

POSITIVE LANGUAGE IN THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP
CREATING AN EDUCATIONAL VIDEO FOR PARENTS

A Senior Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology

by

Katherine Y. Upchurch

Psychology and Child Development Department
College of Liberal Arts
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo
Fall Quarter, 2010

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, PhD

Table of Contents

I.	Chapter 1: Introduction	1
II.	Chapter 2: Literature Review	3
III.	Chapter 3: Methods	16
	Participants	16
	Procedure	16
IV.	Chapter 4: Results/Discussion	18
	Limitations	18
	Conclusion	19
	Future Directions	20
V.	References	21
VI.	Appendices	24
	Appendix A: Scenario Explanations	25

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Parenting is a role recognized across the world for centuries. It is complex and diverse, yet a common feature of cultures encompassing the majority of the world. Classifications of parenting characteristics, such as the attachment or overall parenting style, have been created to try and understand the inner-workings of the parent-child relationship. It has been shown that ethnicities, races, cultures, and/or socioeconomic classes must be taken into account when evaluating the usefulness of the various classifications. These differences in lifestyle carry diverse values and beliefs that are instilled in the family system, affecting preferred styles of parenting and their influences on the family unit. Keeping these variations in mind, it is important to look at what parental behaviors help foster positive and healthy child development. It has been found that positive and supportive parenting fosters a child's positive self-esteem and aides in the development of a healthy self-image (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000). On the other hand, critical and degrading parenting can lead to the decline of a child's sense of worth. This makes the language that parents use with their children critical to their development. Research has also shown that open as well as supportive communication between parents and teens contributes to the prevention of risky behaviors in adolescence (Baxter, Bylund, Imes, & Routsong, 2009).

This project focuses on that positive language used with children and attempts to promote its practice to the parents with children enrolled at The Children's Center, located on the Cal Poly Campus, San Luis Obispo. A video was made that focused on the use of concise and clear limits with the follow through of the adult that ultimately provided the child with a firm boundary in an empathetic fashion. The development of the child was taken into consideration as to what

behaviors could be expected of the child at that stage. Throughout the video, tools were provided as to how the parent could be more clear and firm in the boundaries, yet still provide that supportive and positive communication that children need to develop. Filmed clips of teachers' interactions with the children were included as examples of the type of language that could be used in boundary setting scenarios. These exchanges were situations in which the teacher was enforcing a limit that the child was testing. The hope is that this video will provide parents with new language they could use in day to day situations where their child is testing a limit or boundary. This new communication will hopefully enhance parents' positive interactions with their children at home as well as foster a healthier life-long development of the child.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Parenting is a role that is diverse, dynamic, and life-changing. Millions, possibly even billions of people around the world choose to tackle the responsibility in a variety of time periods in life. It requires a multitude of responsibilities and tasks as well as a lot of patience, but in the end, many find the whole experience rewarding. There are many factors that contribute to the development of a child in his/her lifetime. These include family, culture, and even the child him/herself, but it is said that parents hold one of the strongest influences in a variety of ways including socially, mentally, and emotionally (Bigner, 2010). The bond with a parent is normally one of the most consistent aspects of a child's life, therefore, it fits that it has such a powerful impact. It is important to note that the relationship and influence between a parent and child is not static but flows with the development of the child over time.

It all begins with infancy, where children are working on meeting their immediate needs such as eating or sleeping and comprehending the new world around them (Leach, 1978). In addition, according to the Bigner, children are working on forming a relationship with their caregivers. This means that every interaction between an adult and child is building a connection and a sense of trust that the adult is reliable. Building muscle strength, starting with the neck and moving down to the legs and feet, is a core task at this age (Leach); parents can foster this development through allowing the child ample time and opportunity to strengthen their muscles. An example of this is laying an infant down on their stomachs to play, causing them to work their neck and back muscles. With the strengthening of muscles, there is a dramatic increase in the child's mobility and a new sense of the world occurs for the child. This gives the parent an

opportunity to establish an even stronger connection with the child by showing that they are there to guide him/her in the new adventures. Another major task at this stage is the development of language, beginning with babble and evolving into the first words, which on average takes place around the first birthday (Leach, 1978). This is monumental for the parent-child relationship because with the use of real words by the child, although only a few at first, they are able to communicate to the parent more clearly what they are wanting rather than the nonverbal methods relied on before. Infancy is all about adapting to the world through establishing a sense of trust in their caregivers, making it important for the parent to use their interactions with the child to show their reliability and support.

After infancy comes the toddler years (year one through three) and a whole new set of tasks for the child. In this time, there is a newly developed urge for independence, a “let me do” attitude (Leach). According to Bigner (2010), with this need for individuality begins more defiant kinds of behavior; children are trying to distinguish themselves as a person, and in turn this creates quite a challenge for parents in trying to find a balance of guidance for their children as well as allowing room for independence to grow. In this stage, there is an inability to think very far ahead and a shortened memory span (Leach). This can cause children to find themselves in situations of which they are not sure how to get out of and a frustration for parents in having to remind them repeatedly not to do so. Around this time, it is the parent’s job to provide the child with as many words as possible to help with the development of language, making communication between the parent and child essential (Bigner). Conversation becomes one of the main aspects of the parent-child relationship.

Toddlers quickly develop into preschoolers (year three through five) bringing along new milestones to complete. Children start testing their body’s limits, always wanting to know how

far they can go; curiosity at this age is extraordinary (Leach, 1978). But it is not just a curiosity in their own limits, there is a curiosity in parents' limits as well, creating some frustrating moments for both parties. Children are busy trying to figure out how everything works and any type of play is a common mode of learning (Leach). Parents can enhance this process by providing a variety of experiences for the child to explore, making the parent-child relationship a means to play out the child's curiosities. In this stage, learning how to handle emotions is also a task and is accomplished by the child expressing any feeling without constraint (Leach). The relationship with the parent becomes a guide for the child on how to express emotions within socially accepted means. According to Bigner (2010), a child's interest in playing with other children increases, as well as a curiosity of people outside their families. Socially acceptable behavior begins to play an important part in the child's life with this change. It becomes the child's task to learn what they can do to be accepted by others outside the family with the guidance of the parents (Leach). Communication is still a major focus of the parent-child relationship during this stage. Clear and consistent messages and boundaries are important for the child and their development because in order for a child to learn, they must understand what they are being told (Faber & Mazlish, 1980). Guiding children is an essential part of the relationship around this time and it is the parents' responsibility to place limits for children to ensure their safety (Leach).

Although parenting is continually changing with the development of the child through adulthood and beyond, researchers have attempted to place parenting styles into categories. According to Olson, Defrain, and Skogrand (2008), the most well-known grouping is Baumrind's three general parenting types: (a) permissive (two types), (b) authoritarian, and (c) authoritative. Baumrind's classification describes the *permissive* parent as having few

restrictions and no consequences or punishments. The child is able to do as they please with no penalties. There are two types of permissive parents: *indulgent* and *neglectful* (Olson, DeFrain, & Skogrand, 2008). The indulgent parent combines few rules and no punishments with nurturing whereas the neglectful parent combines free reign with little or no attention. Differing consequences arise as results of these different styles. In the second type of parenting, *authoritarian*, the parent aims to control the child (Rogoff, 2003). Olson and colleagues state that these parents set clear and firm standards with no negotiation and little to no explanation for any punishment. Considered to be between the two is the third type, the *authoritative* parent (Olson et al.). Here, clear standards are set but explanations are given; the standards are considered to be reasonable, and some rules are flexible. According to Rogoff, with the authoritative parent there is more of a verbal “give and take” with the child.

Just as with the parenting styles, the parent-child attachment is also commonly categorized. Rogoff describes the following three types of attachment. There is the *secure* baby who is defined as having “mild weariness” (p. 114) when the caregiver is gone but is comforted with the caregiver returns. The *anxious/resistant* baby has “high distress” (p. 114) when the caregiver is missing and is not easily comforted but does approach the caregiver upon return. Lastly, there is the *anxious/avoidant* baby. Similar to anxious/resistant, the anxious/avoidant baby is highly upset when the caregiver leaves, but this child doesn’t make contact with the caregiver when (s)he returns.

As convenient as these classifications are for parenting and attachment types, there is a major flaw. The categories have been formed from limited research only fitting cultures with certain values, beliefs, and practices. With such a narrow source of data, not every family falls neatly into a category that best explains the situation (Rogoff). For example, when infants from

Northern Germany were tested to see which attachment type was most common, observers most often noticed an anxious/avoidant infant (Zach & Keller, 2004). This was concerning to researchers because in the U.S., this is considered to be an unhealthy attachment, but when looking at North Germany's values and beliefs, one would notice that early independence is highly valued which could be considered a cause for the observation (Zach & Keller). These findings are not considered unhealthy when given the cultural context in which the child is raised. Discrepancies can also be found in the categorization of parental styles. Caucasian and African American families tend to have a more authoritative style with clear limits and boundaries for children yet a sense of warmth and communication with the child. (Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994). According to Rogoff (2003), this is considered the healthy parenting style in the United States. On the other hand, most Asian Americans are considered to be more controlling of their children and expect obedience and respect for elders which are traits more commonly found in parents who could be described as more authoritarian (Julian et al.). This could be seen as unhealthy, but when considering some commonly held values of Asian Americans, such as collectivism and the notion of filial piety, authoritarian parenting style makes sense in terms of the fact that it produces the traits members of these cultures value (Julian et al.). Research into different cultural beliefs, values, and norms is a reminder that different categories can result in incorrect conclusions about different ethnicities and races.

Contextual differences that can affect raising children must be kept in mind when trying to classify any type of parent-child characteristic; otherwise any assumptions could be misleading at best and completely incorrect at worst. Ethnic and racial differences are two influencing factors to consider. To understand the parenting styles of different ethnic and racial groups, differences in core values, beliefs, and practices must be considered and taken into

account (Julian et al.). This is particularly important because minority racial and ethnic groups and their practices have often been incorrectly pathologized when making comparisons to the majority group norms (Sue & Sue, 2008). As our society becomes more multiculturally competent, it is imperative to look closely to see the many differences as well as similarities that can arise between the different ethnic and racial groups.

Many Asian American families value the concept of *filial piety* i.e., respect and obedience for parents and elders and because of this, they are said to exert more control over their children's lives in comparison to non-Asian American parents (Benokraitis, 2003). These values and beliefs can greatly affect the parent-child relationship. They also tend to cause many Asian American parents to be considered more authoritarian type parenting than other group (Benokraitis). When considering ideals such as filial piety, this classification of parenting style makes sense because of the values that are considered important to instill in the next generation. In addition, according to Bigner (2010), Asian American parents place a greater emphasis on verbal punishment as opposed to physical. Many are said to use guilt and shame to punish children and reinforce values and beliefs (Benokraitis). This is related to the social structure and the idea of humility and maintaining a positive self-image. But it is not to be assumed that this always negatively affects the parent-child relationship. Conversely, it is found that the strongest family ties are between the parent and the child, rather than the spouses, in Asian American families (Benokraitis). Many families follow ideas of collectivism that emphasizes interdependence, cooperation, and the importance of family over the individual (Benokraitis). These ideals can cause some conflict when living in an individualistic culture such as the United States because of the dissimilarity of their values. It is found that Asian American households are more likely to include extended family members, such as grandparents, in addition to nuclear

families (Benokraitis). This can greatly affect the development and outcome for a child because in these cases Asian American children may possess a larger support network in the home in comparison to many other children.

In contrast, many Caucasian American families value individualism rather than collectivism (Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994). According to Rogoff (2003), this includes parental encouragement of individual differences, self-expression, and a wish for children's own distinct thoughts and actions. In other words, these parents want their children to think and operate on their own without the influence of others. In many Caucasian American families, parental strictness is seen as preventing the child's autonomy (Rogoff). Still, many middle class Caucasian American families are considered to be authoritative parents (Julian et al.). This means that there are limitations for children in most middle class homes, otherwise more permissive parenting would be found. In addition, according to Rogoff, many Caucasian families are believed to be parent-centered suggesting that the children are expected to follow the mother/family's schedule and agenda rather than the family adjusting to the child's immediate needs.

African American families are often also considered to be parent-centered in the family structure (Bigner, 2010). But similar to many Asian American families, African American families are more likely to have strong family ties with frequent visits and consistent contact; this plus high involvement in other social groups (such as churches and extended family networks) create a strong social network for African American families (Benokraitis, 2003). This can be a strong advantage for all members of African American families, especially since according to Benokraitis, African Americans are more likely than any other racial-ethnic group to face threats of violence or violence itself on almost a daily basis. These obstacles can have a large impact on

the parent-child relationship as it can cause a lot of stress within the family in general. Parenting within many African-American families is considered to be more authoritative and are found to be encouraging of early autonomy of the children (Benokraitis, 2003). According to Bigner (2010), African American parents are found to rely on physical punishment more than any other racial or ethnic group. Yet, it is found that parents and children still have a close relationship despite parent's choices in punishment, unlike other racial and ethnic groups (Benokraitis).

Within the Latino community, an important ideal to consider is the role of *machismo*, which is defined as “masculinity, aggression, and dominance, as well as courage, honor, and respect for authority” (Benokraitis, 2003, p. 92). This has a great effect on the role and behavior of males, including fathers. Machismo is modeled and instilled in the younger generations and effects the role of fathers and their interactions with their children. Like Asian American and African American families, there is an emphasis on the extended family; this not only includes grandparents, but aunts, uncles, cousins, godparents, and even close family friends as well (Benokraitis). This provides children with a large support system upon which they are able to rely on throughout children's development. According to Binger, Latino parenting is considered to be authoritarian, possibly because of the emphasis on the family hierarchy; children are expected to respect parents and their elders. Still, Latino parents are typically found to be affectionate and loving towards their children (Benokraitis). Cooperation and collectivism are traditionally valued in the Latino culture; children are expected to think about others when making a decision rather than just themselves (Binger). This idea is very different that the individualist values most Caucasian American families hold. According to Benokraitis, many Latino families have the belief that family relationships should take priority over a person's own

well-being. These values are similar to those of collectivist Asian American families mentioned above.

Julian and colleagues (1994) argue the point that socio-economic status and/or social class is an affecting factor in the parent-child relationship as well. Conger, Conger, and Martin (2009) state that the lower the income of a family, the more probable for the parent to experience a higher level of stress, causing a possible setback in the child's cognitive and social development, their school success, as well as conflicts in their attachment to the parent(s). A lower economic status is correlated with harsh and uninvolved parenting that is considered to be inconsistent (Conger et al.). This is possibly caused by the higher levels of stress associated with a lower income. With a higher socioeconomic status, there are additional resources available, allowing parents to devote more towards their child's development; according to Conger and colleagues, these investments include "parent stimulation of learning both directly and through outside supports, adequate food, housing, clothing, and medical care, and living in a more economically advantage neighborhood" (p. 694). All of these factors positively affect the child by making more constructive resources readily available and allowing the parent the ability to focus on the social, emotional, and cognitive development of their child. This idea is similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory that states basic needs such as food, water, and safety need to be met before one can be concerned about affection, belonging, and self-actualization (Huitt, 2007). For lower class families with small incomes the main concern is often getting a roof over the child's head and food in their stomachs; if these needs are the major concern, there may be no room for worrying about the child's potential and self-fulfillment therefore the child's development is affected.

Parent and child interactions are different among social classes and can be seen in the ways parents communicate with their children. In a study looking at children's storytelling habits conducted by Wiley, Rose, Burger, and Miller (2004), results showed that in Caucasian American working class families children had the right to speak freely, but they had to defend what they said, ensuring that their stories were accurate. With middle class families, again children had the right to speak but this time they were allowed to express their personal versions more frequently; correctness in the children's stories was not the focus rather the expression of the child was. This difference can affect the child's self image and how they may interact with others later in their development. There was a similarity between both groups as well. They each stressed the idea of respect of others (Kohn, 1963). This can be seen through the entitlement that children were given to tell their stories to parents as they listened (Wiley, Rose, Burger, and Miller, 2004). The parents showed consideration for what the children had to say and modeled their value of respect.

The differences among families vary greatly whether it is because of ethnic or racial diversity, socioeconomic class variation, or other factors that result in distinctive approaches to parenting. The parent affects the development of the child, no matter the structure or how the family functions. Studies have shown that parents and their communication styles have an impact on the child's self esteem as well as an impact on the risky behaviors in which adolescence choose to participate.

It is found that the self-esteem of a child is correlated with the parent's participation in the child's life; this includes how parents talk to their children. In a study conducted by Kernis, Brown, and Brody (2000), a connection was found between the child's perception of their parents' (especially the father's) communication style and the child's self esteem. The

researchers stated that children with lower self-esteem levels also described their fathers to be particularly critical of their actions, controlling (using conditional love and guilt), as well as insulting. In contrast, children found with higher self esteem described their fathers as being supportive and approving, in addition to showing affection through physical means (hugging, touch on the shoulder). These results indicate that parents (fathers in particular) and the way they talk to their children, whether it be in a loving and supporting, or critical and conditional manner, has an impact on their children. Children internalize the messages their parents give them and use those to create their own self-perceptions and sense of self-worth.

In accordance with Kernis, Brown, and Brody's (2000) research, Ackard, Meumark-Sztainer, Story, and Perry (2006) found that when parents are critical, children are more likely to talk with their friends about important issues than their parents. Children in this situation show lower self-esteem as well as higher levels of depression in comparison to children who feel they can talk to their parents (Ackard et al.). This research supports the idea that when parents are warm and approving toward their children, a sense of trust and a higher feeling of self-worth are both created in the child. The way that parents communicate and what they say is therefore extremely important to the healthy growth of their children.

As children grow older and enter the adolescent years, risky behaviors (e.g. drinking alcohol, smoking, or sexual activity) are introduced into most teens' lives. According to Baxter, Bylund, Imes, and Routsong (2009), parents can provide many different types of rules to prevent risky adolescent behavior. Some examples include providing a specific age or location (e.g. the parent's house under their supervision) at which these behaviors are acceptable for the teen or if these kinds of behaviors are unacceptable and forbidden all together. Parents' justification of such rules is a crucial factor for if the rule is obeyed or not (Baxter et al.). They must be clear

and straightforward with their adolescent as to what the rule is and why; if rules are vague or not communicated clearly, the teen is less likely to respect them. Looking specifically at adolescent sexual activity, Newcomer and Udry (1985) concluded that the chance of such behavior taking place is lowered if mothers had spoken to their daughters and educated them on the subject. If parents comfortably held conversations about sex and the use of contraceptives frequently with their adolescents, constructively timing the conversations as well as maintaining a sense of equality with the teen, the chances that the teen would wait to have sex were shown to increase (Blake, Simkin, Ledsky, Perkins, & Calabrese, 2001). This provides more support for the idea that constant communication that is clear and supportive has a great effect on the decisions that an adolescent makes. Research concludes that involved, but not overly involved parents who are caring and supportive of their children are less likely to have adolescents who participate in risky behavior (Goncy & van Dulmen, 2010). Parents involved in their children's lives talk to them about what's going on with the child in their day to day life. Goncy and van Dulmen support this idea with the finding that a higher level of communication (leading to a close parent-child relationship) is associated with lower behavioral problems and delinquency in the teenage years.

Parents' interactions with their children have an enormous effect on the child's development. Studies show that parents who use supportive and empathetic communication not only assist the child to develop a positive and healthy self-esteem but also help prevent dangerous risky behaviors that may be introduced in the adolescent years (Kernis et al., 2000; Baxter et al., 2009). Critical and degrading parenting practices on the other hand, such as name calling or put-downs, can cause the child great harm and result in a low idea of self-worth (Kernis et al.).

When looking at parenting practices, it is always important to consider the context; the values and beliefs that originate from cultural background, ethnicity, and race all play a large role in the parenting style and how it effects the development of the child (Julian et al., 1994). Cultural elements impact parenting and are critical influences to consider because if ignored, they can cause major misconceptions and false implications when trying to classify parenting characteristics into neat categories. A number of factors impact the parent child-relationship as it progresses with the development of the child as well as the adult; it is an ever changing event full of surprises and blunders. Still billions of people choose to become a parent and find the entire experience one of the most rewarding life has to offer.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Participants

The video used staff and children from The Children's Center on the campus of California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. The staff used was both part-time student staff (5) as well as full-time core staff (3). The children included had parents that were students, staff, or alumni of Cal Poly at the time of filming. Their ages ranged from the one to six years and they were enrolled in Room two through seven; Room one was excluded from this video because of the developmental stage.

Procedure

The first step was developing the idea of the video itself. In collaboration with advisors, it was decided that the video would be used at parent meetings held with the assistant director of The Children's Center. The purpose of the video was to focus on boundary-setting with an emphasis on the clear, concise, firm communication of the parent, as well as the *empathy* of a parent for his/her child rather than *sympathy*. Later, it was decided because of time constraints, only the topic of boundary setting would be examined.

In the months of July and August of 2010, the following books were used to compile the information to be used in the video: *Between Parent and Child* (Ginott, 1956); *There's Gotta Be a Better Way: Discipline that Works* (Bailey, 1994); and *How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk* (Faber & Mazlish, 1980). It was discussed with the assistant director later what information from those sources would be most important as well as beneficial for parents. At the beginning, it was decided that video clips of teacher-child interactions were going to be used as visual examples of more positive and constructive communication to work in

partnership with the information from the listed sources above. The video uses the examples filmed at The Children's Center and after the clip is shown, it provides an explanation to the parents as to why the staff chose to react that way, what the outcome of the situation was, and how that affected the child.

Before filming could take place, consent of the parents need to be obtained. Once a letter was sent to the parents explaining the project, I filmed for the following two and a half weeks in all classrooms during business hours; around 13 hours of footage was taken.

Once it was decided on what clips to use in the final product (roughly 20 clips), consent had to be obtained from those families and individuals for this specific project. For the children, there was a letter attached explaining what was happening, a consent form, as well as the clip to be used, and this packet was placed in the appropriate parent pocket (located outside the child's classroom) for the families to review. They were given one week to review to material and return a signed consent form into the front desk as The Children's Center if they approved or a form with a box checked at the bottom if they did not. A similar procedure was carried out with the staff. They received the same letter, a consent form, and the footage to be used on a CD, but their information was left for them in the classroom they worked in most. They were given a week to review it as well.

Once consent was obtained, those video clips were combined with the information selected to be used to create the video. The information was both acoustically and visually presented. The video was reviewed and corrected by the assistant director before the final submission of the product.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

After filming and editing, there were roughly 20 usable clips that were asked to be consented. Out of those 20 clips, the assistant director determined that 7 of them would be acceptable examples to use in the video. A total of 13 children were included in addition to 8 staff members (three core staff and five student staff). The footage contained examples of limits and natural consequences. Please see Appendix A for the descriptions of the clips used. These clips were combined with the parenting information collected from the suggested books by The Children's Center to create the complete film. The final film was reviewed and edited by the assistant director before a copy was turned over to The Children's Center.

Limitations

A limitation was the vulnerability of the participants. With the involvement of children in the video, there needed to be a lot of communication with the families of the center and consent was needed to use any material in the final video. A second limitation in filming was the fact that the population of children and staff at The Children's Center is rather non-diverse. Because the center is affiliated with Cal Poly, the majority of families include parents as either students or faculty of the campus, creating a strong educational atmosphere at home for the children. This produced a lack of diversity in family lifestyles. Because of the scarcity in racial, ethnic, and cultural differences on campus, diversities in these areas were limited at The Children's Center as well. These limitations created a narrow look at children's behaviors. A final limitation of the project was the restricted amount of material that was usable for the video. The final footage had a lack of variety in the types of interactions. This caused a lot of the same footage. In filming just

The Children's Center alone, there was a similarity in the responses as well as an absence of extremes to compare and contrast in the video.

Conclusion

The film will hopefully provide parents with additional tools they can use when interacting with their children in difficult situations at home, such as tantrums or testing limits. The clips in the film are intended to provide parents with examples of how they can use language to provide a better outcome for the child as well as the parent. The kind of language exemplified includes clear and concise limit setting, yet still supportive of and empathetic to the child's emotions in the situation. Respect for the child is stressed and shown by the actions of the adult (e.g., the adult putting their body at the child's eye level, using active listening with eye contact, and acknowledging the child's emotions). The examples used highlight research findings that positive and supportive communication help children develop a healthier self-esteem and is more likely to prevent risky behavior in adolescence (Baxter, Bylund, Imes, & Routsong, 2009; Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000). The goal of the video is to help parents in fostering healthier relationships with their children by teaching empathetic and supportive communication. These skills will hopefully create more open lines of communication with children when used by parents. Research shows that children who feel comfortable in talking to their parents about personal issues tend to have higher self-esteem than children who feel like they cannot (Ackard, Meumark-Sztainer, Story, & Perry, 2006). Overall, the wish is that by providing positive and supportive language for parents to use, the development of the child and their self-image will become more optimistic and strong. The help that the video can provide the parents at The Children's Center when their kids are young will hopefully carry through the child's lifetime, creating a more positive transition into adulthood.

Future Directions

In the future, filming could be more extensive and expanded to look at more diverse populations of children and families to allow more emphasis on the difference of parenting among ethnicities, race, and cultures. In filming a more diverse population, the differences in the effects of parenting on the development of the child could be looked at in more detail. The effects of the language used at The Children's Center could also be researched specifically to provide empirical evidence of its effectiveness.

As for research regarding parenting and its effects on children, the differences of parenting among different races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic classes should be looked at in more detail. There needs to be a focus on how those specific differences effect or change the child's development and outcome. The affects of parenting on children could also be expanded. Currently it is limited to topics such as self-esteem and risky adolescent behaviors, but issues such as future outcomes, adult relationships, and self-talk could be looked at as well. There also needs to be more research in the differences among socioeconomic classes and race and ethnicity. At this point, only Caucasian Americans have been looked at in research regarding social class but this should be expanded to class differences among other races and ethnicities as well.

References

- Ackard, D., Neumark-Sztainer, D., Story, M., & Perry, C. (2006). Parent-child connectedness and behavioral and emotional health among adolescents. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 30*, 59-66. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2005.09.013.
- Bailey, B. (1994). *There's gotta be a better way: Discipline that works!*. Learning in Action Books: U.S.A.
- Baxter, L. A., Bylund, C. L., Imes, R., & Routsong, T. (2009). Parent-child perceptions of parental behavior control through rule-setting for risky health choices during adolescents. *Journal of Family Communication, 9*, 251-271. doi:10.1080/15267430903255920.
- Benokraitis, N. V. (2003). *Marriages and families: Changes, choices, and constraints*. (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Bigner, J. J. (2010). *Parent-child relations: An introduction to parenting*. (8th ed.). New Jersey: Merrill.
- Blake, S. M., Simkin, L., Ledsky, R., Perkins, C., & Calabrese, J. M. (2001). Effects of a parent-child communications intervention on young adolescents' risk for early onset of sexual intercourse. *Family Planning Perspectives, 33*, 52-61. doi:10.2307/2673750
- Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., & Martin, M. J., (2010). Socioeconomic status, family processes, and individual development. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*, 685-704. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00725.x.
- Demo, D. H., Small, S. A., & Savin-Williams, R. C. (1987). Family relations and the self-esteem of adolescents and their parents. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 49*, 705-715. doi:10.2307/351965.

- Faber, A., & Mazlish, E. (1980). *How to talk so kids will listen & listen so kids will talk*. Avon Books: New York.
- Ginott, H.G. (1956). *Between parent & child*. Avon Books: New York.
- Goncy, E. A., & van Dulmen, H. M. (2010). Fathers do make a difference: Parental involvement and adolescent alcohol use. *Fathering*, 8, 93-108. doi:10.3149/fth.0801.93.
- Huitt, W. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved 2010 Nov from, <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/regsys/maslow.html>
- Julian, T. C., McKenry, P. C., & McKelvey, M. W. (1994). Cultural variations in parenting: Perceptions of Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American parents. *Family Relations*, 43, 30-37. doi:10.2307/585139.
- Kernis, M. H., Brown, A. C., & Brody, G. H. (2000). Fragile self-esteem in children and its associations with perceived patterns of parent-child communication. *Journal of Personality* 68, 225-252. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.00096.
- Kohn, M. L. (1963). Social class and parent-child relationships: An interpretation. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 68, 471-480. doi:10.1086/223403.
- Leach, P. (1978). *Your baby & child: From birth to age five*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc..
- Newcomer, S. F., & Udry, J. R. (1985). Parent-child communication and adolescent sexual behavior. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 17, 169-174. doi:10.2307/2135242
- Olson, D. H., Defrain, J., & Skogrand, L. (2008). *Marriages & families: Intimacy, diversity, & strengths*. (6th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural natural of human development*. New York: Oxford.

Sue, D. W., & Sue D. (2008). *Counseling the culturally diverse*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Wiley, A. R., Rose, A. J., Burger, L. K., & Miller, P. J. (2004). Constructing autonomous selves through narrative practices: A comparative study of working-class and middle-class families. In C.M. Shore (Ed), *The many faces of childhood: Diversity in development* (pp. 100-116). Boston: Pearson.

Zach, U., & Keller, H. (2004). Patterns of the attachment-exploration balance of 1-year-old infants from the United States and Northern Germany. In C.M. Shore (Ed), *The many faces of childhood: Diversity in development* (pp. 34-39). Boston: Pearson.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Scenario #1

Participants: A student staff person was working with two female children in Room 2/3.

Scene: The student staff person was reading a book to two children. In the middle of reading, one of the children hits the book, knocking it out of the teacher's hands.

Discipline strategy: The student staff person explained to the child that the other child is still interested in reading that book. While it is ok to be done, she told the child that it is not ok to be hitting the book to the ground. She gave the girl the option to find something else to do or she could continue to listen with her hands in her lap.

Scenario #2

Participants: A teacher was watching children play in the sandbox, in particular a boy playing with a shovel in Room 4.

Scene: While the boy was playing with the shovel, another child went over to the boy and took the shovel out of his hands. He began to scream and get very angry because he wanted his shovel back.

Discipline strategy: The teacher first gave the boy the language he needed to communicate what he wanted to the other child, rather than screaming and getting physical. She then explained to the other child that if she wanted to play with a shovel, instead of taking it from another child she could find another one in the sandbox that wasn't being used.

Scenario #3

Participants: A child was riding in a car around the bike path with a student staff person watching close by in Room 4.

Scene: The boy tried to lean outside of the car (while still inside) to grab something and in turn, flipped the car over on its side.

Discipline issue: The student staff person was quickly by the child's side asking if he was ok in a calm voice. When he replied yes, she then asked him how he was going to get out of the car because he seemed stuck. As he was having trouble figuring it out, instead of pulling him out or directing him, she gave him some ideas of what he could do. Once out of the car, he attempted to pick it up to put it right side up again. She told him if he needed help, he could ask and he did. Once the student staff person helped pull the car up, she explained to the boy how the car tipped over and what the natural consequence was.

Scenario #4

Participants: A girl was outside playing with a student staff supervising in Room 6.

Scene: A student staff person told the child a few times that she could not be outside in just her socks.

Discipline issue: After the child was told a few times that she could not be outside with her socks only, the student staff person gave her a choice. The child could put on her boots or take off her socks. The child took the boots, but walked away. The student staff person followed through with the limit by stopping the child and making her choose. She would not let the child leave (near the staff) until the child had a plan. The student staff person watched to make sure the child completed the task. At the end, she gave the child positive reinforcement.

Scenario #5

Participants: Children were at a table in the classroom working on drawing a picture from a story told earlier in class that day in Room 6.

Scene: A girl who had finished her drawing was narrating the picture she drew to a student staff. Next to the girl was a boy who was supposed to be working on his own drawing. A teacher was nearby watching the activity.

Discipline issue: The boy was very distracted and not working on his drawing. The student staff person working with the girl told him multiple times to do his own work and leave the other children alone. The nearby teacher came in and told him that the situation was not working for him. She explained that he doesn't seem to do his work well when sitting by that particular girl and he needed to find some place different to work. She helped him find a new spot on the other side of the table and sat down with him to help keep him focused.

Scenario #6

Participants: Children were at the snack table in Room 7. There was a teacher at the table, but she stepped away for a few minutes to take a phone call.

Scene: While the teacher was gone, one of the children pushed the snack roughly across the table to another child.

Discipline issue: When the teacher returned, having seen what happened, she called the child's attention to what happened. She explained to them that by passing the snack so quickly across the table, it could fall on the floor and spill causing the other children to have no snack. She then worked with the children to brainstorm together how else they could pass the food across the table only giving some suggestions. At the end of the conversation, once better methods were decided upon the teacher clearly stated to the

children that she would expect them to pass the snack that way whether a teacher was present or not.

Scenario #7

Participants: Children were working on jumping up and down to see how quickly their heart rate would increase in Room 7. A student staff person was close by, verbally participating in their experiment.

Scene: Two of the children jumping, began to jump and then fall onto the ground laughing.

Discipline issue: The student staff person explained to the children that it was unsafe for them to be falling on the ground as there were other children nearby that could hurt them. She clearly stated that they could be jumping up and down in place (as space was limited) and if they were to purposely fall down again they could be done with the activity.