telfer
School Psychologist

NOTE: Please complete and return with the survey form if you would like to receive a summary of the results of the study.

NAME _________________________________________________________

ADDRESS _______________________________________________________

PHONE _______________________________________________________

Program Areas: Counseling, School Psychology, Special Education, Guided Education
Rehabilitation Services, Psycho-Education Clinic
College of Education
Dear OSPA Member,

Without doubt, the work of school psychologists with the parents of the children we serve in the schools of Ohio represents an extremely important part of our professional practice. The enclosed survey was designed to gather information regarding the extent and nature of school psychologist-parent interactions.

The survey has been reviewed by the OSPA Research Committee. We believe the study of which it is a critical part may result in new insight into this topic that would be of significant benefit to us in terms of the professional practice of school psychology. The findings of the study will be reported to the members of OSPA.

I would like to encourage you to complete the survey and return it as requested. Thank you in advance for your help and support in this effort.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Curtis, President
APPENDIX B

SURVEY

EXTENT AND NATURE OF OHIO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' WORK WITH PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
A SURVEY OF THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF OHIO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' WORK WITH PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1.0 Type of School District (circle one):
   Urban (e.g., Cleveland City Schools)
   Suburban (e.g., Upper Arlington Schools)
   Rural (e.g., Licking County Schools)

2.0 Indicate approximate enrollment: ______________________

3.0 Sex: M ____ F ____

4.0 Age: ______

5.0 How many years have you practiced as a school psychologist? ______

6.0 In what year were you:
   certified as a school psychologist? ______
   licensed as a school psychologist? ______
   licensed as a psychologist? ______

7.0 Institution where you received your school psychology preparation. ____________________________

8.0 In what year did you receive your Master's Degree? ______ Your Ph.D.? ______

9.0 Did you teach before becoming a school psychologist? Yes ____ No ____
   9.1 If yes, for how long? ______
   9.2 Did you teach regular education? Yes ____ No ____ No. years at Elem. level ______
   Middle School level ______ Secondary level ______
   9.3 Did you teach special education? Yes ____ No ____ No. Years ______

10.0 To what extent does your district's policies facilitate or hinder parent involvement?
   ______

11.0 To what extent do you believe you were adequately prepared to work with parents?
   ______

12.0 Did you receive the majority of your preparation to work with parents in preservice ____ or
   inservice ____ programs?

13.0 Do you feel that parents of children with handicapping conditions are more/less involved with
   their child's education program than parents of non-special education students? MORE LESS ______
   13.1 What do you believe is the level of involvement of parents of children who are
   receiving special education services? ______
   13.2 What do you believe is the level of involvement of parents of children in regular education?

Please see next page.
14.0 With students as the primary client, please indicate the number of contacts per month in each of the categories defined below that you devoted in your role as a school psychologist to working with parents of (a) students who are receiving special education ("Spec") and (b) students in regular education ("Reg").

14.1 FAMILY SYSTEMS INTERVENTION
Definition: An intervention that focuses on the family as a method of interrelated parts that assumes the individual's problems are symptomatic of interactional problems within the family (Anderson, 1983).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan 1987</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPEC</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.2 CONSULTING WITH PARENTS
Definition: An interaction between two individuals (consultant and consultee) that focuses on solving a client's problem (Smith & Lyon, 1984).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan 1987</th>
<th>Feb</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPEC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.3 CONFERENCING WITH PARENTS
Definition: A meeting between parent(s) and a school psychologist concerning a student in which information is shared and recommendations may be made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan 1987</th>
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<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.4 CONDUCTING PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS
Definition: Lecture/discussion meetings designed to provide information, heighten awareness and change attitudes (Kramer, 1986, p. 263).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan 1987</th>
<th>Feb</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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14.5 CONDUCTING PARENT TRAINING PROGRAMS
Definition: Programs designed to equip parents with skills expected to produce changes in parental attitude and behavior as well as concomitant changes in behavior and adjustment of children. Programs range from being very general in scope to focusing on specific techniques (Kramer, 1986, p. 264).

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14.6 PARENT COUNSELING AND/OR THERAPY
Definition: Services provided to parents who have serious problems within the family.

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14.7 OTHER (Please indicate below.)

Please see next page.
15.0 Was the information provided in 14.0 derived from estimate or by checking your appointment or log book? Estimate _____ Appointment Book _____

16.0 May I code your response, and possibly contact you later?
Yes _____ No _____ (Do not key my name to my responses.)

Name three things that can be done to increase parental involvement in the educational process.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thanks for your cooperation.

NOTE: Definitions were taken from the following references:


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Schipper, W. (1982). Recommendations to assist school districts to enhance the provision of quality educational services to handicapped children in Ohio. A report of the State Superintendent's Council for Special Education to the Ohio Department of Education. Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Education.


