

Household Management of Young Families: The Birth of the First Child



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FERN E. HUNT, JOYCE E. MATTHEWS, and KRISTAN R. CROSBY¹

INTRODUCTION

The family is viewed as a social system of inter-related roles and statuses. The family is continually in transition as it passes through the many stages in the life cycle and attempts to meet demands made upon it. How families manage as they pass through the various stages in the life cycle has implications for satisfaction and family welfare. Family management involves planning and implementing the use of available resources to reach levels of achievements and satisfactions acceptable to the family. No ideal mode of family management is universally possible, since each family is unique in its particular values, goals, demands, and resources.

This study involves the perception of husbands and wives of their ability to cope with parenthood. Parenthood represents a major change in family composition imposing critical demands on available resources, including managerial experiences and abilities of husbands and wives.

Parenthood has been viewed as a crisis experience by some researchers but not by others. LeMasters (25) reported that four of every five married, middle-class white parents perceived the transition to parenthood as a period of "extensive" or "severe" crisis. Similarly, Dyer (10) reported that more than one-half of the couples in his study of adjustment of 32 pairs of young first-time parents in Houston associated "extensive" or "severe" crisis with parenthood. In contrast, Hobbs (20) found that 86.8% of the 53 couples (white, urban, first-time parents) he studied were classified in the "slight" crisis category and no couples were in the "extensive" or "severe" crisis category. Russell (35) reported that the birth of the first child was not a severe crisis experience for her sample of 271 couples ranging in age from 16 to 47 years who had become parents for the first time. Hobbs and Cole (21) later concluded in a study of 65 white urban couples with birth of a first child (a replication of a previous study) that it is more accurate to think of parenthood as a transition accom-

panied by some difficulty rather than as a crisis of severe proportions.

An attempt is made here to provide information for understanding some of the dynamics of management in young families with the birth of the first child. How families perceived their problems and resources and attempted to adapt household and financial management practices was a focus of the study. Differences in management (planning and implementing decisions) are reported in relation to various inputs to the management system, especially education, occupational and educational experiences, income, health, housing, and help from parents. Satisfactions with progress toward goals were also explored.

This report is based on data collected in the spring of 1972 from husbands and wives in 100 young families living in four cities in central Ohio with populations of less than 50,000. Families selected for the study met the following criteria:

- Both husband and wife were 29 years of age or younger at the time of the baby's birth.
- A husband, wife, and baby were the only full-time residents of the household.
- The baby was the first child in the family and was 4 to 5 months old (120 to 180 days) at the time of the interview.
- The wife was not employed or was employed for no more than 10 hours per week.

Descriptive information is provided about the young families experiencing the transition to parenthood. Such information should be valuable to professional people who are working with or are interested in reaching young family units in terms of increased understanding of feelings, attitudes, possible problems that are faced, and implications for providing appropriate methods for disseminating relevant information. The findings reported include in Part I a general description of family characteristics such as age of parents, education, occupation, income, health, marriage experience, housing and major equipment, help from parents, and attitudes toward the wife working. Part II includes a discussion of homemaking skills, adequacy of resources, family planning, decision making and implementing, problems of young families, communication, and satisfaction with recreational goals. The study is summarized in Part III and implications for professionals working with young families are suggested.

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Definition of Terms

Some of the terms used in the report are defined here for clarity of meaning. Others will be defined as necessary throughout the report.

Young family refers to a husband living with his wife (both 29 years of age or less) and their first child during the early parenthood stage of the family life cycle.

Demographic factors are those characteristics of a husband and wife which affect their household task performance through an influence on the quantity of human resources available at a specific point in time. These factors include age, health status, education, occupation, community participation, and income.

Human resources are assets possessed by husband and wife which could help them perform household tasks. Human resources include such factors as time, physical health, knowledge, and skill.

Household tasks are activities related to running a household and are performed by husbands and wives in young families. These include shopping for food, laundering clothes, preparing food, child care, and the like. The tasks may represent both decision making and decision implementation activities.

Household task performance roles are the sets of activities customarily engaged in by a husband or wife in operating a household.

Decision making is deciding what to do, how to do, and who should do a task.

Decision implementation is doing the task about which decisions were made.

Satisfaction with help received from parents is a judgment or opinion of the help parents gave compared to the couple's expectations of help.

PART I. WHO WERE THE YOUNG FAMILIES?

General Family Characteristics

Age and Length of Marriage: Age and length of marriage were viewed as indirectly representing personal and marital experience or opportunities to develop and accumulate knowledge, skills, abilities, and financial assets. Wives in the sample were generally about 2 years younger than their husbands (Table 1). At the time of the interview, more than one-half of the husbands were between the ages of 20 and 25 years and most wives were 25 years of age or less; one-fourth of the women were 19 or less.

The average age at marriage for the husbands was 21.6 years (s.d. = 3.10) and for the wives, 19.8 years (s.d. = 2.06) (Table 1). The husbands and wives in this study were younger than the husbands and wives in the population of the United States (45). However, the average difference in age at first marriage of husbands and wives was similar to that for the U. S. population (7).

TABLE 1.—Distribution of Husbands and Wives by Age at Time of Marriage and Interview (N=100).

Age (years)	At Interview		At Marriage	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
	no.	no.		
19 and under	4	25		
20 to 21	14	21		
22 to 23	29	23		
24 to 25	31	26		
26 to 27	11	4		
28 to 29	11	1		
Mean age	23.9 yr	21.8 yr	21.6 yr	19.8 yr
s. d.			3.10	2.06
Range			17 to 28	14 to 25

The couples had been married an average of 30.3 months (2.5 years) prior to being interviewed (Table 2). Based on a 5-month age of the babies, the adjusted average length of marriage prior to parenthood was 25.3 months. Marital experience of individual couples in the total sample varied from 3 to 89 months. The distribution of couples according to number of months married prior to parenthood was:

Less than 12 months	30 couples
12 to 24 months	25 couples
More than 24 months	45 couples

The length of time between marriage and the birth of the first child is a measure of marriage experience and is a period when the husband and wife can concentrate on adjusting to their married status. Blood (1) concluded in an analysis of studies reported by others that "the longer the conception is postponed after marriage, the stronger the marriage has an opportunity to become." Marriage experience prior to the birth of the first child in the present study was slightly higher than reported in studies by Hill (19) or Freedman and Coombs (14). The average time from marriage to the birth of the first child for each of the three generations studied by Hill (19) was about 20 months, whereas half of the women in the sample studied by Freedman and Coombs (14) had their first child within the first year of marriage.

In this central Ohio study, births occurred in 23 families (nearly one-fourth of the sample) less than 9 months after marriage. The incidence of premarital pregnancies was similar to that found in studies by Freedman and Coombs (14, 15) and Russell (35),

TABLE 2.—Marriage Experience of Couples at Birth of Baby and at Time of Interview (N=100).

Time	Mean (months)	s. d.	Range (months)
At birth of baby	25.3	18.6	3 to 89
At interview	30.3	18.5	9 to 94

and less than the 34% of premarital pregnancies reported by Hobbs (20).

Education: Educational attainment of both the husbands and wives was scored according to Hollingshead's classification,² with scores ranging from 1 for graduate professional training to 7 for less than 7 years of schooling (22). The mean for husbands was 3.68 (s.d. = 0.94) and for wives, 3.80 (s.d. = 1.02) (Table 3). Thus, husbands in the sample had attained a slightly higher educational level than the wives. As indicated in the description of education in Table 3, approximately one-third of the husbands and the wives went beyond high school in their education; almost one-half of both husbands and wives were in the high school graduate group. Only 15 of the men and 19 of the women had not graduated from high school. The educational attainment of men and women in this study was similar to that of persons 20 to 29 years of age in the United States in 1971 who had completed high school (79.5%) (44).

During 1971, the year prior to the interview, approximately one-fifth of the wives received some formal schooling. In 1972, following the birth of their baby, only nine wives were receiving formal education: four were enrolled in high school, two in college, and three in vocational-technical programs. Of the husbands in the sample, 37 received formal schooling during 1971. In 1972, 23 husbands were enrolled in high school, college, or vocational-technical programs. When asked whether they had discontinued planned schooling during 1971 or 1972, ten husbands and ten wives said that they had. These findings of discontinued education are consistent with those of Freedman and Coombs (14).

Although an equal number of husbands and wives had discontinued schooling, the wives indicated somewhat more satisfaction than their husbands in their progress toward obtaining their desired level of

²Hollingshead Education Scale: 1 = graduate professional training, 2 = college or university graduation, 3 = partial college training, 4 = high school graduation, 5 = partial high school, 6 = junior high school, 7 = less than 7 years of schooling.

TABLE 3.—Educational Achievement of Husbands and Wives (N=100).*

Educational Achievement Level	Hollingshead Scale Score	Husbands (no.)	Wives (no.)
Graduate professional	1	1	1
College or university graduate	2	10	10
Partial college; trade or technical school	3	26	21
High school graduate	4	48	49
Partial high school	5	14	15
Junior high school	6	0	3
Less than 7 yr school	7	1	1

*Mean Hollingshead scale score: husbands, 3.68; wives, 3.80. Standard deviation: husbands, 0.94; wives, 1.02.

TABLE 4.—Self-assessment of Progress Toward Goal of Obtaining Desired Level of Education (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Very well	12	19
Well	35	42
So-so	29	22
Not so well	17	11
Not well at all	5	4
Not applicable	2	2

education (Table 4). Sixty-one wives said that they had done well or very well in obtaining the desired education; only 47 of the husbands responded similarly to the question pertaining to achievement of educational goals.

Home Economics Education: The wives in the sample were asked the amount and type of home economics education that had been received in junior high school and/or senior high school. The majority of the women had some homemaking education at the junior high school and/or freshman level (Table 5); however, fewer than one-third of the respondents had received training in homemaking classes beyond the freshman year of high school. Furthermore, some of the training in home economics at advanced secondary levels was of the non-vocational type which may not have included preparation for homemaking or parenthood but was more of a foods/clothing skills approach. In the present study there was no attempt to determine knowledge acquired through home economics training; however, exposures to courses in homemaking appear to come at a time when students may be too young to be interested in preparing for family life.

Parenthood Classes: After determination of pregnancy, husbands and wives may seek information about parenthood. In the present study, the participants were asked whether or not they had attended classes about young families. More wives than husbands (31 and 25, respectively) had attended some type of class (Table 6). Most of the classes attended provided prenatal and/or child care information

TABLE 5.—Distribution of Respondents (Wife) by Type of Home Economics Education Received in Junior and/or Senior High School (N=100).

Level	None	General	Vocational	Non-vocational
Junior high school	37	63		
Senior high school				
Freshman	63		10	26
Sophomore	66		11	20
Junior	76		12	12
Senior	81		5	13

TABLE 6.—Attendance of Classes About Young Families (N=100).

Type of Class	Number Who Attended	
	Husband	Wife
Natural childbirth	0	0
Prenatal and/or child care: Red Cross	1	6
Prenatal and/or child care: Hospital	15	17
Prenatal and/or child care: Other sponsor or sponsor not identified	7	7
Pre-Cana	1	1
Religious other than Pre-Cana	0	0
Other	1	0
Combination	0	0
No classes attended	75	69

rather than dealing with overall family functioning. It is important to note that the majority of men and women in the sample had not participated in family life classes.

The abundance of information and experience shared by parents of both husbands and wives may bridge the knowledge gap for the young couples with their first child. More than one-half of both husbands and wives reported receiving much or some information from parents; however, high levels of satisfaction with informational types of help received were not evident in the study. With one-half of the couples living within 10 miles from both the husband's and wife's parents, there was opportunity for convenient sharing of information.

Factors Related to Participation in Educational Programs: Couples were asked to indicate, in order of importance, factors which they would consider when deciding whether or not to participate in a series of educational programs in their community. The top factors relating to probable participation were: program cost, joint participation of husband or wife, time available after household or job responsibilities, and when the programs were offered (Table 7). Time available and cost were the most important items to husbands and approval or joint participation of husband was most important to wives.

Occupation: One-third of the men were employed as machine operators and semi-skilled workers (Table 8). Clerical and sales and skilled manual occupations were the types of work for one-fifth of the husbands. Only 15% of the men held either unskilled or higher level administrative, executive positions.

Clerical and sales work was the occupation of one-third of the wives who had been employed prior to the birth of the baby. Another one-third of the women had not been employed prior to having the baby.

TABLE 7.—Factors Important* to Participation in Educational Programs in the Community (N=100).

Factor	Husbands						Wives											
	No Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean Rank	s. d.	No Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean Rank	s. d.
Time available after household or job responsibilities	0	21	30	21	14	10	2	2.7	1.34	2	14	22	30	11	16	5	3.1	1.43
Cost of program	0	29	19	14	18	7	11	2.9	1.69	1	27	20	13	15	13	11	3.0	1.73
Approval or joint participation by husband/wife	0	23	9	26	18	18	4	3.1	1.53	2	31	24	14	12	12	5	2.6	1.57
Day and/or time programs offered	0	16	23	16	20	14	9	3.2	1.57	2	8	20	20	24	18	8	3.5	1.42
Publicity or comments on this or similar programs offered previously	0	5	8	12	17	25	31	4.4	1.50	2	5	4	11	21	23	34	4.6	1.43
Difficulty in obtaining a babysitter	0	4	9	9	11	24	41	4.7	1.52	2	13	8	10	15	17	35	4.2	1.79

* 1=most important; 6=least important. Interest in a particular program topic was not considered in the ranking.

TABLE 8.—Occupations of Husbands at Time of Interview and of Wives Prior to Motherhood.

Occupational Category	Hollingshead Scale Score*	Husbands (no.)	Wives (no.)
Higher executive	1	3	0
Business manager	2	6	8
Administrative	3	4	2
Clerical and sales	4	22	32
Skilled manual	5	19	5
Machine operator and semi-skilled	6	34	10
Unskilled	7	12	9
Not employed	8	0	34

*Mean Hollingshead scale score: husbands, 4.98; s. d.=5.70; wives, mean=1.50; s. d.=2.05.

Income: The mean 1971 taxable income including earned income, profit from own business, rents, interests, dividends, and other income such as benefits, payments, and gifts was \$8,568. Incomes for the majority of the families were between \$4,725 to \$12,411, although the range was from \$900 to \$20,000. The mean income for families in this study was lower than the mean income for U. S. families whose head was in the paid labor force—\$8,821—but higher than the mean income for U. S. families whose head was 14 to 24 years of age or lower—\$7,270.

Health of Family Members: Self-assessments of their health by husbands and wives were generally positive (Table 9). Some 76% of the husbands and wives rated their health status as very good or excellent; 24% of the ratings ranged from good to below

TABLE 9.—Self-assessment of Health Status of Husband, Wife, and Baby (N=100).

Rating	Score*	Husband	Wife	Baby
Excellent	1	53	50	84
Very good	2	23	26	14
Good	3	17	19	1
Average	4	4	5	1
Below average	5	3	0	0
*Mean score		1.81	1.19	
s. d.		1.05	0.92	

TABLE 10.—Limitations in Ability of Husbands to Work and Wives to Keep House (N=100).

Response	Husbands	Wives
Not disabled	92	98
Not limited in any way listed	2	1
Able to work/keep house but limited in kind or amount of other activities	1	0
Able to work/keep house but limited in kind or amount of work	5	1
Not able to work/keep house at all	0	0

average. The average for all husbands was somewhat lower than for all wives as a result of three men reporting below average health.

None of the husbands or wives indicated disability to the extent that they were unable to work or keep house at all (Table 10). One wife stated that although she was able to keep house, she was limited in the kind and amount of work that could be performed. Five husbands reported similar limitations in the amount and kind of work which they could perform.

Although none of the wives and only three of the husbands rated their own health status as below average, 47 wives and 37 husbands rated the problem of feeling physically tired or fatigued as either important or very important (Table 11). Both husbands' and wives' responses to this question were directly correlated (at the .01 level of significance) with their rankings of other problem statements which included not knowing the time and work a baby required, having upset schedules and routines, not being able to keep up with housework, curtailing outside activities and interests, being tied down at home, and having to change plans made before birth of the baby.

It has been suggested that the ease of transition to parenthood may be related to the "personality" of the infant in that some babies seem more excitable and demand more attention than others. One factor which would seem likely to be related to demands for attention would be the child's health status. Parents in the study were asked to evaluate the health status of their child (Table 9). The majority (84) stated that their child's health was excellent, 14 couples re-

TABLE 11.—Problems of Parents of Young Children: Feeling Physically Tired or Fatigued.

Importance to Respondent	Husbands (N=99*)	Wives (N=100)
Very important	8	12
Important	29	35
Not very important	50	46
Unimportant	12	7

*Missing data for one husband.

TABLE 12.—Health Problems of the Baby (N=100).

Response	Number
No problems	82
Bones—feet or legs	4
Allergy or rash	3
Blood disorders	1
Nervous stomach	1
Hernia	2
Other single problem	7

ported their child to be in very good health, and none rated the baby's health as below average. With such high ratings for all the babies, the health variable was not useful in this study as a predictor of ease of transition to parenthood. Health problems reported for the babies are shown in Table 12.

Community Activity Participation: Participation in community organizations was not a high priority for two-thirds of the couples interviewed (Table 13). One-fifth of husbands and wives had one organizational affiliation. Social groups were the most frequently mentioned type of community organizations in which the wives participated, whereas religious organizations were the most common affiliations among husbands (Table 14). The next most popular organizational affiliations of the wives were religious and sports organizations and for the husbands, occupation-related and service organizations.

These findings are consistent with those reported by Geismar (16) in a study of 555 young Newark, N. J., families with a first child. Families in his study were not joiners. Highest participation in community activities was in church clubs (13% of the wives and 12% of the husbands) and sports clubs (11% of the husbands). Membership in community organizations is reported to be highly related to family life-cycle stages and participation is lowest in the early child-rearing stage.

TABLE 13.—Participation in Community Organizations by Husbands and Wives (N=100).

Number of Affiliations	Husbands	Wives
None	65	71
One	20	20
Two	10	8
Three	5	1
Mean	0.53	0.41
s. d.	0.86	0.70

TABLE 14.—Participation of Husbands and Wives in Community Organizations by Type of Organization and Number of Affiliations.

Type of Organization	Husbands				Wives			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Educational	98	2	0	0	97	3	0	0
Service	93	6	1	0	97	2	0	0
Social	95	5	0	0	86	12	1	0
Sports	94	3	3	0	93	6	0	0
Youth	96	4	0	0	99	0	0	0
Occupation	93	7	0	0	98	1	0	0
Armed Forces-related	95	4	0	1	97	2	0	0
Religious	89	11	0	0	91	7	1	0
Other	100	0	0	0	96	3	0	0

TABLE 15.—Distribution of Participants by Ownership and Housing Type (N=100).

Characteristic	No.
Home ownership	
Own	41
Rent	59
Type of housing	
Single family house	53
Duplex (or two-family)	17
Apartment	18
Town house	5
Mobile home	7

TABLE 16.—Distribution of Participants by Satisfaction with Progress Toward Housing Goal (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Very well	16	25
Well	39	40
So-so	30	25
Not so well	11	6
Not well at all	3	2
Not applicable	1	2
Mean	2.44	2.16
s. d.	0.99	0.94

Housing: The majority of the couples (59%) interviewed rented their homes (Table 15). Marriage experience ($p < .01$) and the ages of both husbands ($p < .05$) and wives ($p < .01$) were related significantly to home ownership. In other words, the shorter the marriage and the older the couple, the more likely they were to be homeowners.

More than one-half of the couples (53%) lived in single-family homes. Apartments and duplexes were the next most frequent types of dwellings. Town houses and mobile homes were the living quarters for only 5 and 7%, respectively.

More than half of the husbands (55%) and about two-thirds of the wives (65%) reported that they were well or very well satisfied with the progress they had made in acquiring desired housing (Table 16). Only 14% of the husbands and 8% of the wives indicated some dissatisfaction. The progress in attaining desired housing was correlated significantly for both husbands and wives with all other goal attainment variables at the .01 level except recreation and well-managed household for husbands and recreation for wives.

Mobility: Homeowners had lived in their quarters from 2 to 56 months, with an average of 16.7 months (Table 17). Renters had lived in their home an average of 12.6 months (range = 1 to 53 months). The longer the family had lived in the present location, the greater was the dollar value of household

TABLE 17.—Duration of Residence in Present Quarters (N = 100).*

Time Period	N
Less than 13 months	55
13 to 24 months	31
More than 24 months	14

*Renters: range, 2 to 56 months; mean, 12.58; s. d., 9.57.
 Owners: range, 1 to 53 months; mean, 16.68; s. d., 13.69.

durables ($p < .01$) owned by renters but not by homeowners. The lower dollar value of durable goods owned by the latter group may have been due to depreciation or possibly to less money available to spend on household durables with early costs of home ownership.

Mobility has been reported by others to be related to age, the presence of and ages of children, and educational attainment of the spouses. Young families in their twenties, as in this study, have the highest mobility rate of any age group. According to the Current Population Reports (46), 88.5% of the people in the 14 to 24 year age group had moved within the last 5-year period, 1970-1975. The rate was 72% in the 25 to 29 year age group for the same 5-year period. Establishment of new households is reflected in the high mobility rate reported.

Husband-wife families whose children are less than 6 years of age are more residentially mobile than those with children more than 6. Enrollment of children in school is apparently a factor in mobility. Educational attainment also is related to mobility; the higher the educational attainment, the greater the likelihood of relocation. Nearly twice as many college graduates as high school graduates, 29.5% and 16.1%, respectively, had moved in the 1970-1975 period according to information from the Current Population Reports (46).

Ownership of Household Durables and Patterns of Acquisition by Young Married Couples

Ownership: Household durable goods such as ranges and refrigerators had been acquired by seven of every ten couples participating in the study (Table 18). About two-thirds of the couples in the sample had a washer and more than one-half had a dryer and sewing machine. Less than 10% had dishwashers. About one-half of the ranges and refrigerators were bought used or were used appliances obtained as a gift, but the majority of the washers, dryers, and sewing machines owned were obtained new.

About one-half of the sample had television sets—57 had black and white and 47 had color; nearly two-thirds had a stereophonic record player. Nearly all had acquired living room and bedroom furnishings but only two-thirds had carpeting. At least one-half

TABLE 18.—Ownership of Major Household Items.

Item	Owners	Acquired Used*	Acquired New*
Range	71	36	23
Refrigerator	77	35	35
Washer	64	19	43
Dryer	57	18	37
Dishwasher	8	1	2
Sewing machine	58	19	39
Television (black and white)	57	31	26
Television (color)	47	10	37
Stereo equipment	64	11	52
Living room furnishings	91	31	54
Bedroom furnishings	91	34	51
Carpeting	66	15	35

*Includes gifts.

of the black and white television sets were acquired used (Table 18). Two-thirds of the washers, dryers, sewing machines, and furnishings were purchased new, and color television and stereo sets were purchased new by at least three-fourths of the couples owning them.

Lackey (24) reported that the majority of young families considered buying only new models of equipment and chose in the low or medium price range. In this study, however, the frequency of ownership of used durables and furnishings was fairly high, indicating that, contrary to common belief, newly married or young couples do not necessarily start a home with all new items or at the current level of living of their parents.

According to Tippett *et al.* (43), the estimated service life expectancy for used ranges is 5.6 to 6.6 years and for refrigerators, 7.4 years. Those expectancies are about one-half those of similar appliances acquired new. Tippett *et al.* reported a trend for earlier discard of appliances by younger families. The

TABLE 19.—Major Household Items Acquired as New or Used Gifts (N=100).

Item	Used and Gift	New and Gift	Total Acquired as Gift	Total Families Owning Item
Refrigerator	12		12	77
Range	10		10	71
Washer	6	1	7	64
Dryer	7		7	57
Dishwasher	1		1	8
Sewing machine	11	4	15	58
Stereo equipment	3	2	5	64
Television (black and white)	15	4	19	57
Television (color)	2	1	3	47
Bedroom furnishings	13	6	19	91
Living room furnishings	13	2	15	91
Carpeting	8	2	10	66

trend may be related in part to the high proportion of young households having used appliances. Replacement costs would be an important factor in budgeting among young families.

Household items most frequently reported as received as gifts by the young couples in the study were black and white television sets, sewing machines, refrigerators, and ranges. The majority of those items had been used when received (Table 19). In addition, living room and bedroom furnishings were received as gifts by 15 and 19%, respectively, of the couples.

Acquisition Patterns for Major Household Appliances: In an analysis of clusters of major household appliances purchased during a given year, all combinations of items were most frequently acquired during 1971 (Table 20)—the year before birth of the baby in this study. In that year at least one-fourth of the couples had acquired both a washer and a dryer; similarly, both a range and a refrigerator had been obtained by more than 25% of the participants. Nearly 20% had obtained those two pairs of appliances within a 1-year period but previous to

TABLE 20.—Acquisition of Clusters of Major Household Appliances by Year (N=100).

Appliance Cluster	Purchase Year		
	1972	1971	Prior to 1971
Range and refrigerator	10	29	19
Washer and dryer	9	27	18
Range and washer	4	15	9
Range, refrigerator, and washer	4	13	8
Range, refrigerator, washer, and dryer	2	12	8
Range, refrigerator, washer, dryer, and dishwasher	1	0	0

TABLE 21.—Acquisition of Individual Items of Home Furnishings or Equipment in 1971 or 1972 (N=100).

Item	Families Owning	Families Acquiring in 1971	Families Acquiring or 1972
	no.	no.	%
Refrigerator	77	45	58
Range	71	45	63
Washer	64	43	67
Dryer	57	37	65
Dishwasher	8	6	75
Stereo equipment	64	16	25
Sewing machine	58	21	36
Television (black and white)	57	34	60
Television (color)	47	21	45
Living room furnishings	91	50	55
Bedroom furnishings	91	40	44
Carpeting	66	49	77

1971. Only about 10% of the couples had added either of the pairs in 1972, the year of the birth of the baby.

When the addition of appliances to the household inventory was considered on an individual item basis (Table 21), 60% or more of the couples who owned specific items had acquired something in 1971 or 1972, at or near the time of the birth of the first child. For some of the couples, moving to a new residence in which appliances were not furnished may have precipitated purchases of durables. For others, anticipation of an increase in demand for laundering with a new baby may have supplied the motivation for the purchase of laundering equipment. The fact that purchases were more frequent in 1971 than in 1972 for this sample may have been due to planning ahead while the wives were still employed and money was available for such purchases.

Hill (19) reported that "the periods of moving involved, on the average, four times as many purchases of these durables as did the periods of non-moving. But within the intervals of moving, the moves to owned residences involved twice as many purchases, on the average, as those to rented residences." Hill concluded that "the inventory of durable goods acquisitions over the first 5 years is most affected by residential mobility and least consistent by increases in income" (19).

In McFall's study (30) of acquisition patterns of 23 household durables by 250 newlyweds in the late 1960's, the priority order for ownership of the eight items included in the present study was as follows:

- black and white television
- stereo or hi-fi equipment
- refrigerator
- sewing machine
- washer
- color television
- dryer
- dishwasher

Sargent (39), in a study of the ownership data for 17 durables for a sample of 943 Midwest subscribers to *Consumer Reports*, found that refrigerators were first in order of priority for both urban and rural persons; black and white television sets were second. In the present study and for the married child generation in Hill's study (19), greater priority was placed on the acquisition of necessities, such as ranges, refrigerators, and washers, than entertainment durables such as radios, televisions, and high fidelity sound equipment.

Dollar Value of Household Durables: In 1972, the average net worth of assets for participating families was \$5,372, an increase of \$671 from the

previous year. The average change in assets was paralleled by an average debt change of \$3,010. While acquisitions of durable goods contribute to increases in net worth, they nevertheless place additional demands upon limited financial resources. The mean value of household durables was 6.6% of the total assets. The 1972 mean for debts was \$6,404.92, 54% of the mean assets (valued at \$11,776.90).

Factors Related to Dollar Value of Household Goods: Forty-one couples were homeowners, 19 of whom had acquired the home during the year preceding the interview, and 59 were renters. Time between marriage and birth of the first child was significantly related to the ratio of value of gifts to total value of goods for renters ($p < .05$) as well as for homeowners ($p < .01$); for homeowners, however, the relationship was negative. For the 59 couples who were renting, the dollar value of durables and length of time between marriage and birth of the first child were significantly related at the .01 level. Relationships between the dollar value of durables and ages of both husband and wife at marriage were also significant at the .01 level for renters, but for homeowners, the age of only the husband at marriage was significantly and negatively related to the ratio of gifts to total value of household durables ($p < .05$).

For the total sample ($N = 99$),⁸ there was a negative and significant ($p < .05$) relationship between the length of time from marriage to the birth of the first child and the change in the value of durables. An explanation for this finding may be that with longer marriage, fewer durables may have been acquired in recent months. Reported values also included depreciation.

The length of marriage to birth of child was related significantly and negatively to the ratio of gifts to total household durables ($p < .01$) for the total sample and the homeowners. In other words, the shorter the marriage period, the greater the ratio of gifts to total household durables. For renters, the relationship was positive ($p < .05$).

Satisfaction with Progress in Acquiring Desired Household Goods: Ninety-three husbands and 90 wives were reasonably satisfied with their progress in acquiring household goods (Table 22). Debts ranging from \$22 to \$623 were reported by 10% of the couples for refrigerators, washers, and dryers (Table 23). Entertainment items such as color television and stereo radio/record playing equipment were also debt items for couples (11 and 7%, respectively). In addition, debts had been incurred by some couples for living room furnishings (17%) and bedroom furnishings (9%).

⁸Missing data for one couple.

Feelings About Debt: About 70% of both husbands and wives reported that they were at least well satisfied with their progress in keeping debt under control (Table 24). One-third of the husbands and

TABLE 22.—Progress Toward Goal of Acquiring Desired Household Goods (N=100).

Satisfaction Response	Husband	Wife
Very well	14	20
Well	55	49
So-so	24	21
Not so well	6	9
Not at all well	1	0

TABLE 23.—Extent of Indebtedness of Participating Couples (N=100).

Item	Debtors (no.)	Amount of Debt
Range	4	\$ 99- 387
Refrigerator	13	38- 623
Washer	11	63- 240
Dryer	9	22- 232
Dishwasher	0	0
Sewing machine	2	50- 150
Television (black and white)	2	21- 101
Television (color)	11	20- 500
Stereo equipment	7	20- 300
Living room furnishings	17	10- 500
Bedroom furnishings	9	10- 450
Carpet	1	135
Other	6	48- 892
Auto	53	10- 3,800
Medical	55	20- 2,800
Home	39	1,756-20,408
Other	19	20- 2,500

TABLE 24.—Satisfaction of Participants with Progress in Keeping Debts Under Control (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Very well	23	30
Well	48	40
So-so	21	20
Not so well	8	7
Not at all well	0	1
No response	0	2

TABLE 25.—Ability of Participants to Meet Debt Payments at Time of Study Compared to a Year Previously (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Much more difficult	7	10
More difficult	25	19
About the same	44	50
Less difficult	22	16
Much less difficult	2	5

wives said they were having more difficulty, however, in meeting debt payments at the time of the survey than a year previously (Table 25). Increased difficulty in meeting debt payments would be attributable in part, at least, to the fact that the wives had quit work when the baby was born and two salaries were no longer regularly available.

Help from Parents

Type and Amount of Help: The amount of help received from parents was described on a scale of 1 for "much" to 4 "none" for money—gifts or loans; services like babysitting; goods; and sharing of knowledge, ideas, or experiences since the birth of the first child (Table 26). The mean for total help received from husbands' families was 2.78 and from wives' parents 2.64; thus the average amount of help reported was between "some" and "little". Much or some help was more often reported from wives' than from husbands' parents during the first 4 or 5 months after the birth of the child. In contrast, Christensen (5) reported that the average amounts of assistance contributed by the husbands' parents were somewhat higher than by the wives' parents, both at marriage and during the first year.

The relative amounts of help received from the husbands' and wives' parents were similar for the categories of knowledge, ideas, and experiences; services like babysitting; goods; and money gifts or loans. Sharp and Axelrod (40) reported that families with wives 29 years of age and younger received a higher percentage of help of each type than any other age group studied. The types and percentages were babysitting, 67%; help during illness, 60%; financial aid, 53%; and help with housework, 32%. At least half of the couples received financial assistance, which was similar to findings in this study.

The frequency of at least some help with services (65 for husbands and 78 for wives) reported in this study was similar to the frequencies of reported services received for babysitting and during illness in the research of Sharp and Axelrod.

Satisfaction with Help Received from Parents: Satisfaction with help from parents was rated on a scale from 1 to 5 for "very satisfied" to "dissatisfied". On the average, husbands and wives reported themselves as "mostly satisfied" with the help received from both sets of parents (Table 27); mean scores were 1.94 and 2.23. The wives were slightly better satisfied than the husbands. Apparently help received was generally meeting the expectations of the young couples. The slightly lower level of satisfaction for husbands than for wives may be indicative of the pressures the husbands experienced to evidence financial independence while also desiring additional help to improve the well-being of their families.

According to Hill (19), more help does not necessarily lead to greater satisfaction. "Many help

TABLE 27.—Mean Scores for Satisfaction of Husbands and Wives with Help from Their Parents.

Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Satisfaction with help from husband's parents		
Husband (N=97)	2.23	1.156
Wife (N=99)	2.18	1.081
Difference	0.07	1.088
Satisfaction with help from wife's parents		
Husband (N=100)	2.13	1.108
Wife (N=98)	1.94	1.069
Difference	0.20	1.098

*Scale: 1=very satisfied, 2=mostly satisfied, 3=somewhat satisfied, 4=so-so, 5=dissatisfied.
Source: (23).

TABLE 26.—Distribution of Responses on Help from Parents by Amount* and Kind of Help.

Item	Frequency of Response				Mean Score	Standard Deviation
	Much	Some	Little	None		
Help from husband's parents (N=98)						
Money	8	11	25	54	3.27	0.965
Goods	19	17	30	32	2.75	1.109
Services	21	27	17	33	2.66	1.159
Knowledge	26	30	23	19	2.34	1.069
Help from wife's parents (N=97)						
Money	11	17	18	51	3.12	1.073
Goods	21	23	27	26	2.60	1.105
Services	21	31	26	19	2.44	1.041
Knowledge	29	30	21	27	2.27	1.075

*Scale: 1=much, 2=some, 3=little, 4=none.
Source: (23).

items seem to have been given despite the recipients' protests. Many items were given to meet stressor situations, with the recipient feeling that the help was unnecessary, unwanted or inadequate." Further dissatisfaction may arise if the young couple feels unable to reciprocate adequately even though the help from the parents was desired and useful.

Services and Information: Both husbands and wives expressed higher levels of satisfaction with help received from parents in the form of services than with help in the form of information (Table 28). The services such as babysitting would reduce child care expenses for the young couples, but the information may have been unappreciated because of a "generation gap" and the fact that young couples may want to be independent of their parents.

A higher level of satisfaction was expressed with help from the wives' parents than from the husbands' on both services and information. The difference could not be attributed to distance from parents because about an equal number of husbands' and wives' parents lived just 10 miles or less away.

Length of time married (months) before the birth of the first child was not significantly related to ratings of help in the form of services or information received from parents; however, several positive significant relationships were shown with regard to age of husband, age difference between husband and wife, and satisfaction with help for services and information from both the husband's and wife's parents (Table 29). For example, the age of the husband at marriage and age difference between husband and wife were significantly related ($p < .05$ and $.01$, respectively) to the wife's rating of help received from both his and her parents for information.

The older the husband, the greater the wife's satisfaction with such help. Perhaps as age increased, the young couples were more willing to accept information from parents or possibly less information was proffered by parents to their children among the couples who were older. Also, the greater the age difference between husband and wife, the more receptive the wife seemed to be to informational types of parental help.

Husbands and wives agreed in their ratings of help received from his parents in the form of services and information ($p < .01$). Further, if the wife was satisfied with services and information from her husband's parents, she was also satisfied with services and information from her parents. Similarly, if the husband was satisfied with either services or information obtained from his wife's parents, he tended also to be satisfied with such assistance from his own parents or vice versa.

Distance from Parents: More than one-half of both husbands and wives lived no more than 10 miles from their parents (Table 30) and at least 75% of the couples lived within 50 miles of one or both parents. The fairly low incidence of services from parents could not, therefore, be attributed to distance in the majority of the cases. It is possible that parents may have been employed, had young children of their own at home to care for, or were in ill health, which could have prevented them from providing services such as babysitting for the young couples in this study.

Regarding help from parents in the form of information, ideas, and sharing of experiences, distance was not a deterrent. The abundance of such help

TABLE 28.—Distribution of Responses on Satisfaction with Help Received from Parents Since the Birth of the First Child by Type of Help and Spouse.

Parents and Type of Help	Responses				
	Very Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	So-so	Dissatisfied
Husband's responses					
Husband's parents					
Services	50	10	9	22	5
Information	37	14	18	17	5
Wife's responses					
Services	48	14	14	19	3
Information	39	19	15	20	6
Husband's responses					
Wife's parents					
Services	52	15	9	15	4
Information	38	22	17	15	5
Wife's responses					
Services	57	14	6	10	8
Information	50	16	11	18	2

TABLE 29.—Correlation Matrix for Selected Characteristics of Respondents and Satisfactions with Various Kinds of Help Received from Parents.

Item	Months Married Before Birth of Child	Husband's Age at Marriage	Age Difference Between Husband and Wife	Ratings of Help from Parents								
				Services from Husband's Parents		Information From Husband's Parents		Services from Wife's Parents		Information from Wife's Parents		
				Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	
Months married before birth of child												
Husband's age at marriage	.044											
Age difference between husband and wife	— .060	.583**										
Rating of services from husband's parents: Wife	.108	.106	.180									
Rating of services from husband's parents: Husband	.183	.022	.163	.593**								
Rating of information from husband's parents: Wife	— .056	.194*	.306**	.458**	.180							
Rating of information from husband's parents: Husband	— .016	.105	.202	.321**	.486**	.322**						
Rating of services from wife's parents: Wife	— .073	.172	.190	.276**	.147	.207*	.093					
Rating of services from Wife's parents: Husband	— .022	— .020	.121	.192	.417**	.096	.255**	.640**				
Rating of information from wife's parents: Wife	— .052	.225*	.290**	.150	— .049	.578**	.090	.580**	.345**			
Rating of information from wife's parents: Husband	— .146	.004	.185	.129	.254**	.296**	.646**	.361**	.615**	.341**		

*p < .05.
**p < .01.

TABLE 30.—Distribution of Respondents by Distance (Miles) from Husband's and Wife's Parents (N=100).

Distance (Miles)	Husband	Wife
0	7	7
1 to 5	41	36
6 to 10	11	9
11 to 50	19	24
51 to 100	4	8
101 to 1,000	12	8
More than 1,000	4	5
No response	1	1
Deceased or no contact	1	2

could be communicated by mail or telephone as well as during personal visits.

Employment of Wives

More than 65% of the women who participated in this study had been employed prior to motherhood. Half of those who had worked for pay had held clerical or sales jobs and more than half of the husbands were skilled manual or machine operators and semi-skilled workers (Table 31).

Attitudes toward Wife's Employment: Sixty-five husbands said that they preferred that their wives would not work for pay, but only 41 wives said they would rather not or thought that they should not work (Table 32). Conversely, 8% of the husbands indicated that they would like their wives to be employed and 38% of the wives would have liked to work, either because they would prefer it or felt that they should.

The desire of husbands that their wives not work may relate to the fact that 73% of the husbands reported that management or organization of their households had improved to some extent over that of the previous year. In addition, 79% of both husbands and wives reported that they were very well or well satisfied with progress toward the goal of maintaining a well-managed home.

Feelings of the wife herself about her employment may affect her employment status. Boharic (3) reported that wives with an authoritarian attitude regarding employment were more likely to perceive that their husbands had the stronger role in family decision-making than the wives who had an equalitarian attitude. Joint decision-making was perceived by wives who had mixed attitudes (part authoritarian and part equalitarian) toward employment.

According to Sampson (37), the wife's perception of her husband's attitude toward her working is the single most important variable in explaining the wife's employment status. In Sampson's study, the wives who perceived their husbands as having a

TABLE 31.—Occupations of Husbands at Time of Interview and of Wives Prior to Motherhood (N=100).

Occupation	Husbands	Wives
Higher executive	3	0
Business manager	6	8
Administrative	4	2
Clerical and sales	22	32
Skilled manual	19	5
Machine operator and semi-skilled	34	10
Unskilled	12	9
Not employed	0	34

TABLE 32.—Attitudes of Husbands and Wives About the Wife Working for Pay (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Should work	0	23
Prefer to work	8	15
Makes no difference	27	21
Prefer not to work	40	36
Should not work	25	5

favorable attitude about their working outside the home were more likely to be working than those who perceived a negative attitude in their husbands. Age of children was a deterrent to the wives being employed but was not as important as the husband's attitude.

Sampson reported further that the employed wife is more likely to be family-centered and less "friend-centered" than the non-employed wife, is more likely to be working in order to bring about a change in the level of living, and is more satisfied with her husband's attention. Husbands too have been reported to benefit in several ways when their wives were employed. Booth (4) stated that for his sample of urban women under 45 years of age with one or more children, husbands of employed women reported happier marriages and less stress than men who were married to housewives. He cited the additional income and a sense of personal fulfillment as advantages of the wife being employed.

The labor force participation rate of married women with a husband present has increased over time irrespective of the presence of children and their ages. The participation rate of those with children under 6 years of age increased from 12% in 1950 to 37% by 1975 (46).

Various explanations have been offered for the increases in women participating in the labor force in the United States. Among them are these offered by Sampson (37):

- a. Public attitudes concerning the employment of married women have changed. These at-

TABLE 33.—Decisions About Wife's Employment.

Decision and Respondent	Distribution of Responses				
	Husband Always 1	Husband More 2	Joint H/W Equal 3	Wife More 4	Wife Always 5
Whether or not wife should go to work or quit work Wife*	16	18	44	18	4
What job the wife should take Husband	11	13	31	38	17

*Mean = 2.763, s. d. = 1.068.

titudes have been reflected in the enactment of government programs affecting working women.

- b. The educational level of women has increased, making them better qualified for employment as the demand for labor has increased.
- c. The decline in home production activities and the increase in labor-saving devices in homes has permitted women to be in a better position than formerly to seek outside employment.

Deciding Whether the Wife Works and What Job She Takes: One-third of the wives indicated that it was the husband's decision as to whether they should go to work or quit work (Table 33). Forty-four perceived the matter as a joint husband-wife decision. However, the wife was most often indicated by the husband as the one to decide what job she should take.

In the North Central Regional Study of Patterns of Living Related to Income Poverty in Disadvantaged Families (33), generally the homemakers reported that both the husband and wife decided about the wife's employment outside the home. In about one-half of the families in the sample, the "husband alone" was cited more frequently than the "wife alone" in the decision for the wife to work outside the home.

Expectations of Wives to Return to Full-Time Employment: A criterion for selection of fami-

TABLE 34.—Expectations of the Wife to Return to Full-time Paid Employment (N=100).

Expectation	Number
Within 6 months	8
6 months to 1 year	10
1 to 2 years	9
3 to 4 years	5
5 or more years	23
Do not expect to work for pay	45

lies for participation in this study was that the wife should not be employed for pay or, if employed, for not more than 10 hours per week. The majority of the women (55%) reported, however, that they expected eventually to return to work (Table 34). Responses to this question were in congruence with those on attitude toward the wife's working for pay.

If the wives in the present study do return to the labor force, they may expect to experience some signs of stress, initially, according to Booth (4). He reported that more signs of stress were found in women who had just begun to work full time and those who had held a job previously than in women who had been working full time for more than a year and women who had never been employed. The stress was attributed to the transition between employed and unemployed roles, possibly stemming from adjustments occurring in the division of labor within the family as well as from modification of individual schedules and routines.

Labor force participation of mothers may create conflict—the demands of the mother role and the worker role may interfere with one another. According to Sweet (42), such conflict involves the allocation of time, a scarce resource. Working women typically carry the burden of work and household commitments. Cook (6) concluded that whether married women work or not, they get little assistance with housework from their husbands. When they work outside the home, they must still carry the major responsibility for care of home and children (47).

The conflict accruing due to the "double role" of mother-worker may be offset in part by the satisfactions of a career, social participation, or independence (42). According to Wright (49) who analyzed several national surveys concerning whether or not working women are more satisfied than homemakers, both worker and housekeeping roles have costs and benefits. Employed women enjoy outside income and some increase in independence as a result of it. On the other hand, they may have less free time and a more hectic pace and lead a more compli-

cated life. Wright concluded that housewives prove to be consistently just as satisfied as women who work outside the home. His conclusion refutes earlier writings of Ferree (12, 13), who reported that women with jobs outside the home are generally happier than are full-time homemakers.

Sampson *et al.* (38) reported that in both "disadvantaged" and "typical" families, the youngest child's educational status and frequency of help from family members with work in the home were significantly related to the mother's working outside the home; the higher the educational status of the youngest child and the more the family members accepted responsibilities around the house, the more likely was the wife-mother to be employed.

PART II. HOW DO YOUNG PARENTS MANAGE?

Information on selected factors related to the management situation and practices of 100 husband/wife couples interviewed 4 to 5 months after the birth of their first child are presented in this section. Goals and expectations of a couple, resources available, and how the partners perceive their situation in comparison to that of others may be strong influencing factors in the satisfactions with their achievements. Families who are satisfied may have adjusted to changes in demands and resources whether or not levels of achievement have been maintained or increased.

In this study, most husbands and wives said that they believed their family situation was as good as or better than that of other young families (Table 35). For these couples, therefore, it might be assumed that they had either achieved as expected or adjusted to changes to their satisfaction.

TABLE 35.—Respondents' Comparisons of Their Family Situation with Other Young Families (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Much better	31	34
Some better	18	26
Little better	20	13
About the same	29	24
Some worse	2	3

Adequacy of Resources

Change in resource adequacy with birth of the first child was determined from responses of the wives regarding the situation before the baby's birth and at the time of the interview for "keeping your home in the condition you want," "providing desirable family meals," and "caring for a baby." A rating scale was used with a range from 1 for "almost always adequate" to 5 for "almost always inadequate". Resources considered were knowledge, skills, furnishings or equipment and supplies, money, time, and personal energy available for meeting the three demands.

For home care and providing meals, about 80% of the young mothers reported that resources were *usually* or *almost always adequate* before birth of the first child. Little change in adequacy of knowledge, skill, and equipment occurred with motherhood, but drops of 15 to 25% in responses in the upper two levels of adequacy occurred for money, personal energy, and time resources (Tables 36 and 37).

For the task of caring for a baby, 80% or more of the young mothers reported that money, time, and energy were *usually* or *almost always adequate* before the child's birth (Table 38). At the time of the interview (when the baby was 4 to 5 months old),

TABLE 36.—Distribution of Responses by Adequacy of Resources for Keeping the Home in the Desired Condition Prior to Birth of the Baby and at Time of Interview (N=99).

Resource	Period	Almost Always Adequate	Usually Adequate	Sometimes Adequate	Seldom Adequate	Almost Never Adequate
Knowledge of what to do	Before	39	48	10	2	0
	Present	29	54	14	2	0
Skill, how to do	Before	26	61	9	3	0
	Present	27	53	19	0	0
Available furnishings or equipment and supplies	Before	39	37	19	4	0
	Present	35	42	19	3	0
Money available	Before	35	46	12	5	1
	Present	13	51	28	6	1
Time available	Before	46	37	12	4	0
	Present	16	44	29	8	0
Energy available	Before	45	46	6	2	0
	Present	23	43	27	2	4

TABLE 37.—Distribution of Responses by Adequacy of Resources for Providing Desirable Family Meals Prior to Birth of Baby and at Time of Interview (N=99).

Resource	Period	Almost Always Adequate	Usually Adequate	Sometimes Adequate	Seldom Adequate	Almost Never Adequate
Knowledge of what to do	Before	47	39	13	0	0
	Present	42	44	9	4	0
Skill, how to do	Before	41	47	10	1	0
	Present	37	54	7	1	0
Available furnishings or equipment and supplies	Before	46	37	14	2	0
	Present	45	38	15	1	0
Money available	Before	43	43	9	3	1
	Present	23	50	18	8	1
Time available	Before	42	46	9	2	0
	Present	21	42	31	4	1
Energy available	Before	38	51	8	2	0
	Present	25	47	21	4	2

distribution of responses for time remained practically unchanged; for money, there was a slight decrease (7%) in those reporting upper levels of adequacy; and for energy, a 14% decrease was shown. In the cases of those three resources, apparently needs in care of the baby were supplied first and lacks were then felt more keenly in the other two tasks studied. It should be pointed out that the drop in adequacy ratings for the energy resource represented an important change for all three tasks studied and is a factor that may be important for young couples to be aware of and make allowances for.

The greatest changes in adequacy of resources noted were in knowledge, skill, and equipment or supplies for baby care: about two-thirds of the young mothers reported that they had felt *usually* or *almost always adequate* in those three resource areas before the birth of the child and the numbers increased by

40 to 45% after the child's birth. Apparently when the need arose, these were resources which could be readily acquired by most of the women.

Findings with the families in this study were similar to those of researchers in other studies of young families. In research reported by Dyer (10), Hobbs (20), LeMasters (25) and Russell (35), participants expressed concern for the family financial situation—having to adjust to one income as well as assume the added expenses of a child. Regarding time, nearly two-thirds of the wives had been employed prior to birth of the baby but, in accordance with criteria for participation, were not currently in the labor force; therefore they had more time at home after the birth than before. Much of that time was absorbed in care of the child and many of the women felt a lack of time for attending to other tasks just as Dyer (10), LeMasters (25), and Lopata (27)

TABLE 38.—Distribution of Responses by Adequacy of Resources for Caring for a Baby Prior to Birth of the Baby and at Time of Interview (N=99).

Resource	Period	Almost Always Adequate	Usually Adequate	Sometimes Adequate	Seldom Adequate	Almost Never Adequate
Knowledge of what to do	Before	18	47	21	10	3
	Present	42	49	7	0	1
Skill, how to do	Before	21	41	26	8	3
	Present	47	43	9	0	0
Available furnishings or equipment and supplies	Before	27	35	16	9	12
	Present	52	38	5	3	1
Money available	Before	35	46	12	5	1
	Present	28	47	18	6	0
Time available	Before	39	46	4	8	2
	Present	42	41	10	5	1
Energy available	Before	37	51	6	5	0
	Present	31	45	19	3	1

had reported. Similarly, the drop in numbers of women rating their energy levels as *usually* or *almost always adequate* corresponds with findings in other studies that mothers of first children reported loss of sleep (10, 25, 35) and chronic tiredness and exhaustion. Findings in the present study did not concur with those of Echols (11) regarding lack of knowledge; most of the women in this study felt fairly adequate in that resource at the time of the interview.

A few demographic variables were significantly related to change in rating of adequacy of resources in a least squares method of analysis of variance. For example, the wife's age at marriage was related at the .05 level to change in adequacy of resources for keeping house (furnishings, equipment, or supplies) but not for changes in other resources. Home economics education for the wife was related ($p < .05$) to ratings of adequacy of money for keeping the home in the desired condition and for providing desirable family meals. The wife's level of education was related to change in adequacy of energy ($p < .05$) and in knowledge and skills ($p < .01$) in providing desirable family meals. No demographic variables were significant, however, in explaining the variance in changes in adequacy of resources for caring for a baby.

Roles of Husbands and Wives in Household Decision Making and Implementation

Roles of husbands and wives are viewed as recurrent patterns of action resulting from a combination of human resources and household tasks and may be affected by social-demographic characteristics. In this study, responsibility for selected household tasks including both decision-making and decision implementing activities was determined among the 100 couples surveyed. Responses were scored according to whether the husband or wife took major responsibility or tasks were shared. The scoring scale on responsibility for the tasks studied was as follows: 1, husband always; 2, husband more than wife; 3, husband and wife exactly the same; 4, wife more than husband; and 5, wife always.

Tasks with response means ranging between 1.0 and 2.5 were considered part of the husband's role; those ranging between 3.5 and 5.0 were classified as the wife's. Shared responsibility for tasks was indicated by means ranging between 2.5 and 3.5. Spouses shared in making and implementing several task decisions; however, they tended to specialize and differentiate roles as well. The household tasks were grouped into the following categories for discussion: social/leisure/recreational, housing and maintenance, food purchasing and preparation, clothing, employment, and other.

Household Tasks: Decisions

Social/Leisure/Recreational: The decision concerning where to go for vacations was shared equally by husbands and wives according to 80 and 88% of the responses, respectively (Table 39). As for deciding whom to invite to the house or to go out with, two-thirds of the couples said that they shared in the responsibility. The decisions about what television or radio program to tune in tended to be the husband's according to 57% of the husbands and 46% of the wives.

Housing and Maintenance: Seventy-two of the men and 88 of the women indicated that the decision as to what house or apartment to select was shared; however, more than one-half of the husbands and wives reported that decorating the home was the role of the *wife more than the husband* or *wife always*, 65% and 54%, respectively.

Food Purchasing and Preparation: The responsibility for deciding the dinner menu was generally the wife's in this study. According to 69% of the husbands and 81% of the wives, the wife more than the husband or the wife always assumed this task. Nearly one-half of the men and women (45% and 47%, respectively) said that the decision on how much money the family could afford to spend for food was more the role of the wife than the husband; however, according to the mean rating, the food expenditure decision would be classified as a shared task.

Clothing Purchase and Care: Distributions of husbands' and wives' responses were in fairly close agreement on who made the decisions on clothing purchases for each. For example, 69% of the wives and 72% of the husbands said the wife more than the husband or the wife always decided upon what she would buy for herself. Joint decisions were more common for husbands' clothing purchases than for wives' (Table 39). Decisions on how to get the laundry done, 9 of 10 men and women agreed, were made by the wife.

Employment: What job the husband should take was viewed by the wife in 85% of the families as predominantly his decision; the remaining 15% thought it could be a joint decision. On the other hand, only 22% of the women considered it essentially their own decision as to whether the wife should take a job or quit work; 44% viewed this question as a joint husband-wife decision.

The husbands in 45% of the cases considered what job their wives took to be essentially the wife's decision and 31% considered it a matter for joint solution. Whether or not the husband should take a job or quit one was viewed by 56% of the men as primarily the man's decision. Wives were apparently

TABLE 39.—Frequency Distribution of Husbands' and Wives' Responses Concerning Decision Making for Household Tasks (N=100 Couples).

Decisions	Who Decides					Mean Score
	Husband Always	Husband More Than Wife	Husband and Wife Equally	Wife More Than Husband	Wife Always	
Wife's Responses						
Social/leisure/recreational						
What people to invite to home or go out with	2	24	67	7	0	
What television or radio program to tune in	6	40	47	6	1	
Vacation place	3	7	88	2	0	2.89
Housing						
What house or apartment to take	1	5	88	5	1	3.00
Home decoration	2	5	39	52	2	3.47
Food						
Dinner menus	1	10	8	55	26	3.95
Amount to spend for food weekly	4	11	38	29	18	3.46
Clothing						
What clothes husband will buy	15	29	28	25	3	
What clothes wife will buy	2	9	20	45	24	
How to get laundry done	1	0	5	28	66	4.58
Employment						
What job husband should take	42	43	15	0	0	
Whether or not wife should go to work or quit work	16	18	44	18	4	
Other						
What doctor to have	1	5	52	32	10	3.36
What car to get	15	45	40	0	0	2.25
Whether or not to buy life insurance	10	25	63	1	1	2.58
How to control finances	6	22	50	16	6	2.94
Child care practices	0	2	41	43	14	3.69
Husband's Responses						
Social/leisure/recreational						
What people to invite to home or go out with	4	24	66	5	1	
What television or radio program to tune in	4	53	35	7	1	
Vacation place	1	16	80	2	1	2.86
Housing						
What house or apartment to take	1	17	72	7	3	2.94
Home decoration	2	4	29	58	7	3.64
Food						
Dinner menus	1	13	17	57	12	3.66
Amount to spend for food weekly	5	16	34	32	13	3.32
Clothing						
What clothes husband will buy	9	31	31	25	4	
What clothes wife will buy	1	8	19	58	14	
How to get laundry done	2	2	7	29	60	4.43
Employment						
What job wife should take	11	13	31	28	17	
Whether or not husband should take a job or quit one	32	24	40	3	1	
Other						
What doctor to have	2	12	57	16	13	3.26
What car to get	24	48	27	1	0	2.05
Whether or not to buy life insurance	15	33	50	1	1	2.40
How to control finances	11	25	42	18	4	2.79
Child care practices	0	4	48	40	8	3.52

TABLE 40.—Frequency Distribution of Husbands' and Wives' Responses Concerning Performance of Household Tasks (N=100 Couples).

Tasks	Who Does					Mean Score
	Husband Always	Husband More Than Wife	Husband and Wife Equally	Wife More Than Husband	Wife Always	
Wife's Responses						
Social/leisure/recreational						
Invites people to home or to go out with	3	17	61	18	1	
Tunes in and adjusts television or radio	9	45	30	12	4	
Makes vacation arrangements	11	19	58	12	0	2.71
Housing and maintenance						
Arranges to buy or rent housing	24	15	53	7	1	2.46
Decorates and furnishes home	1	2	29	50	18	3.82
Repairs things in household	22	64	9	3	2	1.99
Mows lawn*	50	33	12	3	1	
Shovels sidewalks*	41	35	11	6	6	
Straightens living room for company	1	0	15	42	42	
Food						
Shops for groceries	0	3	22	43	32	4.04
Prepares dinner	0	0	4	24	72	4.68
Gets husband's breakfast	3	10	11	28	48	4.08
Washes evening dishes	0	0	1	19	80	4.79
Clothing						
Buys clothes for wife	11	7	11	35	36	
Buys clothes for husband	18	20	17	35	10	
Does family laundry	0	2	1	21	76	4.71
Other						
Buys car	44	33	23	0	0	1.79
Buys life insurance	42	23	33	0	2	1.97
Keeps track of money and bills	13	14	21	26	26	3.38
Contacts doctor	2	3	18	42	35	4.05
Cares for child	0	0	16	69	15	3.99
Husband's Responses						
Social/leisure/recreational						
Invites people to home or to go out with	2	26	56	15	1	
Tunes in and adjusts television or radio	9	39	31	21	0	
Makes vacation arrangements	4	25	66	4	1	2.73
Housing and maintenance						
Arranges to buy or rent housing	24	19	51	4	2	2.41
Decorates and furnishes home	1	5	34	51	9	3.62
Repairs things in household	34	59	5	1	1	1.76
Mows lawn*	58	32	7	2	0	
Shovels sidewalks*	58	33	6	2	0	
Straightens living room for company	0	0	15	61	24	
Food						
Shops for groceries	1	4	29	39	27	3.87
Prepares dinner	0	0	3	53	44	4.41
Gets husband's breakfast*	8	13	7	34	37	3.76
Washes evening dishes	0	0	4	42	54	4.50
Clothing						
Buys clothes for wife	12	29	19	31	9	
Buys clothes for husband	3	3	9	57	28	
Does family laundry	0	3	2	35	60	4.52
Other						
Buys car	45	26	29	0	0	1.84
Buys life insurance	42	20	38	0	0	1.96
Keeps track of money and bills	9	23	25	28	15	3.17
Contacts doctor	0	9	34	40	17	3.65
Cares for child	0	0	16	78	6	3.90

*Missing data for one participant.

more prone than husbands to pass responsibility off to the spouse in employment-related decisions. Possibly this tendency was a result of socio-cultural conditioning toward deference of wives to their husbands' wishes.

Other: Distributions of responses on the five items grouped in Table 39 under "Other" were similar for husbands and wives. Purchase of life insurance tended to be a shared or a predominantly husband's decision, whereas child care practices were shared or predominantly the wife's domain. One decision which was generally considered in the husband's domain was what car to get.

Household Tasks: Decision Implementation

Once decisions are made, someone must carry them out in completion of the management process. In households of the young couples in this study, implementation of decisions fell to either the husband or wife or both since the only other member of the family was the baby. Distribution of husbands' and wives' responses to questions about who does follow through in performance of various tasks is shown in Table 40.

Social/Leisure/Recreational: More than half of the husbands (61%) and wives (56%) said that they shared equally in inviting people to their home or to go out. Among the other participants, the husband more often than the wife reported that he was the one who did such inviting.

Nearly one-third of the wives and the husbands said that the turning on of television and radio programs and adjusting reception was done about equally by both spouses; however, more of the wives than of the husbands said this role was taken by the man.

Vacation arrangements were usually made together or by the husband more than the wife, according to responses of both the men and the women. Discrepancies were noted between husbands' and wives' responses on this item, with who was reported as taking the major responsibility depending somewhat on who gave the response.

Housing and Maintenance: About one-half of the men and the women said that housing arrangements were made together and few wives took the initiative in this task. Further, practically all of the repair work around the house, lawn mowing, and sidewalk clearing were done by the husband, whereas most of the straightening of the living room when guests were coming was done by the wife. Decorating and furnishing the home was a joint endeavor, according to almost one-third of both men and women, but in most instances the wife more than the husband or the wife always handled these jobs.

Food Purchasing and Preparation: The wife in most young families was the person who generally

took the responsibility for tasks associated with meals, including doing the grocery shopping, meal preparation, and dishwashing. Only about one fourth of the women and the men said that husbands and wives shared equally in the shopping task. There was some discrepancy in husbands' and wives' reports on whether husbands got their own breakfast; 21% of the husbands said they did and 13% of the wives said that was so. On the other hand, 48% of the wives and only 37% of the men said that it was the wife always who fixed the husband's breakfast.

Clothing Purchase and Care: More than 70% of the women and 85% of the men said that the wife more than the husband or the wife always buys her own clothes. On the other hand, 38% of the women and 41% of the men said that the husband more than the wife or the husband always bought his clothes. Doing the family laundry, however, was unquestionably the woman's job in this study; 76% of the women and 60% of the men said that the wife always performed this task.

Other: Wives alone had little or nothing to do with buying cars or life insurance, but about one-fourth of both wives and husbands indicated that car purchases were shared equally as was life insurance by about one-third of both sets of participants. Keeping track of money and bills was a shared responsibility generally, with wives a little more than husbands handling financial matters.

More than 75% of the women reported that they had the major role in contacting the doctor when someone was ill and in caring for the baby. Distribution of the husbands' responses tended to agree with those of the wives, although the women did not give the men quite as much credit for help as men gave themselves, according to information shown in Table 40.

Laundry: The task of laundering was selected for further study as a specific task which might be expected to expand considerably for a couple with the birth of a first child. The wife always or wife more than the husband had the responsibility of deciding how to get the washing done according to 94% of the wives and 89% of the husbands (Table 41).

TABLE 41.—Who Decides How to Get the Family Laundry Done and Who Does It (N=100).

Response	Decider		Doer	
	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband
Husband always	1	2	0	0
Husband more than wife	0	2	2	3
Husband and wife exactly the same	5	7	1	2
Wife more than husband	28	29	21	35
Wife always	66	60	76	60

Availability of facilities for laundering would be likely to have some relationship to getting the family wash done. In this study, about two-thirds of the wives reported doing the laundry in a washer at home (Table 42) and 85% of those having washers had dryers as well. Among families owning washers and dryers, two-thirds were acquired new and one-fifth used. Some 11% of the washers and 12% of the dryers were received as gifts, either new or used (Tables 18, 19, and 43), and two-thirds of the families owning washers and dryers had acquired them in 1971 or 1972 at or near the time of the birth of the baby (Table 19).

Most of the women said they were usually able to keep up with the washing (Table 44) and to keep clothes from becoming greyish in appearance. Putting clothes away and keeping them neat looking was a little more of a problem for some of the women.

Role Perceptions in Task Performance

According to Geismar (16), household roles can be grouped into two general categories, *instrumental* and *expressive*. Instrumental activities are those directed toward maintenance and improvement of the physical environment and obtaining means to attain basic goals, whereas expressive activities are related to achieving basic satisfactions and goals of social, emotional, and spiritual nature. Husbands' activities have been reported to be generally of the instrumental type. Fluidity in family functioning would be desirable, permitting changes in task roles from one partner to the other depending upon specific interests, areas of competence, and time available.

The household task performance roles of the husbands and wives in this study were similar to the roles reported by others (2, 9, 18, 27, 33, 36). Some specialization in task performance along traditional lines was reported, with wives being responsible for traditional female tasks—cooking and cleaning and the like—which require large segments of time or manipulative dexterity or child care which requires nurturance or affective skills (18).

Although husbands and wives in this study shared the role of decision maker and decision implementer in a number of tasks, each tended to have re-

TABLE 42.—Facilities or Services Regularly Used for Laundry (N=100).

Facility	Number Using
Washer at home	66
Dryer at home	56
Coin-operated laundry	27
Other (diaper service and disposable diapers)	9

TABLE 43.—Acquisition of Washer and Dryer (N=100).

Response	Washer	Dryer
Bought new	42	37
Did not have	36	43
Bought used	13	11
Received as gift, used	6	7
Bought with house	2	2
Received as gift, new	1	0
Total owning	64	57

sponsibility for certain tasks. Wives had somewhat more total responsibility than husbands, especially in implementing decisions. Tasks for which the husband usually had major responsibility included determining what car to get, whether or not to buy life insurance, buying the car and life insurance, making housing arrangements, and repairing things around the house. Decisions regarding home decoration or furnishings, the family dinner menu, child care practices, and the family laundry were usually the responsibility of the wives. Wives were responsible also for implementing decisions related to home decoration and furnishings, grocery shopping, preparation of husband's breakfast and the family dinner, the evening dishes, family laundry, child care, and contacting the doctor.

Husbands and wives shared in the decision making on what house or apartment to take, where to go on vacation, how to control family finances, how much to spend for food per week, and what doctor to have when illness occurs. Further, handling the

TABLE 44.—Management of Clothing Care as Wife Wanted (N=100).

Problem	Response				
	Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
Keeping clothes washed up	67	27	6	0	0
Keeping clothes from greying	66	29	4	1	0
Keeping neat, unwrinkled look: folding, ironing, hanging	62	30	8	0	0
Keeping clothes put away	59	29	11	1	0

money and bills was a task shared by husbands and wives.

Lovingood (28, 29) analyzed the association between household task performance roles and social-demographic factors for the couples in this study. Husbands and wives who were "below average" in social-demographic factors (younger; in poorer health; lower in level of education, occupation, and community participation) tended to be more specialized than others in performing traditionally male and female tasks (evening dishes, car, household repairs).

In other studies of decision-making and implementation tasks related to housing and automobiles, roles for specific parts of the tasks have been delineated (for example, price, when to buy, plan, style, size, color, etc.). Hempel (17) reported that the husbands were usually the initiators of the house-buying process and handled such matters as the price, the mortgage, and when to buy, while the wives re-

ported involvement in decisions regarding neighborhood and house style. Further, Hempel reported greater wife than husband involvement in the search task for a home, but both husbands and wives shared the responsibilities of obtaining and evaluating information.

Munsinger *et al.* (31) reported equal influence in decisions concerning housing in a majority of couples. However, husbands tended to dominate in the rent/buy and price decisions and wives dominated the decisions relating to floor plan, style, and size.

Husbands' and Wives' Agreement on Roles and Influence: Mean scores and correlations between husbands' and wives' responses on who does the decision making and who takes the responsibility for carrying out selected household tasks are shown in Table 45. Agreement between direction of husbands' and wives' responses on decision items was

TABLE 45.—Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Husbands' and Wives' Responses for Household Tasks.*†

Household Tasks	Husbands' Responses		Wives' Responses		Correlation
	Mean	s. d.	Mean	s. d.	
Who decides:					
home decoration	3.64	.759	3.47	.717	.35
dinner menu	3.66	.890	3.95	.914	.25
car to get	2.05	.744	2.25	.702	.19
to buy life insurance	2.40	.791	2.58	.727	.33
what house or apartment	2.94	.633	3.00	.426	.04
food expenditures	3.32	1.053	3.46	1.039	.46
what doctor to have	3.26	.906	3.36	.772	.31
vacation place	2.86	.493	2.89	.447	.20
control of finances	2.79	.998	2.94	.930	.48
child care practices	3.52	.703	3.69	.734	.16
how to get laundry done	4.43	.868	4.58	.684	.39
Mean response—decision making	3.17		3.29		
Who does:					
home decoration	3.62	.762	3.82	.783	.39
prepare dinner	4.41	.552	4.68	.548	.27
buy car	1.84	.850	1.79	.795	.43
buy life insurance	1.96	.898	1.97	.969	.37
arrange housing	2.41	.965	2.46	.968	.12
grocery shopping	3.87	.895	4.04	.816	.56
contact doctor	3.65	.869	4.05	.914	.37
vacation arrangements	2.73	.649	2.71	.820	.16
keep track of money, bills	3.17	1.206	3.38	1.354	.66
care for child	3.90	.461	3.99	.560	-.24
family laundry	4.52	.689	4.71	.591	.57
household repairs	1.76	.683	1.99	.785	.05
get husband's breakfast	3.76	1.342	4.08	1.125	.45
evening dishes	4.50	.577	4.79	.433	.22
Mean response—decision implementation	3.29		3.46		
Mean response—all tasks	3.24		3.38		

*Scoring scale: 1—husband always; 2—husband more than wife; 3—husband and wife exactly the same; 4—wife more than husband; and 5—wife always.

†Source: (28).

greatest for control of finances and food expenditures ($r = .48$ and $.46$, respectively) and on task performance items, for keeping account of money and bills ($r = .66$), laundering ($r = .57$), grocery shopping ($r = .56$), preparing the husband's breakfast ($r = .45$), and buying the car ($r = .43$). Greatest divergence in direction of couples' responses was for care of the child ($r = -.24$).

Shuptrine and Samuelson (41) and Davis (9) compared husband and wife perceptions concerning their roles. For 75% of the 350 couples, there was agreement on who made automobile decisions and for furniture decisions, 66% agreement (41). A clearer role definition and level of agreement between couples was reported by Shuptrine and Samuelson than by Davis (9); however, findings in both studies provide evidence that partners recognize individual roles.

In a study of middle-class black husbands and wives who had purchased a major item of household goods, Wilkes (48) examined the pattern of husband-wife influence across the process including problem recognition, information search, final decision, and purchase. Husbands and wives within families held common perceptions about their relative influence for a given phase of the decision process, even though the pattern of husband-wife influence varied substantially across different phases of the decision process. Shuptrine and Samuelson (41) reported that the partner who was dominant for most pre-purchase decision components also tended to make the real decision to purchase. Thus, the partner who is recognized as the dominant influence actually carries this influence into the critical stage of buy/not buy.

Factors Related to Role Perception: Boharic (3) and Cox (8) have studied the role perceptions of husbands and wives in relation to variables such as education, marital satisfaction, satisfaction with level of living, length of marriage, and presence of children. Perceived joint decision making was related to the wife's report of greater marital satisfaction and satisfaction with level of living (3). Boharic reported that the husband's level of education was significantly related to the wife's perception of decision-making roles. Wives whose husbands had less than 12 years of education reported that they had the stronger role in family decision making than when the husband had more education (more than 12 years). The more nearly adequate the wife perceived the present family income to be, the more likely she was to perceive joint husband-wife decision making on family matters.

Cox (8) concluded from his work with 93 married couples in a midwestern town that stage in family life cycle was superior to length of marriage as a contributor to the process of adjustment in goal-congru-

TABLE 46.—Major Decisions Likely to be Troublesome for Young Couples.

Decision	Number of Mentions		
	Husband	Wife	Total
Financial management (general)	21	24	45
Wife's employment	14	19	33
Housing (rent, buy, build)	18	24	42
Children (number and spacing)	16	15	31
Children (general care)	8	12	20
Financial management (future and auto)	13	4	17
Leisure	11	3	14

ent behavior regarding family purchase behavior. Agreement declined after 26 years of marriage as well as in the last two stages of the family life cycle. The presence of children was one of the principal pressures which tended to bring about goal-congruent behavior.

Troublesome Decisions for Young Couples

Husbands and wives in this study were asked to identify two major decisions that a couple in a situation similar to theirs might have trouble making. For both groups, financial management and housing decisions were the most frequently mentioned areas of potential difficulty (Table 46). Whether or not the wife should work and the number or spacing of children were also fairly high on the list of problem areas pointed out by the participants. It is not surprising that the matter of the wife's employment should appear among these responses in view of the fact that 65% of the husbands and only 41% of the wives had said that they preferred that the wife not work outside the home (Table 32).

Family Planning

Aspects of family planning dealt with in this study of young families with a first child included desire for a child at this stage in the marriage, the number of children anticipated, and the spacing of children expected. A total of 87% of the husbands and 84% of the wives said that they had wanted a child by this time in their marriage, whereas only a few (5 and 6%, respectively) reported that they had not. The desire for a child by the husbands was significantly related to the length of marriage and their age at marriage ($p < .05$), but the relationships between the wife's age at marriage and marriage experience and the desire for a child by this time were not significant.

According to reports of other researchers (26, 34), most early pregnancies are wanted by the time birth occurs but there is a greater likelihood that subsequent children will not be wanted. In this study, the majority of the couples anticipated the birth of one or two more children; only 12% of the husbands and 11% of the wives reported the desire for only

TABLE 47.—Family Planning: Total Number of Children Anticipated and Spacing (N=100).

Expectations	Husband	Wife
Number of children		
One	12	11
Two	58	65
Three	24	17
Four	5	6
Five	1	1
Spacing (years apart)		
One	5	8
Two	58	50
Three	23	26
Four or more	4	6
No more expected	10	10

one child (Table 47). Most of the couples expected the spacing between births to be 2 or 3 years.

The addition and spacing of children may affect the wife's ability to return to work. The fact that the majority of the women expressed an interest in entering or returning to the labor force within 5 or more years and that they want to have their second child within 2 to 3 years of the birth of the first is indicative of the expectation that their childbearing would be completed prior to a return to the labor market.

Satisfaction with Household Management

Husbands and wives were asked individually how well they were progressing toward having a well-

TABLE 48.—Couples' Assessment of Progress in Maintenance of a Well-managed and Organized Household (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Very well	28	18
Well	51	61
So-so	17	17
Not so well	3	3
Not at all well	1	1

managed and organized household. Among both men and women, 79% said they were either well or very well satisfied (Table 48). The wives' satisfaction with household management was related to age at marriage ($p < .05$).

The couples rated the management or organization of their households at present with how it had been a year earlier and with how they expected it to be 1 year ahead. Only 2% of the husbands and 4% of the wives said that the situation had deteriorated over the preceding year and none expected it to worsen in the next year (Table 49). Interestingly, 73% of the husbands compared to 63% of the wives indicated that management or organization had improved to some extent over the previous year. The rating of management by the wives was related at the .05 level to length of marriage, and husbands and wives tended to agree in their ratings of the situation ($p < .05$).

TABLE 49.—Management of the Household: Current vs. 1 Year Ago and Expectations for 1 Year Ahead (N=100).

Response	Husband		Wife	
	Current vs. 1 Year Ago	Current vs. 1 Year Ahead	Current vs. 1 Year Ago	Current vs. 1 Year Ahead
Much better	26	30	28	25
Some better	16	16	22	24
Little better	31	22	13	17
About same	25	32	33	34
Some worse	2	0	4	0

TABLE 50.—Effects of Unexpected Events or Occurrences on Young Mothers and Their Work (N=100).

Event	Response			
	Much Effect	Some Effect	Little Effect	Would Not Happen
Husband had an unexpected change in his work and came home early	4	68	19	9
Baby awakened unexpectedly after only a short nap	2	58	37	3
Wife forgot and let the nipples for the baby's bottle boil dry	22	25	30	23
Wife had car trouble and was late for appointment with pediatrician	5	37	39	19
Wife had an accident and could not get a bandaged hand wet for a day or two	5	29	30	36
Baby awoke with a stuffy nose and was fussy all day	2	17	51	30

Effects of Unexpected Events on Wives and Their Work

The wives were asked to rate the effect of unexpected events or occurrences on them and their work. An unexpected change in the husband's work and his coming home early would have some or much effect on the wife's schedule, according to 72% of the women (Table 50). Second in frequency of responses as a disturber of the wife's routine would be having the baby awaken after only a short nap (60%). Two occurrences likely to have much effect on the young mother, according to 22% of the women, would be letting the nipples for the baby bottles boil dry and having the washer break down.

Adjustments and Problems Associated with a New Baby

Some problems may be encountered by parents of a first baby. A list of items that could be problems was given to both husbands and wives and each was asked to rate the importance of the items individually on a rating scale ranging from "unimportant" to "very important".

The ranked order of problems was similar for husbands and wives (Table 51); however, adjusting to changed income, feeling tired, not being able to keep up with housework, and having to curtail outside interests and activities were considered important or very important by more of the women than men (Table 52). The top three problems for both parents were adjustments to changed income, ignorance of the time and work a new baby requires, and fatigue. The biggest difference between husband and wife responses was on knowledge of the time and work associated with a baby—the demands apparently came as a shock to about two-thirds of the men and nearly one-half of the women.

TABLE 51.—Rank Order of Problems for Parents of Their First Baby.

Husbands	Wives
1 Not knowing the time and work a baby requires	Adjusting to changed income
2 Adjusting to changed income	Not knowing the time and work a baby requires
3 Feeling physically tired and fatigued	Feeling physically tired and fatigued
4 Having upset schedules and daily routines	Not being able to keep up with housework
5 Not being able to keep up with housework	Having upset schedules and daily routines
6 Curtailing outside activities and interests	Curtailing outside activities and interests
7 Having to change plans made before birth of the baby	Having to change plans made before birth of the baby
8 Being tied down at home	Being tied down at home

Feelings of tiredness were not unexpected responses because at the time of interviews sleep of parents at night might still be interrupted for night-time feedings or other attention to the baby. In addition, 18 of the babies were reported to have health problems (Table 12), some of which may have imposed unusual demands for parental attention.

About two-thirds of the women had been employed full or part-time prior to the birth of the baby. It is not surprising, therefore, that a high proportion of the participants (60% of the husbands and 70% of wives) rated adjustments to changed income high as a problem for young parents. By the time of the interview (4 to 5 months after birth of the baby), a couple would have had ample time to become aware of the financial costs of an addition to the family and consequences of withdrawal of the income contributed by a working wife. Further, women who had been accustomed to an income of their own may have missed the feeling of security or independence afforded by a regular personal paycheck.

TABLE 52.—Importance of Problems for Parents of a New Baby.

Problem	Very Important and Important	Not Very Important, Unimportant
Adjusting to changed income		
Husbands	60	39
Wives	70	30
Not knowing time and work a baby requires		
Husbands	65	34
Wives	48	51
Having upset schedules and daily routines		
Husbands	35	64
Wives	37	63
Feeling physically tired and fatigued		
Husbands	37	62
Wives	47	53
Not being able to keep up with housework		
Husbands	28	71
Wives	44	56
Curtailing outside activities and interests		
Husbands	22	77
Wives	33	67
Having to change plans made before birth of the baby		
Husbands	21	78
Wives	27	73
Being tied down at home		
Husbands	21	78
Wives	27	73

Other researchers have reported that adjusting to changed income was an important problem for couples in their studies. Hobbs (20), for example, reported findings similar to those in this study—60% of the husbands and 66% of the wives said the income adjustment was a problem for them. Further, Russell (35) and Hobbs and Cole (21) reported that increased money problems accompanied the birth of the baby for parents in their samples.

Keeping up with housework was an important problem for three-fourths of the husbands and wives in studies reported by Hobbs (20) and Hobbs and Cole (21), whereas in this study it was considered a problem by only 44% of the wives and 28% of the husbands. Age range of participants may have been a factor in differences between findings in the Hobbs studies and this one; in this study the oldest participant was 29 years old and in the Hobbs report, 38 years.

With the transition from a dyad to a triad family relationship with parenthood, young couples can expect several new kinds of problems according to Hobbs (20), Hobbs and Cole (21), and Russell (35):

- Increased money problems
- Decreased contact with friends
- Interruptions of routine habits of sleeping, going places, etc.
- Dissatisfactions with quality of housekeeping (wife's concern)
- Additional work required in care of baby
- Feelings of edginess or emotional upsets (wife)
- Physical tiredness and fatigue (wife)
- Having to change plans because of birth of baby
- Unwanted suggestions from in-laws about care of baby (husband's concern)

On the other hand, parenthood is reported to provide personal gratification as well for parents.

Many of the couples studied by Russell (35) reported that their marriage relationship had improved (42%) or had stayed the same (43.5%) since the birth of the baby. Very few reported a deteriorating marriage relationship. Hobbs (20) and Hobbs and Cole (21) reported similar findings; more than half of both men and women in their studies said that their marriages had remained about the same as before the birth of the child.

Russell (35) reported that level of education and occupational prestige scores for men were negatively related to gratification scores for parenthood. Those of higher educational and occupational status reported lower levels of gratification than those who were less highly educated and had less prestige in their jobs. Attendance at parenthood education classes and wanting more children were positively related to gratification scores for men.

Hobbs and Cole (21) reported that more than 75% of the 65 couples in their study experienced only slight or no difficulty in adjusting to the first child; mothers reported significantly greater amounts of difficulty than fathers. Hobbs and Cole reported further that difficulty scores for adjustment to parenthood were correlated with income level and husband's age. They concluded that initially parenthood may be somewhat difficult but not sufficiently problematic to warrant calling it a crisis experience for parents whose first child is still an infant. They suggested that it is more accurate to think of beginning parenthood as a transition accompanied by difficulty rather than a crisis of severe proportions.

Communications

Men and women participating in the study were asked how frequently they engaged in a few forms of communication with their spouses, expressing feelings, opinions, praise, or affection (with a kiss of

TABLE 53.—Distribution of Responses by Frequency of Selected Forms of Interpersonal Communication (N = 100).

Form of Communication	Person	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	No Response
Discuss feelings when either one is bothered or upset	H	28	43	25	4	0	
	W	37	39	19	5	0	
When opinions differ make effort to see spouses point of view	H	17	53	26	4	0	
	W	32	46	15	7	0	
Ask spouse about day's activities	H	37	46	15	1	1	
	W	51	31	12	5	1	
Tell spouse about own activities during the day	H	22	46	28	3	0	1
	W	45	37	11	6	1	
Praise spouse for doing something	H	20	54	22	3	0	1
	W	46	46	7	1	0	
Kiss when spouse leaves or returns from work	H	79	16	3	0	1	1
	W	84	11	3	1	1	

greeting or at parting), and reporting on activities. At least 70% of both the husbands and wives were able to discuss their feelings when either was bothered or upset and said also that when there were differences in opinion, an effort was made to see the spouse's point of view (Table 53). Even more of the men and women (more than 80%) said they asked their spouses about their activities of the day, but considerably more women than men said that they recounted their activities to the other. According to the distribution of responses, the wives were more generous with praise to the spouse for things done. It could be, perhaps, that husbands were especially attentive to the needs of their wives or the wives were particularly appreciative of their husbands. Nearly all of the respondents reported some display of affection as the spouse left or returned from work and there was agreement among both men and women on this point.

Recreation

Only one-half of both husbands and wives were well-satisfied with the amount of recreation they were able to engage in and 25% of the husbands and 14% of the wives indicated some dissatisfaction with this aspect of their lives (Table 54). Such dissatisfaction may have been related to the fact that slightly more than 20% of the men felt that being tied down at home or having to curtail some outside activities and interests since the birth of the baby was an important problem for parents of young children. A few more wives than husbands considered the restraints to be problem areas (Table 52). Fatigue in the early months of parenthood may also have been a factor relating to satisfaction with progress toward recreation goals.

The greater dissatisfaction of husbands concerning recreation may be related to the fact that husbands more than wives have trouble making decisions about leisure. Orthner (32), in a study of leisure activity patterns and marital satisfaction over the marital career, found that husbands and wives were not influenced alike by leisure. However, the proportion of time spent in shared leisure activities was

positively related to marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives. Further, Orthner reported that individual activities were negatively related to marital satisfaction—more so for wives than for husbands. He concluded that shared leisure activities for husbands and wives were critical for couples in early years of marriage—the first 5 years—the period comparable to the marriage experience of the majority of couples in this study. Joint activities, according to Orthner, should encourage marital interaction and tend to open communication, thus increasing chances for maintaining a high level of marital satisfaction.

PART III. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This study involved the perception of young husbands and wives with a first child of the changes in their lives associated with parenthood. Information is provided as background for understanding some of the dynamics of management of young families—of how they cope with the demands accompanying the birth of a first child.

Data for the study were obtained in 1972 by interviews with husbands and wives in 100 young families living in four central Ohio cities with populations of less than 50,000 people. The husband, wife, and baby were the only full-time occupants of the household. The baby was the first child and was 4 to 5 months old at the time of the interview. The wife was not employed or, if employed, worked no more than 10 hours per week outside the home.

The participants in the study were 19 to 27 years of age; the husbands tended to be 2 to 3 years older than their wives. The couples had been married an average of 2 years prior to parenthood. Only one-fourth of the sample became parents less than 9 months after marriage.

The majority of the couples had completed high school or had received education beyond high school. The mean educational levels for the husbands and wives were between partial college and high school, with husbands on the average having slightly more schooling than the wives. Husbands were less well satisfied with their level of educational attainment than the wives. Marriage and the birth of children mean added responsibilities, and decisions to make present sacrifices to improve education for future gains may become difficult to make or implement.

Education in home economics received by two-thirds of the wives had occurred at the junior high school level (grades 7 to 9) and may have been a source of some knowledge about parenthood and family functioning; at that age, however, parenthood may not have been of particular interest or concern to the students. Only one-third of the wives had taken a course in homemaking during high school.

TABLE 54.—Satisfaction of Young Parents with Progress Toward the Goal of Having Enough Recreation (N=100).

Response	Husband	Wife
Very well	15	13
Well	35	37
So-so	25	36
Not so well	20	11
Not at all well	5	3

Parenthood education classes were not the source of information for parenthood for the majority of young couples in the study. Classes attended by some of the respondents, however, generally included prenatal and child care information rather than information about overall family functioning or management and decision making. Young couples in this study obtained some information from their parents, but this was not particularly satisfactory to them. The fact that one-half of the young couples lived near their parents (within 10 miles) probably facilitated the sharing of information.

Educational program participation, the young couples said, would depend upon approval of spouse or joint participation of husband and wife, cost of the program, and time available after household or job responsibilities were fulfilled. Community organization participation was not a part of the lifestyle for at least two-thirds of both husbands and wives; thus programs involving attendance at group meetings would not likely be effective ways of meeting informational needs. A need for creative, alternative means of providing adult education employing various forms of media—radio, television, and/or printed matter—is indicated. A high school course on parenthood or incorporating units dealing with the topic would be desirable for both men and women since they as parents share in the decision making and decision implementation of household functioning.

Adult education programs should be provided for joint participation of husbands and wives at little or no cost and for brief periods of time to encourage participation. According to findings in this study, a subject area of particular need for young couples is changes in family life that accompany birth of a first child, including ways of coping with the problem of feeling physically tired and fatigued, adjusting to upset schedules and routines, keeping up with housework, being tied down at home, and changing plans made before birth of the baby.

Homes of the participants tended to be fairly well-equipped to handle some of the work such as increased laundry associated with a new baby; however, equipment and furnishings were frequently not acquired new. Household durables such as ranges, refrigerators, washers, dryers, and sewing machines were common items owned by the young couples in this study. One-half of the ranges and refrigerators were purchased used or the used appliances were acquired as gifts, whereas the majority of the washers, dryers, and refrigerators were obtained new. About two-thirds of the families having washers and dryers had purchased them in 1971 or 1972, at or near the time of the birth of the first child. Educational materials on the service of new and used appliances, war-

rancies, use and care of equipment, pros and cons of purchasing new or used appliances would be helpful for young couples. Further, since service life expectancies of used appliances are about one-half those for new items, young couples need to take replacement costs into account in budgeting use of their money.

Nine of every 10 couples were satisfied with their progress in acquiring household goods. However, one-third reported having more or much more difficulty in meeting debt payments compared to a year prior to the interview. This implies a need for budgeting guidelines and adjustment of spending patterns to correspond with reduced income as the wife leaves employment and increased living expenses accompanying the addition of a child to the family.

Help from young couples' parents was mostly in the form of information rather than services such as babysitting, money (gifts or loans), or goods. Slightly more help was received from the wives' parents than from the husbands' parents during the first 4 to 5 months after the birth of the child. Wives expressed greater satisfaction than husbands with help received from both sets of parents.

Even though one-half of the couples lived 10 miles or less from their parents, services were not a major type of help received by the couples in the study. Perhaps other neighborhood support groups may be needed to provide services such as dependable and inexpensive babysitting if young parents are not to feel tied down or to have to curtail outside activities because of having to care for a small child.

Couples expressed greater satisfaction with help received from parents in the form of services than the help received in the form of information. If the young couples' parents are providing unwanted information for parenting, perhaps there is a need for information for those grandparents oriented toward promotion of satisfying intergenerational relationships and to an updating of their knowledge of parenting and family functioning—making certain that information shared is appropriate for today's young family.

The majority (55%) of the wives reported that they expected to re-enter the work force for pay within the next 5 years. For those who wish to enter or return to the labor force, educational programs may be needed to help develop skills in managing the home efficiently, setting standards, and allocating time for the essential household and family tasks; sharing of roles between husbands and wives; and coping with the conflicts which may occur when demands of the mother role, wife role, and worker role interfere with each other.

Although husbands and wives shared the role of decision maker and decision implementer in a num-

ber of tasks, each performed certain roles in the household. Wives had somewhat more total responsibility than the husbands, especially in implementing decisions. Tasks usually the major responsibility of the husband included what car to get, whether or not to buy life insurance, buying the car and life insurance, making housing arrangements, and repairing things around the house. Wives' responsibilities included decisions regarding home decoration or furnishings, the family dinner menu, child care practices, and the family laundry and implementing most of those decisions as well. Shared decision-making tasks included what house or apartment to take, where to go on vacation, how to control family finances, how much to spend for food per week, and what doctor to have when illness occurs. The main decision implementation task shared by husbands and wives was keeping track of the money and bills.

Satisfaction with progress toward the goal of maintaining a well-managed household was expressed by the majority of the young couples interviewed. In fact, they reported that management or organization of the household had improved to some extent over the previous year in spite of the added work and increased feelings of tiredness since the birth of the baby.

Resources such as money, time, and energy were viewed as less adequate following the birth of the baby than before. Financial management was particularly troublesome, as indicated by reports of problems in adjusting to changed income. Despite the problems with which the young couples were coping, the majority of the sample anticipated the birth of one or two more children.

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APPENDIX

Methodology

Interview Schedule: An interview schedule was developed with pretesting and revision to obtain information about changes that occur in managerial behavior of young married couples with the birth of their first child, managerial abilities and satisfactions with their situation, and educational needs. Factors studied with regard to household management included decision-making responsibility, how roles are allocated, coping procedures with unscheduled events, and problems and satisfactions with home management. Specific questions and problem situations were included in the questionnaire to indicate educational needs of the respondents.

The interview schedule consisted of three parts: one providing descriptive information about the family and answered by the husband and wife together was completed by the interviewer; a second part consisted of two schedules having identical items, each completed separately by husband and wife. Questions in the second part dealt with household responsibilities, shared thoughts and feelings, managerial abilities and satisfactions, problems of parenthood, problem-solving, participation in community organizations, and needs for educational programs. The wife completed two additional sections. In one, she was asked to compare adequacy of her resources at the time of the interview with those before the baby was born; the other dealt with a specific household task, the family laundry.

Population and Sample: Four cities with populations of less than 50,000 people according to 1970 United States Census figures, with hospitals,

and located within a 60-mile radius of Columbus were selected as sites for data collection. The cities were Lancaster, Marion, Newark, and Zanesville. The following criteria were used for selection of families for the study:

- Both husband and wife were 29 years of age or younger at the time of the baby's birth.
- A husband, wife, and baby were the only full-time residents of the household.
- The baby was the first child in the family and was 4 to 5 months old (120 to 180 days) at the time of the interview.
- The wife was not employed or was employed for no more than 10 hours per week.

Names and addresses of all couples in each of the four cities who had become parents during the fourth and fifth months prior to the interview period were obtained from public birth records. A total of 278 married couples had become parents in the selected cities during the period covered by the study. Every family which could be located was contacted to determine eligibility for participation and to schedule an interview. Among the 278 families, 120 were eliminated because of ineligibility on one or more of the criteria for selection, 23 refused to participate, and 35 could not be located or interviews could not be scheduled at a time when husband and wife could both be present during the period of eligibility. Distribution of the population among the four cities is shown in Appendix Table I.

Data Collection: Interviews were scheduled in the spring of 1972 at times when both husband and wife could be present. Women from the communities involved were hired and trained as interviewers and data collection was supervised and checked by members of the project staff.

APPENDIX TABLE I.—Distribution of Population and Sample.

City	Population	Births in 2-Month Period of Study	Interviews Completed	Parents Ineligible for Study	Refusals	Unable to Locate or Unable to Schedule
Zanesville	33,045	73	26	33	5	9
Marion	38,646	57	28	19	3	7
Lancaster	32,911	63	15	34	8	6
Newark	41,836	85	31	34	7	13
Total		278	100	120	23	35

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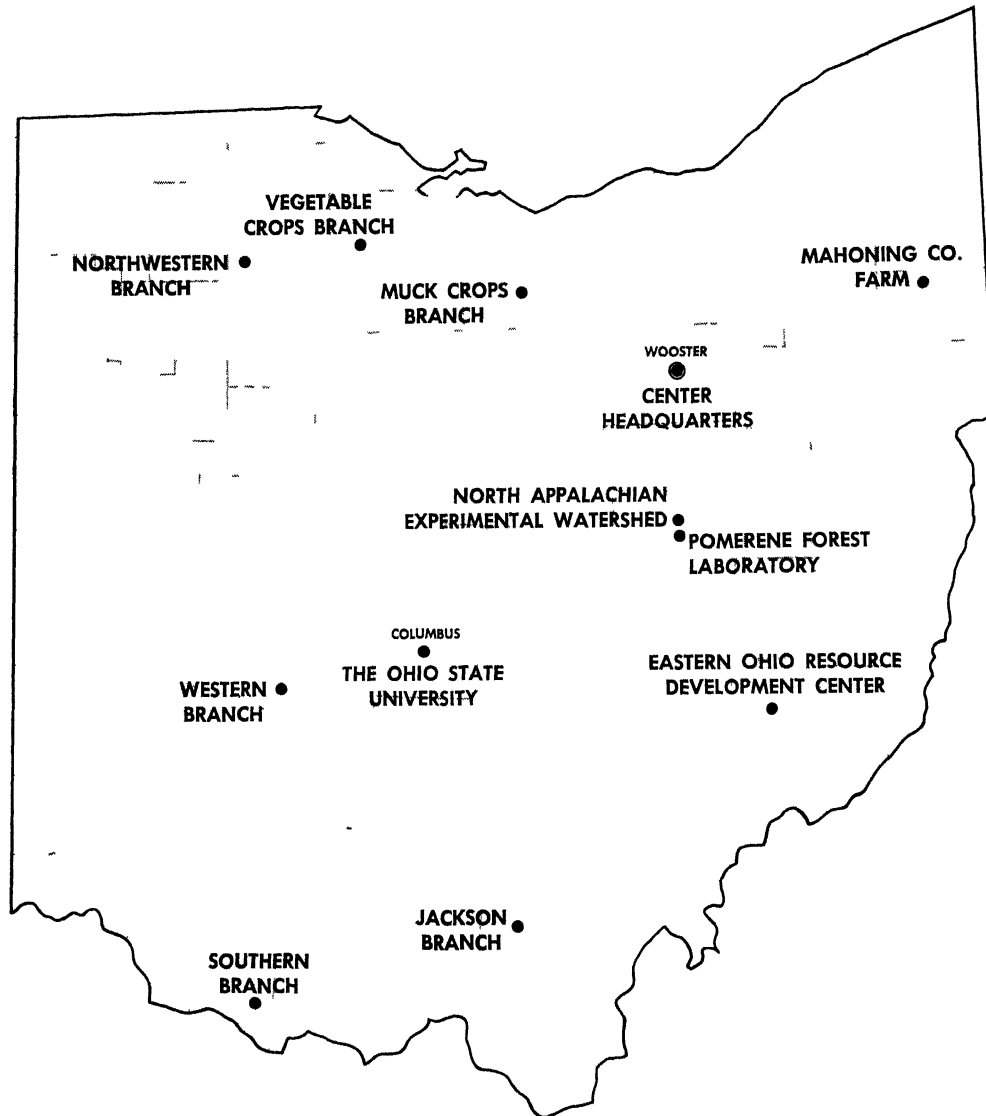
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Center Headquarters, Wooster, Wayne County: 1953 acres

Eastern Ohio Resource Development Center, Caldwell, Noble County: 2053 acres

Jackson Branch, Jackson, Jackson County: 502 acres

Mahoning County Farm, Canfield: 275 acres

Muck Crops Branch, Willard, Huron County: 15 acres

North Appalachian Experimental Watershed, Coshocton, Coshocton County: 1047 acres (Cooperative with Science and Education Administration/Agricultural Research, U. S. Dept of Agriculture)

Northwestern Branch, Hoytville, Wood County: 247 acres

Pomerene Forest Laboratory, Coshocton County: 227 acres

Southern Branch, Ripley, Brown County: 275 acres

Vegetable Crops Branch, Fremont, Sandusky County: 105 acres

Western Branch, South Charleston, Clark County: 428 acres