

PERCEPTION OF SELF-COMPETENCE AMONG
FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN AS PREDICTED
BY PARENTAL ATTITUDES ABOUT
CHILDREARING, AND GENDER

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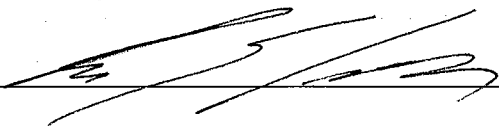
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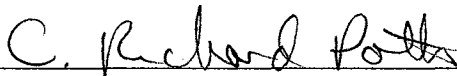
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Introduction

The study of the perception of self-competence in children and the factors affecting the perception of self-competence has been a recent area of interest among developmentalists. Researchers are divided in terms of how the perception of self-competence develops in children. The perception of self-competence is viewed as either unidimensional or multidimensional. For instance, Rogers (1959) and Coopersmith (1967) view self-competence as unidimensional. Unidimensional self-competence is defined as a cumulation of one's evaluations of performance across various tasks. It is argued that unidimensional self-competence is a global concept. It is an integration or the sum of one's feeling of confidence in achieving tasks across a range of areas.

Self-competence was defined by Harter (1983) as "the feeling of confidence in achieving certain tasks". In other words, it is one's perception of being able to succeed in a specific task. Harter (1983, 1985) argued that perception of self-competence was multidimensional. Multidimensional self-competence means that self-competence can be assessed by evaluating the child's feeling of confidence of being able to succeed in a variety of areas separately. Harter (1983, 1985) argued that one's perception of self-competence was not to be assessed as a single unit of overall confidence in one's abilities. Instead, it was to be viewed as the confidence about one's performance in different, separate, specific areas (e.g., physical competence, cognitive competence, and social competence). Multidimensionalists argue that their approach to the study of self-competence highlights important evaluative judgments in several dimensions and it is not possible to make such evaluative judgments in the unidimensionalists model. For the purpose of this paper it is assumed that self-competence is multidimensional.

Harter (1983) proposed four dimensions for the perception of self-competence in young children. These were physical competence, cognitive competence, social acceptance and maternal acceptance. Physical competence is the perception of one's physical ability (i.e., how one feels about his/her ability to do physical activities). Cognitive competence is the perception of one's cognitive capabilities (i.e., how one feels about his/her ability to succeed in tasks that involve the use of cognitive capabilities). Social and maternal acceptance are the child's perception of him/herself by peers and mothers respectively (i.e., how the child feels about others' view and acceptance of him/her).

Harter (1988) also included another dimension in the perception of self-competence. She classified this as the global construct of self. This is an umbrella of one's confidence in the self as a person. This dimension is similar to Coopersmith's (1967) unidimensional perception of self; however, Harter (1988) did not propose that people only use this global dimension of self-competence. Instead, she advocated that the examination of the four dimensions of self-competence (i.e., physical competence, cognitive competence, peer acceptance, and maternal acceptance) would result in an in-depth understanding of the perception of self-competence. Harter (1988) also stated that global self-competence was not an additive dimension of the other four dimensions of self-competence (i.e., physical competence, cognitive competence, peer and maternal acceptance).

The literature (e.g., Broughton, 1974) indicated that the development of self-competence is related to a number of variables. For one, the ability to perceive one's self-competence in multiple dimensions (i.e., physical competence, cognitive competence,

peer and maternal acceptance) increases with age. Further, it has been argued that the perception of children's self-competence influences the social behavior and interpersonal relations of children. There are equivocal data or gaps in the literature pertaining to the influence of gender differences and influence of the significant others on the perception of self-competence among the young children. These contradictory data as well as other data (e.g., the existence of gender differences in the perception of self-competence, the presence of the influence of parental attitudes on childrearing on the self-competence of the preschool children) makes it difficult to discern consistent patterns with regard to the influences of gender and significant others. Such literature indicates that the study of self-competence in preschool children warrants further attention.

The purpose of the present research is to study the factors that influence the perception of self-competence in four-year-old children, in order to gain a better understanding of the process of perception of self-competence among young children. The specific factors that will be studied are: (a) gender of the child, (b) parenting attitudes, and (c) the gender of the child and the gender of the parent interacting with the parental attitudes about childrearing techniques in predicting the self-competence of young children.

Harter and Pike (1984) in their research identified factors like cognitive competence and relationship with significant others (e.g., parent) as affecting the perception of self-competence in young children. Research further indicates that parental attitudes about childrearing techniques play an important role in influencing the child's perception of self-competence. It is argued that this is due to the primary caregiving function of parents. As primary caregivers play a major role in creating an environment

in which the child develops, this may influence how the child perceives his/her self-competence. There are a variety of parenting attitudes and behaviors that the parents might use. Contradictory results were found with regard to the influence of parental attitudes about childrearing techniques on the perception of self-competence among preschool children (e.g., Podmore, 1988; Turner & Harris, 1984). The present research will study the predictability of the perception of self-competence among four-year-old children by the parental attitudes about childrearing techniques and gender of the parents and children.

Research has also indicated that there are gender differences in the perception of self-competence among children. However the data about gender differences in the perception of self-competence in preschool children is contradictory (e.g., Trautner, 1992; Sugawara, Adduci & Cate, 1986). Further the two related factors of gender differences in the parental attitudes and children's gender differences in their perception of self-competence have not been studied and that will be the focus of the present study. Apart from studying the combined influences of gender and parental attitudes in predicting the self-competence of four-year-old children, the present research will also study the separate influences of gender and parental attitudes about childrearing in predicting the self-competence of four-year-old children.

By studying factors that influence the perception of self-competence among young children, the present research will contribute to the scarce literature in the area of the factors influencing the perception of self-competence among young children. Identifying the various factors that influence the self-competence of young children is important, so that the primary caregivers and teachers can create an atmosphere to better

foster the development of positive perception of self-competence in young children and to create a conducive atmosphere that facilitates the child's development. Research has shown that an enriched curriculum in preschools has the possibility of enhancing the positive perception of self-competence in preschool children (e.g., Washington, 1976; Chafel, 1987; Caraway, 1986). Data have also indicated that inculcating a high self-competence in young children will encourage them to adopt prosocial behavior, excel in academic tasks, and continue to have high self-competence in later ages too (Cauley & Tyler, 1989; Gottschalk, 1993). Hence it is important to study the variables that influence the development of self-competence among younger children to enable them to succeed in order to facilitate success in later life.

Theoretical Background

Research about the individual differences and developmental changes of self-concept has been studied under various constructs. One construct is Bandura's (1977) "self-efficacy", which is defined as one's belief concerning the ability to make use of one's skills in achieving certain tasks or demands. Bandura (1988) stated that perception of self-competence was not an innate trait that a person has or does not have. Instead it is a trait that is constantly developing and that involves the joint action of cognitive, social, and behavioral skills that have to be effectively combined to aid in the development of self-competence. Another construct of self-concept that Harter (1983) studied was called "self-competence". Self-competence is a person's feeling of confidence in achieving certain tasks. Review of these various definitions indicated that some factors were shared by both constructs. One such shared factor was the general meaning of self-competence as being the overall feeling of confidence in succeeding at a specific task or a group of tasks.

As discussed in the introduction, Harter's (1984) model of self-competence is a multidimensional one, consisting of four domains: (a) physical competence, (b) cognitive competence, (c) peer acceptance, and (d) maternal acceptance. Harter (1984) also included another dimension to the perception of self-competence which was the global feeling of self-worth. Global self-competence was the dimension that evaluated the overall feeling of the self as a person. Harter (1984) stated that the global self-worth was not the sum of feelings of competence in the various dimensions (e.g., physical competence, cognitive competence, peer acceptance, and maternal acceptance) but rather an overall feeling about the self as a person.

Global self-worth has been assessed through several independent questions that evaluate self-worth directly. Harter (1984) indicated that she elaborated on global self-worth along the lines of James's (1892) and Cooley's (1964) definition of the self. From James' theoretical formulation Harter proposed that global self-worth stemmed from the comparison of one's level of competence in one domain to the value of achieving success in that domain. This meant that a person's self-worth was influenced to a great extent by the importance the person placed on achieving a certain task. For example, if it meant a great deal for a child to complete a specific cognitive task and he felt confident about completing the task; this meant that the child will have high self-worth because he/she felt that he/she can succeed in the task that he/she valued. In essence, Harter (1983) derives from James' model that self-worth is determined by the comparison "between the level of competence and the value of attaining success in various domains". Thus the amount of discrepancy will indicate the level of self-competence. In other words, a child will have high self-worth if the child thinks he/she will successfully achieve a task that he/she values. A child will have a low self-worth, if he/she thinks that he/she cannot succeed at a task that is of value to him/her. Higher the level of discrepancy, then lower the self-worth, and lower the level of discrepancy then higher the self-worth.

Harter (1983) had also incorporated Cooley's (1964) theory of self in her model of self-worth. Cooley (1964) focused primarily on the social origins of global self-worth. According to him, one's self-worth was primarily dependent on the attitudes of the significant others. One then evaluated these attitudes and incorporated them into one's own evaluations of the self, in forming the global self-worth. Cooley referred to this as the "looking glass self". The two dimensions of Harter's model of self-competence

(maternal and peer acceptance) were extensions of Cooley's formulations of self-worth. In these two dimensions, children evaluated their social competence in terms of how the significant others (usually parents and peers) perceived them. This is a very important part of the formation of perception of self-competence. In the present study, this construct was examined by focusing on the predictability of self-competence of four-year-old children by the attitudes of significant others (e.g., parents).

To summarize Harter's (1988) model, she proposed that self-competence in young children was multidimensional. She also argued that as the children grew older their understanding about the number of dimensions of self-competence increased and children were able to get an in depth understanding of their self-competence. Harter had also introduced another dimension of self-competence called the global feeling of self-worth. Harter (1988) got the idea of global self-worth from James's (1892) and Cooley's (1964) work on the self. Global self-worth indicated the overall feeling of self, which included the feeling of confidence in achieving success in certain tasks that are of value to the person. It also included the feeling of being wanted and valued by the significant others. It is very important for a child to know that his/her parents care for him/her. This will promote a feeling of being wanted and being important. This in turn will promote high perception of self-competence in young children. The other parental dimension that influences children's perception of self-competence is the parental attitudes towards childrearing. This was the interest in the present study. The present study focussed on the predictability of self-competence among four-year-old children by the attitudes their parents had towards childrearing.

Bandura's (1988) description about self-worth and self-competence is not very different from Harter's (1988) description of the same. According to Bandura (1988) self-competence and self-worth developed through a process that is constantly changing in a person. It involved development that was influenced by several skills such as cognitive, social, and behavioral skills. Bandura (1988) stated that self-efficacy or self-belief in one's ability was best measured through designated domains or functions, since these types of evaluations were sources of richer predictive power than the omnibus unidimensional measures. According to him perceived self-competence was how one judged one's capabilities; and self-worth or self-esteem was how much one liked or disliked oneself. Bandura (1988) stated that both perceived competence and self-worth were multidimensional. According to Bandura (1988) one might have a positive perception of self-competence in an area but have a low feeling of self-worth, because one might not value that particular activity and may place low value on it. For example, one might have a high perception of self-competence in academic pursuits, and have a low self-worth about academic pursuits because of the low value it has for that person. On the other hand, a person might have high self-worth on sports activities even though one does not have a high perception of self-competence in it. This high self-worth is basically due to the high value the person placed on the sports activities and enjoyed doing sports. Bandura's statement about the multidimensional nature of self-worth and perception of competence is not very different from Harter's statement about the two. Recalling from the previous paragraph, Harter's argument was that self-worth, could be viewed as an additional dimension of self-competence and it was an overall evaluation of the self as a person.

Bandura (1988) also stated that one's self-efficacy or belief in one's competence influenced one's behavior. For instance, if one truly believed that one can succeed in a certain task, then one will be motivated to pursue the task with endurance and successfully complete it. If one did not believe in one's own competence then one will not pursue a task with high motivation and persistence. Similarly, one's belief in having control of one's affective functioning determined how one handled a new situation. If one felt that he/she was not in control of his/her actions, then he/she would feel vulnerable in new situations. The cognitive process of each person is also influenced by the belief about the cognitive competence. A person who has high sense of one's own cognitive competence, will feel confident about setting higher goals and pursuing them. Further, the kind of activities one chooses is also dependent on one's belief about succeeding in those activities. The above explanation supplements Bandura's view about self-efficacy (wherein he emphasized that, one will have high self-efficacy if one is able to achieve their perceived level of competence). This implied that self-efficacy was learned, since people tended to repeat activities that have yielded success in the past and have been repeatedly reinforced for it. However, Bandura stated that such an achievement did not guarantee high/positive self-worth or esteem. A child might feel worthless even after succeeding in a task, because the task is not valued highly by the child. As a result succeeding in that task was of low value to the child. On the other hand if the child had succeeded in a task that was of high value to him/her, then the child would have developed a positive sense of self-worth.

Development of self-competence

The development of the perception of self-competence proceeds in a gradual manner with children first being able to perceive their self-competence only in dimensions related to physical activities. But as they grow older children are able to identify their competence in several areas simultaneously (Harter, 1983; Bandura, 1988). Four-to 7-year-old children can make reliable judgments about the existence of each of the following four domains: (a) cognitive competence, (b) physical competence, (c) peer acceptance, and (d) maternal acceptance. However, children in this age span cannot successfully distinguish their own competence in the four domains. Harter and Pike (1984) stated that even though children in this age could articulate their judgments about the self in the four areas, they were not able to clearly differentiate between cognitive and physical skills, and between peer and maternal acceptance. Furthermore they were not able make judgments about their own overall self-worth. This however did not mean that children did not possess a sense of self-worth, it meant that children in this age did not have the ability to articulate their self-worth. This limitation is due partially to the limited cognitive repertoire of 4- to 7-year-old children. The children in this age range cannot clearly distinguish between the four dimensions, and are not able to clearly articulate their feelings about self-worth. The ability to verbalize global self-worth is achieved by children in middle childhood (8-12 years) (Harter, 1983). During middle childhood children can clearly identify their self-competence in five areas - scholastic competence, social acceptance, behavioral conduct, athletic competence, and physical appearance.

Harter (1983) hypothesized that during adolescence, there is still further differentiation in the perception of self-competence. Adolescents start to discriminate

between close friendship, romantic appeal and job competence in addition to the five areas they identify in the middle childhood.

In sum, as children grew older, children's perception of self-competence continues to be further differentiated. With growth and development, one started to get a meaningful picture of self-worth. Children become able to articulate their feelings of self-worth and develop the ability to clearly distinguish between the various dimensions of self-competence. One major reason for the change in the perception of self-competence is due to the development of more advanced cognitive competence (Harter, 1983).

Factors influencing the development of self-competence in young children

Children's ability to perceive their self-competence differentiates with an increase in age. This was partly due to the increasing cognitive repertoire. Another reason for the development of sophistication in the children's perception of self-competence was due to the influence of underlying environmental factors. With increase in age, several interacting environmental influences begin to play a major role. For example, during early childhood the influence of parents, their childrearing techniques, and the environment they provide for the child influenced the child's perception of self-competence (e.g., O, Connor, 1995; Larsen, 1985). Healthy-favorable relationships with the caregivers are very important in fostering a sense of competence in young children, which will also be reflected in their social competence during later life (Hartup, 1989). Parents who encouraged their children to make their own judgments and to be independent and who

interacted with their children enhanced the perception of self-competence in young children.

Bandura (1988) stated that with increase in age and as the child's social horizon broadened, the sources of social influence changed. When children are young, parents play one of the most important roles in their development of the perception of self-competence. However when children become adolescents their peers begin to play a more influential role in their development of the perception of self-competence. As one moves from being an adolescent to a young adult other sources of influences such as, lasting relationships, career etc. plays a major role in influencing the perception of self-competence.

Harter (1983) also acknowledged the importance of the parents in the development of the perception of self-competence among preschool children. This reflected Cooley's idea of the "looking glass self". Children evaluated their perception of self-competence based on how their significant others (e.g., parents) evaluated the child's abilities. Children's perceptions of self-competence was also influenced in part by how the child perceived his/her parents' affection/love for him/her. In other words, a child will have a high feeling of self-worth if he/she felt that his/her parents cared for him/her. Thus it becomes very important for the parents to convey to their children in a positive manner how they truly feel about them.

A third perspective that also supports the role of parents in influencing the development of children's perception of self-competence was the social learning theorists' concepts. According to the social learning theorists children tended to repeat behaviors/actions that were reinforced by the views and actions of their significant others

(i.e., parents). Hence by means of reinforcement children learn to value their behaviors/actions which in turn made them feel competent and value themselves more positively. Research had also implied that parents who encouraged their children to be independent and reinforced free thought and action promoted a higher sense of competence in their children. This was because these children learned to handle responsibility and make evaluative judgments for themselves very early in life. As a result they felt confident of achieving any task. Thus parents do play an important role in the development of the perception of self-competence among younger children.

Other than parental attitudes on childrearing influencing the development of self-competence in young children, gender was also found to influence the perception of self-competence in young children. Usually starting at the age of three years the children learn through interaction with the environment, to play the socially accepted gender roles (Burge, 1982). Every culture has a set of gender-typed behaviors for males and females. Depending on the extent to which the gender-typed behavior is emphasized in the culture, children learn to play the appropriate gender roles. This behavior was usually reinforced by the environment, and this in turn influenced the children's perception of self-competence (Burge, 1982). The controversy about the influence of gender on the perception of self-competence among young children is whether they actually understand the role of gender-typed behavior or if they were simply playing the gender-typed behavior to gain social approval. According to Kohlberg (1960), children learn to play the gender-typed behavior by about six years of age, but whether the children understood the concept of gender-constancy is still questionable.

Thus looking at the above two models it is evident that researchers are in agreement about the gradual developmental pattern of self-competence in children. It can also be noted that researchers are also in agreement about the multidimensional nature of self-competence. The development of self-competence was also said to be influenced by several environmental factors, the most important one being the influence of parents' attitudes towards childrearing. The next section will elaborate on a working model that emphasizes the influence of parental attitudes on childrearing on the development of self-competence in four-year-old children.

Working model

The present research was guided by a working model which was an adaptation of Harter's (1983) and Bandura's (1988) models. Self-competence is one's perception of success that one will achieve in certain tasks or domains. There were four major domains incorporated in the present working model following Harter's (1983) model. These domains were, cognitive competence, physical competence, peer acceptance, and maternal acceptance. In the present model the perception of self-competence in the four domains will be viewed separately, to allow for an in-depth understanding of each domain of self-competence development in four-year-old children.

Self-worth is a complex abstract idea which is a focus of the researchers of self. It is the overall feeling of the self as a person. The dimension of global self-worth was not included in the present model because the present research is with young children; and the literature (e.g., Harter & Pike, 1984) has argued that young children (less than 8 years of age) have not yet developed the cognitive capability to evaluate their global self-worth.

Moreover in the present study, the researcher was interested in studying the various dimensions of self-competence and not focusing on overall self-worth.

Review of the theories and literature pertaining to the development of self-competence indicated that development of the perception of self-competence in young children proceeds in a gradual manner and increases with age. As children grow older, they are able to expand the variety and number of dimensions about which they can perceive their abilities. Young children's perception of self-competence is limited only to physical attributes (e.g., how tall they are). However with increase in age, children begin to form psychological conceptualizations of their self-competence; beginning to focus on other areas like cognitive competence and social competence. They begin to realize the importance of being competent in cognitive areas and being well liked and accepted by their peers and parents. With increase in age also comes the holistic understanding of the self by the children. The major source of influence for the changing pattern of self-competence is due to the improvement in the cognitive competence of young children. In the present working model it was assumed that the 4-year-old children are able to make evaluative judgments about their self-competence in the four dimensions of cognitive competence, physical competence, peer and maternal acceptance.

The development of self-competence in children is influenced by several environmental sources. One important source is the influence of the parents. Children look up to their parents for support and reinforcement. They tend to repeat behaviors which are reinforced by their parents. By doing so the child is modelling Cooley's (1964) proposition of the "looking glass self"; which implied that a person's self-evaluation was influenced by how others evaluated him/her. In other words the child will

depend heavily on the reinforcement he/she receives from his parents to repeat or stop a certain behavior, which in turn will influence the child's perception of self-competence.

Parents who were affectionate, encouraged their children to be independent, and interacted effectively with their children, promoted high self-competence in their children (Elrod & Crase, 1980). Similarly parents who were very possessive about their children and did not let their children be independent, fostered a low sense of self-competence in their children. The gender of the parents and that of the children influences the childrearing techniques the parents adopt for their children. However there is not enough research to indicate that the gender based parental attitudes about childrearing, influences the perception of self-competence in young children.

To summarize the working model, it is proposed that the development of self-competence in young children progresses in a gradual manner. With increase in age the children's perception of self-competence changes, with children having a greater understanding of the various dimensions and also being able to judge oneself as a person. The perception of self-competence in young children is influenced by several factors; the nature and type of factors varied with age. There is controversy with regard to the role of gender in influencing the children's perception of self-competence. However in the present model gender is used as a predictor of perception of self-competence among four-year-old children, in order to test for the achievement gender constancy by four-year-old children. The above mentioned working model was used to study the question - "how does parental attitudes about childrearing interact with gender of the child and parent to predict the perception of self-competence among four-year-old children?"

Literature Review

Compared to the number of studies which have focused upon the perception of self-competence among older children and adults, few studies have specifically focused upon the perception of self-competence among preschool children. Harter (1983) attributes the lack of research pertaining to the perception of self-competence in preschool children, in part to the argument of many researchers that preschool aged children do not clearly perceive their self-competence. Further she argues that there is a lack of an adequate instrument that measures the perception of self-competence in preschool children. Research that does study the self-competence in preschool children generally focus on the self-competence of the handicapped, abused and neglected children (Urquiza, Wirtz & Peterson, 1994; Rodrigue, Geffeken & Morgan, 1993; Landry, Robinson, Copeland & Garner, 1993; Lobato, Barbour, Hall & Miller, 1987). Only within the last ten years has the issues of self-competence and its development among the 3-4-years-old-children have researched (Caraway, 1986; Eder, Gerlach & Perlmutter, 1987).

The review of the literature indicates a general agreement that, with increase in age the perception of self-competence becomes refined (Broughton, 1978; Harter & Pike, 1984). There is yet no agreement in the literature regarding how various factors influence the development of perception of self-competence in preschool children. For instance, Sugawara, Adduci and Cate (1986) found no significant gender differences in the perception of self-competence in preschool children. While, Trautner (1992) found significant gender differences in the perception of self-competence in preschool children. Similar contradictory results were found on the influence of parental attitudes about

childrearing (e.g., Larsen, 1985; Turner & Harris, 1985) on the perception of self-competence in preschool children.

In order to provide a clear picture about the research on self-competence and the various factors that influence it among the preschool children the literature review has been divided into several sections. The first section reviewed the research that relate to the development of perception of self-competence in young children. The studies will focus on the various dimensions of self-competence and the course of development of the perception of self-competence in preschool children. The second section will focus on the literature that reviewed the research that investigated the relationship between parental attitudes about childrearing and the perception of self-competence in young children. The last section of this chapter will review the research that investigated gender differences in the perception of self-competence in preschool children

Self-competence of Young Children

Literature on self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy were reviewed as well as that of self-competence, since there was a lack of literature pertaining to just self-competence. In many of the research studies (e.g., Eder, 1989; Stipek et. al., 1990) on self-concept it is defined in terms of two dimensions (i.e., physical and social competence). Self-esteem is defined as how one feels about oneself as a person (Bandura, 1977). Researchers have stated that self-esteem is composed of the six dimensions-scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioral conduct and global self-worth (e.g., Wu & Smith, 1995). These dimensions of self-concept and self-esteem are included in the multidimensions of self-competence (i.e., physical competence, cognitive competence, peer acceptance, maternal

acceptance and the universal aspect of self-worth). This similarity in the composition of self-concept, self-esteem, and self-competence makes it appropriate to review the literature on self-concept and self-esteem when exploring the literature about the self-competence of preschool children. A similar representation of idea was used in research conducted by Culp, Little, Letts, and Lawrence (1991), while studying the self-competence of abused children. They extensively reviewed the literature pertaining to self-esteem, and self-concept of abused children even though they were studying about self-competence among abused children. By reviewing the literature pertaining to the development of self-competence, the researcher hopes to gain an in depth understanding of the development of self-competence among younger children.

The development of perception of self-competence in children proceeds in a gradual manner. It proceeds from being made of very few domains to include many more domains and be specific about each domain. Selman (1980) studied the development of self-perception in young children using different types of verbal interview procedures and found significant results that supported Broughton's (1978) hypothesis. He found that the children in the early childhood (3-6 years of age) limit their self-perception to "physicallistic conceptions of self" (aware of their physical attributes). During later childhood the (7 years and above) children begin to reflect on the psychological areas of self (social competence, cognitive capabilities). In addition, they begin to conceptualize their abilities and have a more in depth understanding of the self. In other words they became capable of identifying several dimensions in their perception of self-competence instead of just one dimension.

Brown and Kafer (1994) found that the 7- and 8-year-old period was the critical for the developmental changes in the structure of self among children. These researchers worked with 6- to 11-year-old Australian children and to study the perception of self measured in terms of self discrepancy (measured by the Self Discrepancy Scale; Brown & Kafer, 1994). This scale measured the perception of self in terms of the discrepancy in how one views oneself and how others view them. The researchers also measured the perceived peer acceptance by using the Perceived Peer Acceptance Scale (Harter, 1982). These researchers argue that 7-and 8-year old period is critical in terms of the cognitive changes, as a result of which the children may gain a better understanding of their self.

The research by Guardo and Bohan (1971) on the cognitive bases for self-perception provides support for above argument that cognitive competence is an important basis for changes in the perception of self-competence (i.e., from being physicalistic to being more psychological). Guardo and Bohan (1971) studied four dimensions of self-perception in young children - humanity (human qualities distinct from other forms of life), sexuality (awareness of one's gender and roles), individuality (being aware that each individual is unique and different) and continuity (the belief that one's present is linked to the past and future). These researchers used several interview techniques to work with children in ages 6- through 9-year-old. The results indicated that all these children had a definite perception of their self in all four dimensions.

The study by Keller, Ford, and Meachum (1978) provides a different pattern to the developmental sequence than that suggested by Broughton (1978). In their 1978 interview study with 3- to 5-year-olds, Keller et al. (1978) found that the very young children reflect about their self more in terms of their activities, rather than their body

parts or material attributes (e.g., in terms of how tall he/she is instead of how many toys he/she has). These results are also in accordance with an earlier study by Secord and Peevers (1974), who worked with kindergartners using free response techniques and found that the kindergarten children's perception of their self centered around their activities. However, one could also interpret the above results in terms of the child's perception of self-competence shifting from being a general one (e.g., if he/she can jump) to a specific one (e.g., how high he/she can jump). Thus supporting the previous literature which indicated that the perception of self-competence in children shifts from being physicalistic to becoming psychological conceptualizations of the self in terms of having specific perceptions about their capabilities.

Eder (1989) found significant results indicating that the older children were able to perceive themselves in a more refined manner than the younger ones. She worked with 3.5-, 4.5 - and 5.5-year-old children and she posed forty eight questions pertaining to everyday behaviors, internal characteristics of themselves, their best friend and acquaintances. These questions belonged to the categories of general behavior (i.e., tell me what you have usually done in school), general trait (i.e., tell me how you have usually been in school), specific behavior (i.e., tell me what you did in school today), and specific trait (i.e., tell me how you were in school today). She found that the older children had a more accurate and detailed perception about specific behavior and traits, and the younger children had a higher perception about general behavior and traits.

The changes in the perception of self-competence in young children with increase in age, in terms of the perception being a more specific one and in terms of children being able to identify several domains of competence, was also supported by the work done by

Stipek, Grabinski, and Kopp (1990). They traced the development of self-concept in the toddler years. However these researchers used the mothers of 123 toddlers in the age range of 14 to 40 months to answer questions about the self-concept formation in their children. The mothers were asked to state whether their children showed characteristics of general and specific self-concept development. Factor analysis of the data showed that there were four factors associated with personality development (i.e., self descriptors and evaluations, recognition of self as an identifiable physical entity, emotions related to self-regulation and autonomy). These results indicate that the mother's perception of the development of the various domains of their child's self-concept proceeds in a systematic and gradual manner. The younger children had a more global perception of their self-concept and the older children had a more specific perception of their self-concept.

Another interesting issue that is worth discussing here is that researchers have found that self-recognition precedes the development of self-competence in young children (e.g., Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979). Interestingly research with young children has indicated that children at about 18-24 months of age start to recognize themselves in mirrors and photos; and it is about this time that children gain an understanding of object permanence. Thus this seems to indicate that self-recognition, and self-competence are closely related to the cognitive development of children.

Ewing and Campbell (1995) used the mother's perception of their children's self-competence, to study the course of development of the perception of self-competence in young children. These researchers found that the mother's perception of their "hard-to-manage kids" (i.e., inattentive, active, impulsive etc.) and their "problem free kids" self-perception indicated that the "problem free" children were more consistent about their

self-perception than the “hard-to-manage kids”. The mothers filled out the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). The children were administered the Child Assessment Schedule (Hodges, McKnew, Cytryn, Stern & Kline, 1982) at ten years of age and at thirteen years of age. The children were also given the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) at ten years of age and the Youth Self-Report (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1987) at thirteen years of age. The results indicated that the “problem free kids” were consistent in their self-perception, while the “hard-to-manage kids” showed inconsistencies in their self-perception.

From the combined results of the reviewed studies, it is argued that the development of self-competence in young children (4-6-years of age) is gradual. It proceeds from being physicalistic (i.e., from just reflecting the physical characteristics), to being psychological conceptualizations of the self (i.e., social and psychological aspects of the self). It also proceeds from being limited to very few domains to a larger number of domains which provide a more specific and in depth understanding of self-competence. As such in the present study it is assumed that the 4-year-old children will have a clear understanding of the self in the following four dimensions - physical competence, cognitive competence, peer acceptance, and maternal acceptance. The next two sections will review data that pertain to studying the influence of parental attitudes about childrearing techniques on the perception of self-competence among preschool children and the gender differences in the perception of self-competence among preschool children.

Self-competence and Parental attitudes about childrearing techniques

There are several factors that influence the development of perception of self-competence in preschool children. One important factor that influences the perception of self-competence in young children is the childrearing techniques adopted by their parents (Harter, 1982; Baumrind, 1972). Childrearing techniques simply refers to the type of techniques the parents use to rear their children. Not only are the actual techniques important predictors of self-competence, so are the parental attitudes about these techniques. Parental attitudes about how they need to raise their children was also found to significantly influence children's development.

There is little literature pertaining to parental attitudes on childrearing techniques and its influence on the perception of self-competence in preschool children. In the present section literature about parental behavior and perception of self-competence have also been reviewed to provide an insight about the influence of parenting attitudes on the perception of self-competence in preschool children.

Elrod and Crase (1980) researched gender differences in self-esteem and gender differences in parental behavior of 4- and 5-year-old children. The self-esteem of the children was measured using the Preschool Self-Concept Picture Test (Woolner, 1966) and the parents filled out the Iowa Parent Inventory (Cruse, Clark & Pease, 1976). Results indicated that the fathers interacted more with the sons than with the daughters, but the mothers interacted similarly with both girls and boys. There was also different levels of self-esteem in the children. The boys were found to have an higher overall self-esteem than the girls. A third issue about children's preferences for different parenting

behaviors according to the gender indicated that children preferred their mothers' parenting behavior over their fathers' parenting behavior.

Existence of a correlation between parental behavior on childrearing and the self-competence of preschool children raises the issue of which particular behavior or interaction of behaviors of the parents influence the self-competence of preschool children. There is evidence to suggest that authoritarian childrearing technique or the use of victim centered discipline adversely affect the child's self-perception (e.g., Fitzgerald & White, 1995). Fitzgerald and White (1995) studied the relationship between the parental use of victim-centered discipline (VCD) and the child's perspective taking ability (i.e., self-perception as a person, and view issues from others' perspective). VCD is the use of the child as the victim for any misdemeanor of the child. The Hoffman's Scale (Hoffman, 1975) was used to measure the VCD, and the Selman's (1980) Interpersonal and Self -understanding and Stage Sequence to assess perspective taking of the children. The results indicated that VCD is not an ideal technique to promote prosocial behavior and self-perception of the school aged children. Children raised with VCD tended to have a low perception about themselves, since they felt that they were incapable of anything and could not adequately take care of themselves.

Literature has shown that children who have higher perception of their self-competence usually have parents whose behavior is interactive with the children and geared towards helping the children make their own decisions, independent and self-competent (e.g., Podmore, 1988; O' Connor, 1995). However Turner and Harris (1984) showed a weak correlation between parental attitudes toward childrearing and the various aspects of preschool children's social competence. About 25 male and 22 female

preschool children (aged 31 to 87 months) and their parents participated in their study. The parents attitudes toward childrearing being measured by the Maryland Parent Attitude Survey (Pumroy, 1966).

In contrast, Flynn (1979) found significant correlation between the parent's attitudes toward childrearing and the children's self-competence. The Brown's IDS Self-concept Referents Test (Brown, 1966) was used to measure the children's self-concept and the Gordon's (1970) Mental Authority Measure was used to measure parental authority. The results indicated that children who had high self-competence had parents who were more interactive and less authoritarian. Sometimes when parents use an authoritarian childrearing technique, their children tend to have low self-competence (as shown in the study by Fitzgerald & White, 1955). However it has been shown that if these parents were to change their attitudes to a more open and interactive one, the perception of self-competence in their children will also change to positive (Summerlin & Ward, 1978; Kanisberg and Levant, 1988).

Summerlin and Ward (1978) researched the effect of parental participation in a parent group and the effect it had on the children's self-concept. The parents' attitudes were measured using the Parent Attitude Survey (Hereford, 1963) and the children's self-concept was measured using the Primary Self-concept Inventory (Muller & Leonetti, 1975). The results indicated that the children of those parents who participated in the STEP (Systematic Training in Effective Parenting) and changed their attitudes toward childrearing, as a result of which their children had a higher perception of self-concept.

Another study by Kanisberg and Levant (1988) found similar results, despite the fact that they used a different measure of self-concept. These researchers made use of the

Piers Harris Children's Self-concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969) instead of the Primary Self-concept inventory (Muller & Leonetti, 1975) used by Summerlin and Ward (1978).

The review of the above literature on parental attitudes about childrearing and the self-competence of preschool children, indicates that parental behavior/attitudes influenced the perception of self-competence among young children. Furthermore, the literature also indicated that the parents with mutual understanding and clear communication skills correlated with higher perception of self-competence in their children. The primary objective of the present study is to study the relationship between parental attitude on childrearing and the 4-year-old children's perception of self-competence. The present study will also investigate the predictability of self-competence of 4-year-old children by gender based parental attitudes.

Self-competence and Gender

Data indicates significant differences in the perception of self-competence as related to gender (Trautner, 1992; Hinde, Tamplin & Barrett, 1993). Usually when studies refer to gender differences, they refer to the differences, based on the development of gender-typing and gender-based role preferences (i.e., understanding and playing the appropriate gender based roles and behavior). This type of behavior is reinforced to a great extent by the society and the environment of the child. Sugawara, Andrews, Adduci and Cate (1986), tested the influence of gender role learning (i.e., learning to play the appropriate roles based on gender) in the development of self-concept in preschool children (N=64, \bar{M} = 4 years). They used the Self-concept Motivation Inventory (SCAMIN; Farrah, Milchus & Reitz, 1968) to measure the self-concept of the children. The Sex Role Learning Index (SERLI; Edelbrock & Sugawara, 1978) and the Sex

Stereotype Measure - II (SSM -II; Williams & Best, 1982) were used to measure the sex-role learning and awareness of sex-trait stereotypes in the children (i.e., learning to play the appropriate sex roles and being aware of playing the stereotypic gender based behavior). No significant gender differences were found in relation to the self-concept and sex-role typing. However, children who were more aware of their sex-roles and played them appropriately (in accord with societal expectations) were found to have higher self-concept perception than the ones who did not come to terms with the sex-role preferences and play it appropriately. The authors attribute this trend to the reason that as the children grow older they feel the societal pressures of having to play the stereotypical sex-roles preferences; once they accept and behave according to these prescribed sex roles they tend to feel good about themselves.

Dongen-Melman, Koot, and Verlhurst (1993) found significant gender differences among 8-12 years old Dutch children, while studying the cultural validation of the Harter's Self-Perception Profile (Harter, 1985). Boys scored higher than girls on scholastic competence, athletic performance, physical appearance and general self-worth. The self-perception of the children was measured using the Harter's Self-Perception Profile (Harter, 1985).

Jenson (1983) in her study about self-concept in relation to age, family structure and gender in the Head Start children, also found significant relationship between gender and the children's perception of their self-concept. She used the Piers Preschool Pictorial Self-concept Scale (Piers, 1983) to measure the self-concept of children.

Orosan, Weine, Jason, and Johnson (1992) found significant gender differences in the academic and social behavior of 497 elementary school transfer students. The Wide

Range Achievement Test - Revised (Jastak & Wilkinson, 1984) was used to measure academic achievement; the Teacher Report Form (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983) was used to measure the social behavior of the children and the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1964) was used to measure the self-concept of the children. The researchers attributed the gender differences in the self-concept and social behavior as being due to the differences in the way the teachers behaved or interacted with the children, based on the gender of the child.

Research has indicated that the influence of the society and ethnic origin of the child may also influence the child to play the gender appropriate roles and cause differences in the perception of self-competence in the preschool children. This issue has been researched before, with the results indicating that the children playing the appropriate gender based roles have higher self-competence than the other children who do not play the gender appropriate roles (e.g., Drummond & Mc Intire, 1980; Wu & Smith, 1995). Wu and Smith (1995) studied the self-esteem of Chinese children who were 11-13-years of age and lived in Taiwan. They studied six domains of self-esteem. (i.e., scholastic competence, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioral conduct and global self-worth) using the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) (Chinese version). The results of the study showed significant main effects for gender, with the boys reporting greater confidence in physical ability than the girls and the girls expressed greater satisfaction with their behavioral conduct.

However a study by Samuels and Griffore (1979) indicated otherwise. They studied the ethnic and gender differences in the self-esteem of 72 Black, White and Mexican-American preschool children, enrolled in a Head Start Program. They used the

Purdue Self-concept Scale (Cicirelli, 1974) for preschool children and their teachers rated the children on the Coopersmith's Self-esteem Behavior Rating Form (Coopersmith, 1967). No significant differences by ethnicity or by gender on the self-esteem of the preschool children was found.

The combined results of the literature reviewed above provided contradictory data about gender differences in the children's perception of self-competence. These contradictory results may have been due to specific samples of children studied (i.e., the children were from diverse groups like the Head Start, or public school classrooms and the children were also from different ethnic groups). Another issue that might have influenced the contradictory results, is that the studies reviewed have used different instruments to measure the perception of self-competence of the children. The differences in the instruments and its use on different ethnic populations and diverse groups might have influenced the different results. In order to add to the gender literature, another objective of the present study is to test for the predictability of self-competence among 4-year-old children by the gender of the child.

Summary

The review of the literature has indicated that the development of self-perception in young children is gradual and proceeds from being physicalistic, activity oriented to becoming psychological conceptualizations. The 4-year-old children, who were the participants in this study are likely to show differential sense of self and be able to distinguish between the physicalistic and activity oriented dimensions of self-competence.

Literature pertaining to gender differences and perception of self-competence in children indicated contradictory results about the presence of gender differences in the children's perception of self-competence (e.g., Sugawara, Andrews, Adduci & Cate, 1986; Jenson, 1983). Contradictory results were also found concerning the relationship between parental attitudes about childrearing and the perception of self-competence in preschool children (e.g., Elrod & Crase, 1980; Flynn, 1979).

The present study is designed to further our knowledge about the factors that influence the development of self-competence of young children. The purpose of the present research is to study " how does the parental attitudes about childrearing techniques influence the perception of self-competence among 4-year-old-children?". This study will also study the predictability of the self-competence of the 4-year-old children by their gender and also by the gender based parental attitudes. In order to study this relationship the following working hypothesis will be tested.

1. Parental attitudes will predict the self-competence of 4-year-old children.
2. The gender of children will predict the self-competence of 4-year-old children.
3. There will be a difference between gender of parents and gender of child in predicting the self-competence of 4-year-old children. Specifically, fathers attitudes will be different for boys and girls, as will the mother's attitude.

Methods

Sample

Sixty one four-year-old-children and both their parents participated in the study. The children were attending one of the many preschool programs in a small Midwestern University town. Three of the preschools that the children attended were NAEYC accredited (National Association of Education for Young Children), and although one of the preschools was not, it did follow the NAEYC principles. Twenty seven girls (M age= 4 years, 1 month) and 34 boys (M age = 4 years, 2 months) participated in the study. The children were from predominantly European American (60 Caucasian, and 1 Asian) intact families. Intact families is operationally defined, by the researcher, as families which include the child who participated in the study living with both the biological parents or the families in which the child lives with one of the biological parent, who has married again and has lived with the new spouse for more than a year. In almost all cases the non-biological parent did not have any children from the previous marriage. The children belonged to families whose mean income per month (\$1800.00) exceeded the weighted average poverty threshold (i.e., 1230.00 per month) as published by the U.S. Bureau of Census (1995).

Instruments

Self-concept.

The self-concept of the children was measured using the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance for Young Children (Harter & Pike, 1984). The reliability and validity of the scale was tested on 90 preschoolers (M age of 4.45 years), 56 kindergartners, 65 first graders, and 44 second graders (Harter & Pike, 1984).

The scale has 4 separate subscales which are, cognitive, physical competence, peer, and maternal acceptance. Each of the subscales has 6 items. There are 2 versions of the scale, one is for preschoolers and kindergartners and the other is for the first and second graders. The present study made use of the preschoolers version of the scale. The picture plates which are the pictures that is showed to the child with each of the test questions accompanying the test are separate for the boys and the girls. Each picture plate has a picture of a most competent child and a less competent child of the same gender of the child. The sample item is presented to each child individually and the child is asked to indicate which of the 2 pictures resembles him/her the most. Beneath each picture there are two circles, one is a larger one and the other is a smaller one. Once the child picks a picture that best resembles him/her, the researcher asks the child to point to either of the circles beneath the picture the child picked to indicate the degree of likeness to the picture. Each item on the scale is scored on a 4 point scale, where 4 is most competent and 1 is least competent. The reliability of the subscales was assessed using the coefficient correlation techniques. The computed reliability of the subscales ranged from .50 -.85 (Harter & Pike, 1984). The reliability of the total scale inclusive of all 24 items was found to be .85 (Harter & Pike, 1984).

Parental attitudes.

The parental attitude about childrearing was assessed using the Parental Attitude Survey (PAS) (Hereford, 1963). The Parental Attitude Survey is a paper and pencil measure. The reliability and validity of the PAS was tested on 72 parents. This is a 75 item questionnaire which has 5 dimensions. These dimensions are confidence in parental role, causation of the child's behavior, acceptance of the child's behavior, understanding,

and trust. Each of the items was scored on a 5 point Likert - type scale ranging from -2 to +2 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The reliability of this scale was tested on 72 parents belonging to the middle class society with children in elementary school. The scale was found to have a Split-half reliability of .80 (Hereford, 1963). The intercorrelations between each of the subscales were found to range from .33 -.62 (Hereford, 1963). There was no statistical information about the validity of this scale.

Demographic Information.

A short Demographic Information Questionnaire was administered to obtain demographic data about the family. The questionnaire consisted of questions about the family structure, gender, and age of the child, and monthly income of the family. Either the mother or the father completed the questionnaire.

Procedure

Parent Assessments.

After receiving the Internal Review Board (IRB) approval, a letter was sent to the parents which (a) described the study, (b) described the procedures, (c) requested their participation, and (d) requested that they sign the attached consent forms (for their child and themselves). The interested parents were contacted by phone to setup an appointment. At this meeting the study was explained and all questions answered. During the meeting, the Parent Attitude Survey and Demographic Information Questionnaire was given to the parents using standard instructions and they were instructed to fill them out. Both parents completed the Parent Attitude Survey separately

and only one of them was requested to complete the Demographic Information Questionnaire. It usually took about 15-20 minutes for the parents to fill out the PAS.

Child Assessments.

The Harter's Pictorial Scale of Perceived Self-Competence was administered individually to the children using the standard instructions. This administration was done in the child's preschool, at the child's convenience, and with the permission of the classroom teacher. The child was briefed about the measurement and he/she was made as comfortable as possible. After the administration of the measure was completed, the child was escorted back to the classroom teacher. If at any point of the session the child was uncomfortable, the procedure was discontinued and the child was escorted back to the classroom at that time. It usually took about 10-15 minutes for each child to complete the test.

Design and Data Analysis

In the present research the predicted variables were the four dimensions of self-competence (i.e., cognitive competence, physical competence, peer acceptance, and maternal acceptance) and the predictor variables were the gender of the child, and the parental attitudes. A multiple regression analysis was done to test to see if the predictor variables were significant predictors of the predicted variables, an alpha level of .05 was used throughout the analysis. The SPSS analysis program (SPSS, 1988) was used for the data analysis.

Results

The data was analyzed using the SPSS statistical package (SPSS, 1988) on an university mainframe computer system and using the PC version of the SPSS package. Multiple regression equations were used to test for the predictability of self-competence by the parenting attitudes, gender of the child, and by gender based parenting attitudes.

The first hypothesis that the parental attitudes about childrearing techniques predicts self-competence among four-year-old children was tested using multiple regression analysis. The intercorrelations between each subscale of the PAS were found to range from .33-.62, and the scale had a split-half reliability of .80. As the reliability of the subscales were low to moderate and in order to increase the power of statistical analyses, it was decided that an internal consistency test would be done for each of the five subscales. Only the subscales that had an internal consistency of at least .60 (Cronbach, 1951) would be used in the testing of the hypothesis. The reliability tests for the confidence, causation, understanding, acceptance and trust dimensions yielded the following internal consistency values .51, .40, .68, .66, and .41 respectively. The subscales understanding and acceptance had an alpha value greater than .60 and therefore only these two subscales were used in the analyses as indicators of parental attitudes.

Stepwise regression analysis was done using the two parental attitudes of understanding and acceptance as predictors of self-competence among four-year-old-children. The extent to which the multicollinearity existed in the equation was tested using a tolerance test with .10 as the low level for tolerance. None of the variables exceeded this value. This implied that the predictor variables (i.e, understanding and acceptance) were relatively independent of each other (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). In the

first step, understanding was entered as the predictor variable and in the second step acceptance was entered as the predictor variable. Results (see Table 2) indicated that both were significant predictors of peer acceptance and physical competence. On further examination of the significant results, it was noted that for peer acceptance, understanding and acceptance were joint significant predictors, but their part correlation values were not high enough to make each of these attitudes independent significant predictors of peer acceptance.

For the dimension of physical competence, only understanding was found to be a significant predictor ($b = -.292, p \leq .05$). Understanding and acceptance did not significantly predict cognitive competence nor maternal acceptance.

To test the second hypothesis that the gender of the child would predict the self-competence of four-year-old children, a multiple regression analysis was done, using the gender of the child as the predictor variable and the four dimensions of self-competence (cognitive competence, physical competence, peer acceptance and maternal acceptance) as the predicted variable. Results (see Table 3) indicated that the gender of the child did not significantly predict any of the four dimensions of self-competence in this sample of four-year-old children.

In order to determine whether fathers or mothers better predicted the self-competence of boys and girls, two sets of multiple stepwise regression analysis were done for each gender of the child, using each of the parental attitudes (i.e., understanding and acceptance) for mothers and fathers separately as the predictor variables. In other words one regression equation was run for the boys with the predictor variables of fathers' attitudes entered first followed by the mothers' attitudes. When entering the

predictor variables (i.e., parental attitudes) into the regression equations the attitudes of the same gender parent was entered first, on the theoretical basis that same gender parent's attitude would influence the child's self-competence greater than the opposite gender parent.

In regression equation one, the four dimensions of the self-competence were used as the dependent variables and the parental attitude of acceptance was used as the predictor variable for girls. The mothers attitude of acceptance was entered first in the regression equation followed by the fathers' acceptance attitude. Results (see Table 4) indicated that neither mothers' nor fathers' attitude of acceptance were significant predictors of girls' self-competence.

In regression equation 2, the four dimensions of self-competence were used as the dependent variables and the parental attitude of understanding was used as the predictor variable for girls. The mothers' attitude of understanding was entered first in the regression equation followed by the fathers' attitude of understanding. Results (see Table 5) indicate that neither mothers' nor fathers' attitude of understanding were significant predictors of girls' self-competence.

The steps explained above were repeated for boys, but in each step the fathers' attitude was entered first followed by the mothers' attitude. Results (Table 6) indicated that fathers' and mothers' attitude of understanding were joint significant predictors of cognitive competence, peer acceptance, and physical competence. On further examination of the results it was found that fathers' attitude of understanding was a significant predictor of only the cognitive competence ($b = -.425, p \leq .05$) dimension of the boys' self-competence; mothers' attitude of understanding was found to be a

significant predictor of cognitive competence ($b = -.44$, $p \leq .05$), physical competence ($b = -.56$, $p \leq .05$), and peer acceptance ($b = -.536$, $p \leq .05$).

In regression equation four for the boys, the parental attitude of acceptance was used as the predictor variable, with the fathers attitudes entered first in the equation. Results in Table 7 indicated that fathers' attitude of acceptance was not a significant predictor of any of the four dimensions of self-competence for the boys. Although mothers' attitude of acceptance was not a significant predictor of self-competence for the boys, it approached significance for the dimensions of cognitive competence ($b = -.307$, $p \leq .1$), peer acceptance ($b = -.327$, $p \leq .1$), and physical competence ($b = .311$, $p \leq .1$).

Table I

Descriptive Statistics of Variables Included in The Study

Variable	Mean	S. D.	Minimum	Maximum	N
Acceptance (Moms)	14.02	6.11.	-9.00	26.00	61
Understanding (Moms)	17.59	5.28	7.00	28.00	61
Acceptance (Dads)	9.85	6.44	-2.00	27.00	61
Understanding (Dads)	14.21	5.11	5.00	26.00	61
Cognitive Competence (Boys)	3.42	.530	2.20	4.00	34
Peer Acceptance (Boys)	2.96	.74	1.67	4.00	34
Physical Competence (Boys)	3.21	.55	2.00	4.00	34
Maternal Acceptance (Boys)	3.08	.63	1.83	4.00	34
Cognitive Competence (Girls)	3.50	.45	2.40	4.00	27
Peer Acceptance (Girls)	2.83	.68	1.50	4.00	27
Physical Competence (Girls)	3.11	.48	1.83	4.00	27
Maternal Acceptance (Girls)	2.98	.65	2.00	4.00	27
Acceptance (All)	11.93	6.59	-9.00	27	122
Understanding (All)	15.90	5.45	5.00	28.00	122
Cognitive Competence (All)	3.46	.49	2.20	4.00	61
Peer Acceptance	2.90	.71	1.50	4.00	61
Physical Competence	3.16	.52	1.83	4.00	61
Maternal Acceptance	3.04	.64	1.83	4.00	61

Table II

Parents' Attitudes as Predictors of Self-competence Among Four-year-old Children

Predicted Variable	Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficients	Part Correlation	R ² Change	t	p
Cognitive Competence	Understanding	-.123	-.115	.037	-.91	.370
	Acceptance	-.187	-.173	.030	-1.37	.178
F = 2.09 Multiple R = .259 R ² = .067						
Physical Competence	Understanding	-.292	-.271	.110	-2.208	.031**
	Acceptance	-.110	-.103	.010	-.837	.4060
F = 3.99** Multiple R = .348 R ² = .121						
Peer Acceptance	Understanding	-.213	-.199	.081	-1.609	.1131
	Acceptance	-.199	-.185	.034	-1.50	.1391
F = 3.81** Multiple R = .340 R ² = .116						
Maternal Acceptance	Understanding	-.115	-.107	.029	-.838	.4057
	Acceptance	-.154	-.196	.020	-1.121	.2668
F = 1.52 Multiple R = .223 R ² = .050						

** Significance at $p \leq .05$

Table III

Gender of The Child as Predictor of Self-competence Among Four-year-old Children

Predicted Variable	Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficients	Part Correlation	R ² Change	t	p
Cognitive Competence	Gender C	-.103	-.103	.01	-.802	.425
		F = .642 Multiple R = .103 R ² = .010				
Physical Competence	Gender C	.091	.091	.008	.708	.481
		F = .501 Multiple R = .091 R ² = .009				
Peer Acceptance	Gender C	.097	.097	.009	.751	.455
		F = .563 Multiple R = .097 R ² = .009				
Maternal Acceptance	Gender C	.064	.064	.004	.493	.623
		F = .243 Multiple R = .064 R ² = .004				

Gender C = Gender of the child

Table IV

Acceptance as Predictor of Girls' Self-competence

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Beta Coefficients	Part Correlation	R ² Change	t	p
Cognitive Competence	Acceptance (Mother)	-.258	-.253	0.016	-1.289	.209
	Acceptance (Father)	.130	.079	0.089	.648	.523
	F = .911					
	Multiple R = 0.265 R ² = 0.0705					
Peer Acceptance	Acceptance (Mother)	-.183	-.179	0.002	-.915	.369
	Acceptance (Father)	-.167	-.164	0.10	-.836	.411
	F = .955					
	Multiple R = 0.271 R ² = 0.073					
Physical Competence	Acceptance (Mother)	-.016	-.015	0.0	-.077	.939
	Acceptance (Father)	0.011	.011	0.011	.055	.956
	F = .0038					
	Multiple R = 0.017 R ² = 0.000					
Maternal Acceptance	Acceptance (Mother)	-.115	-.113	0.07	-.564	.577
	Acceptance (Father)	-.134	-.131	0.025	-.657	.517
	F = .466					
	Multiple R = 0.193 R ² = 0.037					

Table V

Understanding as a Predictor of Girls' Self-competence

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Beta Coefficients	Part Correlation	R ² Change	t	p
Cognitive Competence	Understanding (Mother)	-.056	-.056	.08	-.278	.783
	Understanding (Father)	-.213	-.208	.175	-1.049	.304
F = .690 Multiple R = .233 R ² = .054						
Physical Competence	Understanding (Mother)	-.088	-.086	.011	-.424	.675
	Understanding (Father)	.045	.044	.284	.218	.829
F = .097 Multiple R = .089 R ² = .008						
Peer Acceptance	Understanding (Mother)	.106	.103	.000	.524	.604
	Understanding (Father)	-.265	-.258	.260	-1.315	.201
F = .891 Multiple R = .262 R ² = .069						
Maternal Acceptance	Understanding (Mother)	.022	.022	.040	.108	.914
	Understanding (Father)	-.085	-.083	.040	-.410	.685
F = .084 Multiple R = .083 R ² = .0069						

Table VI

Acceptance as a Predictor of Boys' Self-competence

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Beta Coefficients	Part Correlation	R ² Change	t	p
Cognitive Competence	Acceptance (Father)	0.202	0.196	0.016	1.15	.255
	Acceptance (Mother)	-0.307	-0.298	0.089	-1.75	.089*
F = 1.83 Multiple R = 0.325 R ² = 0.106						
Peer Acceptance	Acceptance (Father)	0.122	0.118	0.002	0.69	.49
	Acceptance (Mother)	-0.327	-0.317	0.10	-1.86	.07*
F = 1.78 Multiple R = 0.321 R ² = 0.103						
Physical Competence	Acceptance (Father)	0.1	0.098	0	0.57	.5704
	Acceptance (Mother)	-0.311	-0.302	0.09	-1.76	.0869*
F = 1.57 Multiple R = 0.303 R ² = 0.09						
Maternal Acceptance	Acceptance (Father)	-0.230	-0.224	0.07	-1.31	.198
	Acceptance (Mother)	-0.164	-0.159	0.025	-0.937	.356
F = 1.68 Multiple R = 0.313 R ² = 0.098						

** Significance at $p \leq .1$

Table VII

Understanding as a Predictor of Boys' Self-competence

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Beta Coefficients	Part Correlation	R ² Change	t	p
Cognitive Competence	Understanding (Father)	-.425	-.404	.08	-2.62	.013**
	Understanding (Mother)	-.440	-.419	.175	-2.71	.010**
F = 5.44** Multiple R = .510 R ² = .260						
Physical Competence	Understanding (Father)	-.276	-.263	.011	-1.74	.09
	Understanding (Mother)	-.560	-.533	.284	-3.53	.0013**
F = 6.50** Multiple R = .543 R ² = .295						
Peer Acceptance	Understanding (Father)	.159	.151	.000	.983	.333
	Understanding (Mother)	-.536	-.510	.260	-3.30	.0024**
F = 5.46** Multiple R = .515 R ² = .260						
Maternal Acceptance	Understanding (Father)	-.135	-.129	.040	-.755	.455
	Understanding (Mother)	-.232	-.220	.040	-1.29	.206
F = 1.56 Multiple R = .302 R ² = .091						

** Significance at $p \leq .05$

Discussion

The present research focused on investigating factors that would predict the self-competence of four-year-old-children. The primary factors investigated were parental attitudes on childrearing and gender.

The first hypothesis analyzed concerned how parental attitudes of understanding and acceptance predicted the self-competence of four-year-old children. Understanding measured the attitudes of parents about children's role in family decisions and communications. This subscale consisted of several questions that underlined the general idea that - "children should be seen not heard". Acceptance measured parents' attitudes about themselves accepting responsibility for their children's behavior. Analysis of the data indicated that parental attitudes of understanding and acceptance were significant predictors of two dimensions (i.e., peer acceptance and physical competence) of self-competence among four-year-old-children. The parental attitude of understanding was indicated to be a better predictor of children's self-competence than the parental attitude of acceptance. As there were negative beta coefficients between understanding and physical competence, and peer acceptance dimensions of self-competence, this meant that when parents had lower negative feelings about the notion "children should be seen not heard", their children had higher the physical competence and peer acceptance. In other words parents who permitted their children to voice their opinions and participate in the family decisions promote higher self-competence in their children.

There is ample data to indicate that children's behavior is influenced by parental attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Brody & Axelred, 1978). The above results indicated that parents who had a realistic understanding about children's role in the family and what

their children are capable of doing, promoted high perception of self-competence in their children. Past literature (e.g., Flynn, 1979; Podmore, 1988) has also yielded similar results, wherein it was indicated that parents who encouraged their children to voice their opinions, be independent, and make judgments for themselves, promoted a higher perception of self-competence among their children than parents who made decisions for their children and did not allow any freedom of thought and action for their children.

The subscale acceptance was found to be a significant predictor of children's self-competence in the dimensions of peer acceptance, and this subscale also predicted physical competence of all the children when combined with the understanding subscale. However the part correlation values of acceptance indicated that acceptance by itself was not a significant predictor of 4-year-old children's self-competence. These results indicated that the parents' attitudes of acceptance by itself was not a significant predictor of four-year-old children's self-competence. The above results indicated the importance of parental attitudes on childrearing techniques in terms of influencing children's self-competence. In other words it is important for parents to have a realistic understanding and expectations of the roles children should play in the family. It is also important for parents to establish a two-way communication system with their children in order to allow for open communication between both of them. This will allow the children to feel important and in turn would promote a high sense of self-competence.

The second hypothesis tested was that the gender of the child would predict the self-competence of four-year-old children. Research (e.g., Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1973) had indicated that when the children played the appropriate gender-typed behavior and they were reinforced for it, they began to feel good about themselves, as a result had a

high perception of self-competence. The results of the present study however indicated that the gender of the child was not a significant predictor of the self-competence of these four-year-old children. These results may be partly due to the fact that, children have not yet mastered the understanding of gender-typed behavior at four-years of age (Kohlberg, 1966). Children realize it is important to play the appropriate gender-typed behaviors only after they achieve gender constancy (Kohlberg, 1966). Gender constancy is achieved when the child's cognitive development allows them to realize that gender is permanent and it is important to play appropriate gender-typed behaviors. This is usually achieved after six years of age. As previously stated Kohlberg (1966) argues that children understand about gender-typed behavior at about 6 years of age. As a result 4-year-old children's cognitive competence limits the effect of gender on the children's development of self-competence (Best, Williams, Cloud, Davis, Robertson, Edwards, Giles & Fowler, 1977).

The third hypothesis tested was that gender based parental attitudes would predict the perception of self-competence among 4-year-old children. It was hypothesized that same gender parental attitudes would be significant predictors of 4-year-old children, while their opposite gender parents' attitude would not (i.e. fathers' attitudes would be significant predictors of boys' self-competence than mothers' parental attitudes; and mothers' parental attitudes would be significant predictors of four-year-old girls' perception of self-competence than fathers' parental attitudes).

The results of the present study showed that the attitudes of both parents significantly predicted the boys' self-competence, but neither parents' attitudes was significant predictor of girls' self-competence. The results of the present research also

indicated that mothers' parenting attitudes were better predictors of boys' perception of self-competence than the fathers' attitudes. This supported the past literature, which found that mothers' attitudes/behaviors were better predictors of children's self-competence than fathers' attitudes/behaviors (e.g., Elrod, & Crase, 1980). This highlights the important role of a primary caregiver (who is usually the mother) in fostering positive self-competence in children. The universal role of a primary caregiver in a family is that of a caregiver and nurturer; and it is usually the mothers who spend more time with their children. For young children (especially below the age of five years) being with the primary caregiver and having a secure attachment enables them to feel safe, feel good about themselves, and promotes social competence among children (Grusec & Lytton, 1993).

Another argument concerning why mothers' parenting attitudes were found to be better predictors of boys' self-competence than fathers' attitudes is that, mothers have been found to be very consistent in their parenting techniques and attitudes across genders and ages (e.g., Elrod & Crase, 1980). Consistency in parenting attitudes and behavior is important in terms of positive and negative reinforcement of children's behavior and creating a stable environment for the children (Elrod & Crase, 1980). Research has highlighted on the importance of consistent parental behavior and attitudes in influencing children's social competence, and behavior. Elrod and Crase (1980) offer support with the data indicating that mothers' consistent attitudes and behaviors were found to be significant in influencing children's self-esteem. Children have also indicated that they preferred mothers' accepting parenting attitudes than their fathers authoritarian attitudes in terms of promoting self-esteem (Elrod & Crase, 1980). In other words children felt

that mothers were more likely to listen to them and understand things from their perspective, than the fathers who usually preferred to lay the rules and expected the children to obey them.

The results of the present study indicated that it was important for parents to have a clear understanding of the roles they expected their children to play in the family; it was also important for the parents to teach their children about accepting responsibility for their behavior and actions. By doing so parents would promote a high sense of self-competence among their children.

The current research and theoretical perspective indicate that parenting attitudes are important in influencing children's self-competence. These two concepts (i.e., self-competence and parental attitudes) are important factors that need to be studied to further our knowledge about effective parenting and its effects on children. However both self-competence and parental attitudes are difficult concepts to isolate and study. There are few good measures of parental attitudes. The Parent Attitude Survey (Hereford, 1963) used in the present study is virtually one of very few paper pencil measure of parenting attitudes and is itself limited. Many parents participating in the study felt that most of the items on the scale seemed to measure negative aspects of parenting, more than the positive aspects. Moreover the length of the questionnaire and nature of the questions may lead to confusion and frustration in completing the questionnaire and ultimately masking the respondent's true attitudes. The self-competence measure is one of the very few available pictorial measures for young children. In fact some researchers argue that the way the questions are setup in the Harter's Pictorial Scale of Percieved Competence and Social Acceptance truly mask the children's true response.

The results of the present study and the literature has indicated that additional work needs to be done, in terms of developing more detailed and diverse parenting measures and measures of self-competence. By doing so we will be able to get a more elaborate view about the influence of parenting on the perception of self-competence and other areas of child development.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 06-08-95

IRB#: HE-95-036

Proposal Title: THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER DIFFERENCES AMONG PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN RELATION TO PARENTAL ATTITUDES ABOUT CHILDREARING TECHNIQUES ON THE SELF-COMPETENCE OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Principal Investigator(s): Nancy Huribut, Saigeetha Jambunathan

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.


APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Provisions received and approved.

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: June 23, 1995

APPENDIX B

PARENTAL LETTER

Dear Parent(s),

I am a graduate student, working with Dr. Nancy Hurlbut in the department of Family Relations and Child Development, at the Oklahoma State University. I am writing to ask for your assistance with a research project that I am working on for my dissertation. The Director of your child's preschool has given me permission to contact you. I am studying about the various factors that influence the self-competence among young children. My main interest is to look at how the parental attitudes about childrearing influence young children see themselves. I am also trying to see if parental gender and child gender influence how the young children see themselves. I am interested in interviewing children who are three, four, and five years old. This project has been approved by the Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board. I am writing to you to:

1. Request that you give me permission to include your child in the study. In order for me to do so, I need for you to sign the enclosed Child Consent Form , giving your child permission to participate in this study. Your child will be seen in his/her preschool for one time and for about 15 minutes at your child's convenience, to do the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Self-Competence and Social Acceptance. Please return the **Child Consent Forms** to the Research Envelope placed in the Main Office of your child's preschool by **July 28, 1995**.
2. Request you to participate in the study. I will be calling you over the telephone in the next few weeks to answer your questions concerning the project and to set up an appointment for you to come to your child's preschool. During the appointment you will be asked to fill out (a). Parent Consent Form, giving me your consent to participate in the study (b). a short demographic information questionnaire, which has questions about the child's date of birth, ethnic group, your marital status and your household income; and (c) the Hereford Attitude Survey (which is a questionnaire about parental attitudes on childrearing techniques and has statements such as "Parents should help children feel they are belonged and are needed", and you can either strongly agree, agree, be undecided, disagree or strongly disagree).

I am excited about this project and I feel that it will be very informative in learning about the children's self-competence and the various ways by means of which we can improve it. Please feel free to contact me at 744-7051 or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut (my research advisor) at 744-5031, if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Sai Jambunathan.

APPENDIX C

TELEPHONIC SOLICITATION (A TYPICAL EXAMPLE)

SAI---"Hi ! This is Sai Jambunathan. I am calling about the self-competence research project in your child's preschool. I hope you have received my letter informing you about the study".
(Yes = continue, No = will mail you the letter and call back later).

Parent---" Yes I did receive your letter".

SAI--- "Do you have any questions about the letter you received and about what I need from you and your child?".
(Yes = continue, No = read from ***).

Parent---"How will the measure be administered on the children?".

SAI---"We will take the child to another room in the preschool with the permission of the classroom teacher and at your child's convenience. We will ask him/her questions relating to his/her self-competence and he/she will be asked to point out to pictures that resembles him/her the most. There will not be any kind of stressful or physically exhaustive exercises".

Parent---"What kind of measures will be administered on the parents and do both the parents have to come in?"

SAI---"The parent's attitude about childrearing will be measured using the Parent Attitude Survey. This is a questionnaire, which will be filled out by the parents. It will only take about 15-20 minutes to fill it out. You will also have to fill out the Demographic Information Questionnaire, which includes questions about your family structure, age of your child, your household income etc. Yes both the parents have to come in".

Parent---"How long will it take to administer the measure on the children?".

SAI---"The duration of the administration of the measures on the child should not take more than 20 minutes. We will make sure that the child is comfortable and at ease. If the child gets uncomfortable at any point we will discontinue the test".

***Parent---"I think that I would like for me and my child to participate in this study, may I please meet with you to talk more about this?".

SAI---"Yes I will be pleased to meet with you. Would you like to set up an appointment to meet with me. I will be available at any time during the month of July. I can meet during the day or in the evening".

Parent---"I think -----time is okay with me and my husband".

Sai---"That is fine with me too. We will meet in the Main Office of the preschool. I will send you a letter to confirm our appointment. I look forward to working with you and your family".

APPENDIX D

SOLICITATION WITH THE CHILD

Sai "Hi, my name is Sai. Would you like to play a game with me?"

(If response = yes proceed, if response = no, read from **).

Child "Yes. I would like to play with you. What kind of a game is it?"

Sai "It is a picture game. I will be showing you two pictures of either a boy or a girl and ask you a question. Then you will have to tell me which picture resembles you the best. It is a fun game!"

** Child "No, I do not want to play with you".

Sai "Well, I will come back at a later time, maybe you will feel like playing with me then, okay? Bye".

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD SIGNED BY PARENT

"I _____ hereby authorize Sai Jambunathan, and her research associates to administer the Harter's Pictorial Scale of Perceived Self-Competence and Social Acceptance of Young Children to my child _____ as a part of the investigation "the influence of gender differences among parents and children in relation to parental attitudes about childrearing techniques on the self-competence of young children".

I understand that these procedure will be given to my child during his/her attendance at the preschool. The specific time that these measures will be administered to my child will be determined by my child's teacher, my child and Sai Jambunathan. I am also aware that my child will attend one session which will last about 15 -20 minutes.

I understand that all my child's responses will be held in confidence and under lock and key. I also understand that the questionnaires pertaining to my child and his/her responses to all the measures will be coded with an identification number and that his/her name will not be associated with any of his/her responses.

I understand that the participation in this study is voluntary, there is no penalty for non participation and that I can withdraw my consent from the study at any point in the study after notifying Sai Jambunathan or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut. I am aware that I can contact Sai Jambunathan at 744-7051 or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 744-5031 if anything of concern arises. I may also contact Jennifer Moore at the University Research Services, 001 Life Sciences East, OSU, OK-74078, Telephone Number-(405)-744-5700.

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

Date _____ Time _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Name of the child _____

Signed _____

(Signature of the parent / legal guardian of the child)

"I certify that I have personally explained all the elements of this form and the study prior to requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it".

Signed _____

Project Director or his/her authorized representatives.

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT

"I _____ (print name) hereby authorize Sai Jambunathan, and her associates to administer the following procedures as a part of the investigation "the influence of gender differences among parents and children in relation to parental attitudes about childrearing techniques on the self-competence of young children". The procedures are:

- a. to have me complete a short Demographic Information Questionnaire, that contains questions pertaining to my child's date of birth, ethnic group, my marital status, household income.
- b. to have me complete the Parent Attitude Survey (which is questionnaire about parental attitudes about childrearing techniques).

I understand that all my responses will be held in confidence and under lock and key. I also understand my responses to all the measures will be coded with an identification number and that my name will not be associated with any of my responses.

I understand that the participation in this study is voluntary, there is no penalty for non participation and that I can withdraw my consent from the study at any point in the study after notifying Sai Jambunathan or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut. I am aware that I can contact Sai Jambunathan at 744-7051 or Dr. Nancy Hurlbut at 744-5031 if anything of concern arises. I may also contact Jennifer Moore at the University Research Services, 001 Life Sciences East, OSU, OK-74078, Telephone Number-(405)-744-5700.

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

Date _____ Time _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed _____

(Signature of the subject/ person authorized to do so for the subject)

"I certify that I have personally explained all the elements of this form and the study prior to requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it".

Signed _____

Project Director or his/her authorized representatives.

APPENDIX G

ID Number-----

Demographic Information Questionnaire

Please complete each of the following items. All information will be kept confidential.

1. Your relation to the child:

----- Biological Mother

----- Biological Father

----- Step-father

----- Step-mother

----- Other, please specify-----

2. The date of birth of your child:-----

Month Day Year

3a. Your gender (please check one):-----Male-----Female.

3b. Gender of your child (the one who participated in the research project)

-----Male-----Female

4. Your marital status (please check one):

----- Married, first time

----- Single, never married

----- Single, separated

----- Single, divorced

----- Single, widowed

----- Remarried

----- Other, please specify-----

5. Your current gross total household income per month including child support and welfare before taxes and other deductions (please check one):

----- \$ 0 - 100

----- \$ 100 - 499

----- \$ 500 - 999

----- \$ 1000 - 1499

----- \$ 1500 - 1999

----- \$ 2000 - 2499

----- \$ 2500 - 2999

----- \$ 3000 - 3499

----- \$ 3500 - 3999

----- \$ 4000 plus

APPENDIX H

PARENT ATTITUDE SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages are a number of statements regarding parents and children. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement in the following manner:

Strongly Agree -----cross out letter "A" on answer sheet.

Agree -----cross out letter "a" on answer sheet.

Undecided -----cross out letter "u" on answer sheet.

Disagree -----cross out letter "d" on answer sheet.

Strongly Disagree-----cross out letter "D" on answer sheet.

For example: if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would mark it in this way:

Boys are more active than girls. A a u d D

You can mark your answers in the choices provided next to the questions.

This survey is concerned only with the attitudes and opinions that parents have; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Work just as rapidly as you can - it is your first impression we are interested in. There is no time limit.

REMEMBER

A = Strongly Agree

a = Agree

u = Undecided

d = Disagree

D = Strongly Disagree

Please turn the page and go ahead.....

1. Parents have to sacrifice everything for their children..... A a u d D
2. Parents should help children feel they belong and are needed...A a u d D
3. Taking care of a small baby is something that no woman should be expected to do all by herself.....A a u d D
4. When you come right down to it, a child is either good or bad and there is not much you can do about it.....A a u d D
5. The earlier a child is weaned from its emotional ties to its parents the better it will handle its own problems..... A a u d D
6. Most of the time giving advice to children is a waste of time because they either don't take it or don't need it..... A a u d D
7. It is hard to let children go and visit people because they might misbehave when parents aren't around.....A a u d D
8. Fewer people are doing a good job of childrearing now than 30 years ago.....A a u d D
9. With all a child hears at school and from friends there's little a parent can do to influence him/her.....A a u d D
10. If a little girl is a tomboy, her mother should try to get her interested in dolls and playing house.....A a u d D
11. A child has a right to his own point of view and ought to be allowed to express it, just as parents express theirs.....A a u d D
12. If children are quite for a while you should immediately find out why.....A a u d D
13. It is a rare parent who can be even-tempered with the children all day long.....A a u d D
14. Psychologists now know that what a child is born with determines the kind of person he becomes.....A a u d D
15. One reason that it is sad to see children grow up is because they need you more when they are babies.....A a u d D
16. The trouble with trying to understand children's problems is they usually just make up a lot of stories to keep you interested.....A a u d D
17. A mother has a right to know everything going on in her child's life because her child is a part of her.....A a u d D

18. Most parents aren't sure what is the best way to bring up children.....A a u d D
19. A child may learn to be a juvenile delinquent from playing games like cops and robbers and war too much.....A a u d D
20. There is no reason why a child should not learn to keep his clothes clean very early in life.....A a u d D
21. If a parent sees that a child is right and the parent is wrong, they should admit it and try to do something about it.....A a u d D
22. A child should be allowed to try out what it can do at times without the parents watching.....A a u d D
23. It's hard to know what to do when a child is afraid of something that won't hurt him.....A a u d D
24. Almost all the children are just the same at birth; it's what happens to them afterwards that is important.....A a u d D
25. Playing with a baby too much should be avoided since it excites them and they won't sleep.....A a u d D
26. Children shouldn't be asked to do all the compromising without a chance to express their side of things.....A a u d D
27. Parents should make it their business to know everything their children are thinking.....A a u d D
28. Raising children isn't as hard as most parents let on.....A a u d D
29. There are many things that influence an young child that parents don't understand and can't do anything about.....A a u d D
30. A child who wants too much affection may become a "softie" if it is given to him/her.....A a u d D
31. Family life would be happier if parents made children feel they were free to say what they think about anything.....A a u d D
32. Children must be told exactly what to do and how to do it or they will make mistakes.....A a u d D
33. Parents sacrifice most of their fun for their children.....A a u d D

34. Many times parents are punished for their own sins through the bad behavior of their children.....A a u d D
35. If you put too many restrictions on a child you will stunt his personality.....A a u d D
36. Most children's fears are so unreasonable it only makes things worse to let the child talk about them.....A a u d D
37. It is hard to know when to let boys and girls play together when they can't be seen.....A a u d D
38. I feel I am faced with more problems than most parents.....A a u d D
39. Most of the bad traits children have (like nervousness or bad temper) are inherited.....A a u d D
40. A child who misbehaved should be made to feel guilty and ashamed of himself.....A a u d D
41. Family conferences which include the children don't usually accomplish much.....A a u d D
42. It's a parent's duty to make sure he knows a child's innermost thoughts.....A a u d D
43. It's hard to know whether to be playful rather than dignified with children.....A a u d D
44. A child that comes from bad stock doesn't have much chance of amounting to anything.....A a u d D
45. A child should be weaned away from the bottle or breast as soon as possible.....A a u d D
46. There's a lot of truth in saying "Children should be seen and not heard".....A a u d D
47. If rules are not closely enforced children will misbehave and get into trouble.....A a u d D
48. Children don't realize that it mainly takes suffering to be a good parent.....A a u d D

49. Some children are so naturally headstrong
that a parent can't really do much about them..... A a u d D
50. One thing I cannot stand is a child's
constantly wanting to be held.....A a u d D
51. A child's ideas should be seriously considered
in making family decisions.....A a u d D
52. More parents should make it their job
to know everything their child is doing.....A a u d D
53. Few parents have to face the problems
I find with my children.....A a u d D
54. Why children behave the way they
do is too much for anyone to figure out.....A a u d D
55. When a boy is cowardly, he should be
forced to try things he is afraid of.....A a u d D
56. If you let children talk about their troubles
they end up complaining even more.....A a u d D
57. An alert parent should try to learn all
his child's thoughts.....A a u d D
58. It's hard to know when to make a rule and
stick by it.....A a u d D
59. Not even psychologists understand exactly
why children act the way they do.....A a u d D
60. Children should be toilet trained at the
earliest possible time.....A a u d D
61. A child should always accept the decision
of his parents.....A a u d D
62. Children have a right to activities which do not
include their parents.....A a u d D
63. A parent has to suffer much and say little.....A a u d D
64. If a child is born bad there is not much you
can do about it.....A a u d D
65. There's no acceptable excuse for a child
hitting another child.....A a u d D

66. Children should have share in making family decisions just as the grown-ups do..... A a u d D
67. Children who are not watched will get in trouble.....A a u d D
68. ~~It's hard to know what healthy sex ideas are~~.....A a u d D
69. A child is destined to be a certain kind of person no matter what the parents do.....A a u d D
70. It's a parent's right to refuse to put up with a child's annoyances.....A a u d D
71. Talking with a child about his fears most often makes the fear look more important than it is.....A a u d D
72. Children have no right to keep anything from their parents.....A a u d D
73. Raising children is a nerve-wracking job.....A a u d D
74. Some children are just naturally bad.....A a u d D
75. A child should be taught to avoid fighting no matter what happens.....A a u d D
76. Children do not try to understand their parents.....A a u d D
77. A child should never keep a secret from his parents..... A a u d D

APPENDIX I

**The Pictorial Scale of
Perceived Competence and Acceptance
for Young Children**

Plates — Preschool and Kindergarten, Female
Susan Harter and Robin G. Pike

*In collaboration with Carole Efron and Christine Chao
Illustrated by Deborah Kolbo Ellsworth*

1980

University of Denver

© University of Denver (Colorado Seminary), 1980. Susan Harter, Ph.D., and Robin G. Pike.

INSTRUCTIONS

The child is given a sample item at the beginning of the booklet and instructed as follows:

I have something here that's kind of like a picture game and it's called WHICH GIRL IS THE MOST LIKE ME. I'm going to tell you about what each of the girls in the picture is doing.

Sample: In *this* one (examiner then points to picture on the left), this girl is usually kind of *happy*, and this girl (examiner points to the picture on the right) is usually kind of *sad*. Now, I want you to tell me which of these girls is the most like (Child's Name).

After the child has pointed to the picture appropriate for her, the examiner points to the circles directly below that picture and emphasizes the key qualifying words to help the child refine her choice further. The examiner should always start with the extreme (larger) circle and proceed to the smaller circle. Thus, if the child points to the happy picture in response to the question concerning which is most like her, the examiner would say:

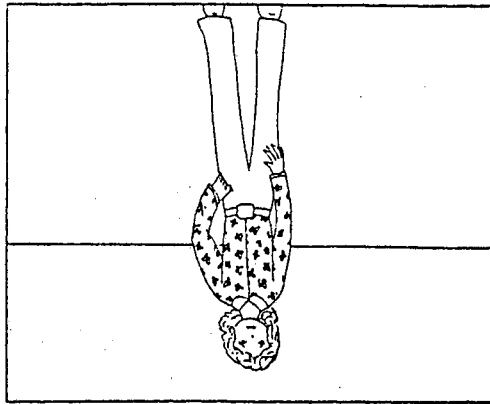
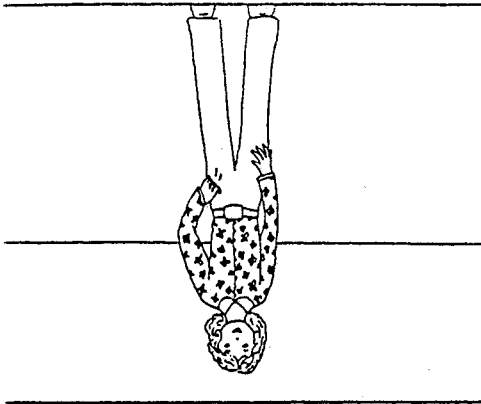
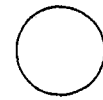
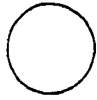
Are you *always* happy? (pointing to the larger circle)

Or are you *usually* happy? (pointing to smaller circle)

Occasionally a child will point to the middle of the two pictures and say that both are like her. The examiner should then say: Yes, sometimes we do feel both ways, but if you had to pick, which one of these girls is the way you are *most* of the time, which one would you choose?

The number value corresponding to the child's choice should be recorded on the Scoring Sheet for Individual Child Responses. Any comments should be recorded in the space provided at the bottom of the sheet.

The examiner continues for each plate, reading the descriptions, verbatim, as she/he points to the picture accompanying each description. In some pictures there is a target child central to the description, designated by an arrow pointing to that child. Be certain that on these items you point to that particular child.



SAMPLE QUESTION

This girl is usually kind of happy. Are you:

Always happy

OR

Usually happy



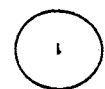
This girl is usually kind of sad. Are you:

Usually sad

OR

Always sad





Not very good
at puzzles



Sort of good



Pretty good



Really good
at puzzles

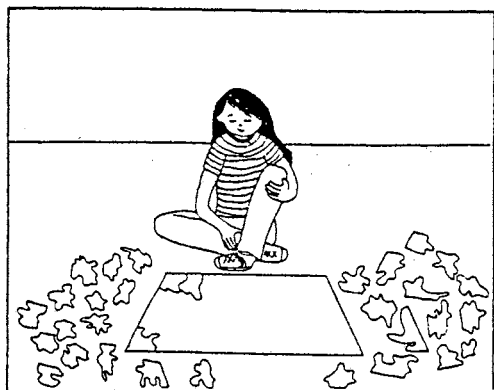
OR

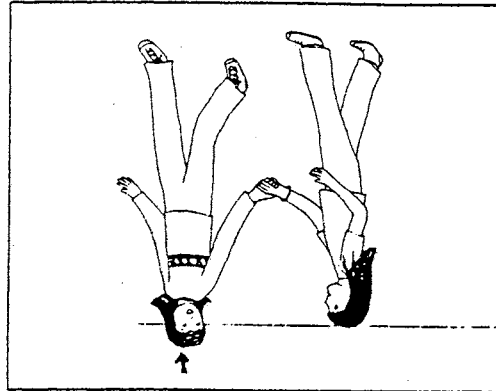
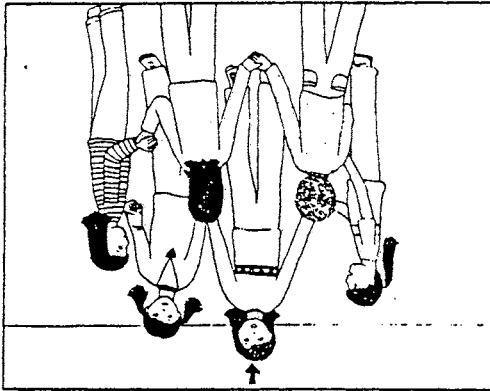
OR

This girl isn't very good at puzzles. Are you:

This girl is pretty good at puzzles. Are you:

ITEM 1





ITEM 2

This girl has lots of friends to play with. Do you have:

A whole lot of friends to play with

OR

Pretty many



This girl doesn't have very many friends to play with. Do you have:

A few

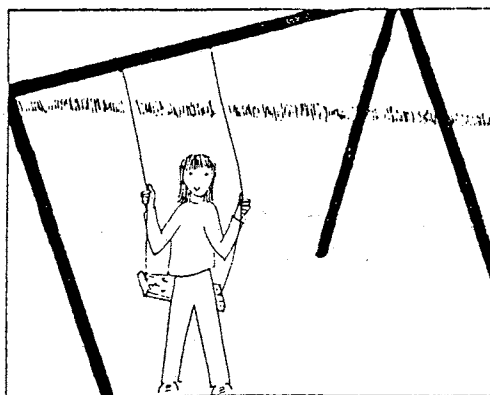
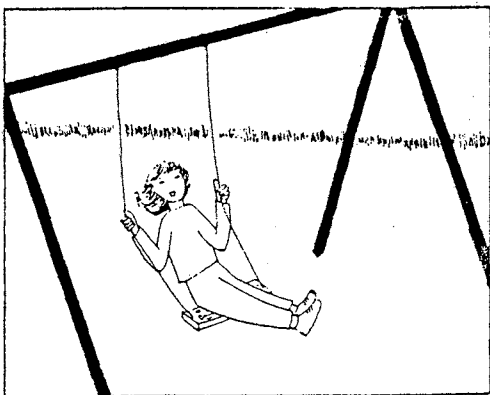
OR

Hardly any friends





ITEM 3



Does she
 4
 Smile a whole lot

OR

1
 Tightly mouth

This girl's mom smiles at her a lot.

OR

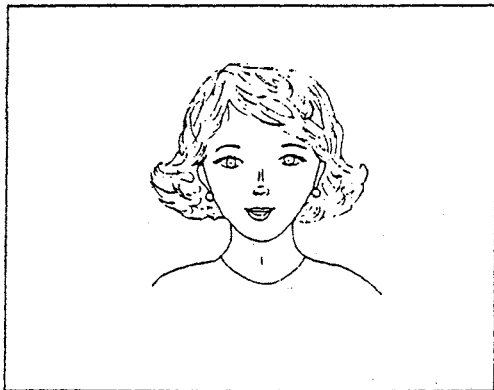
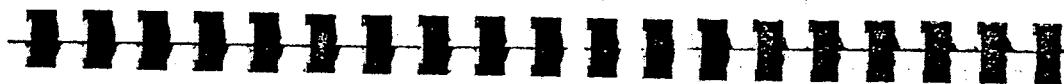
2
 Sometimes smile

OR

1
 Hardly ever smile

This girl's mom doesn't smile at her very much.
 Does she

ITEM 4



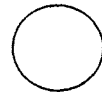
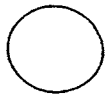
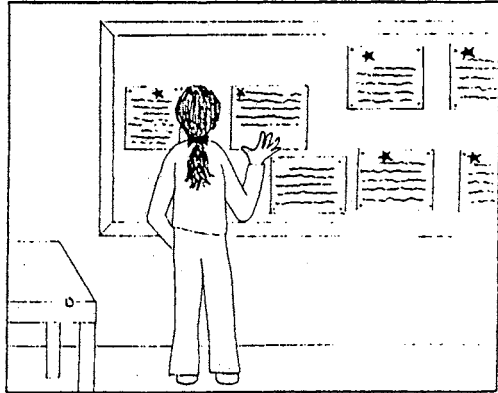
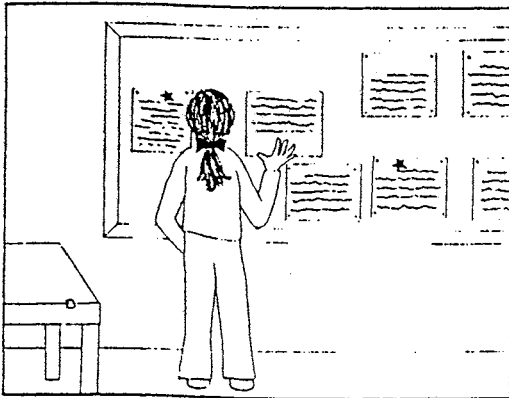
Do you: 1 Never get stars OR 2 Sometimes

This girl usually doesn't get stars on her papers.

Do you: 3 Most of the time OR 4 Always get stars

This girl usually gets stars on her papers.

ITEM 5



This girl stays overnight at her friends' houses.

Do you stay over?

A whole lot

OK

Pretty much

1

4

This girl doesn't stay overnight at her friends' houses very often.

Do you?

Never stay over

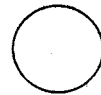
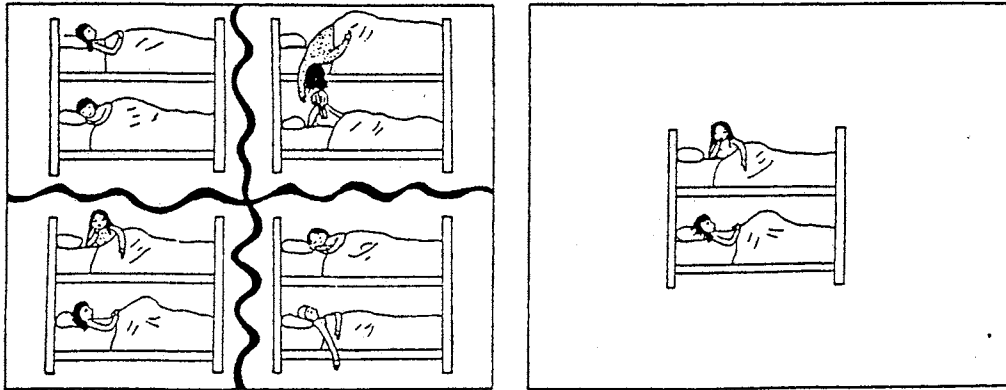
OK

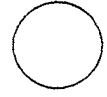
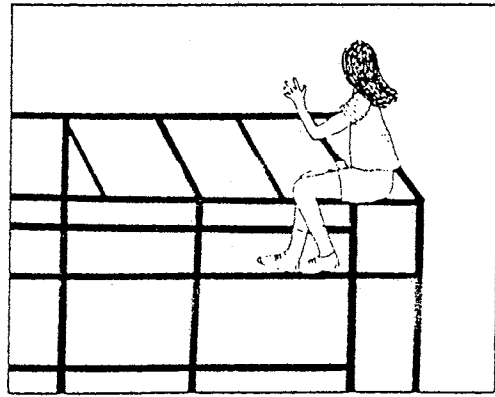
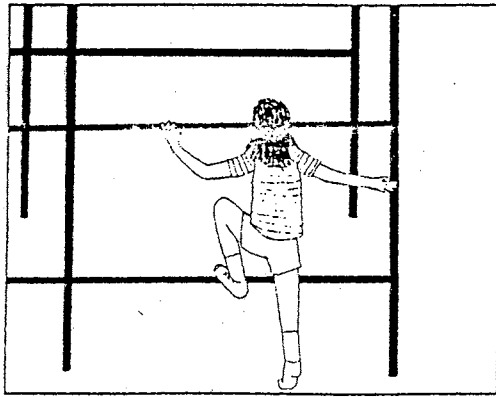
Hardly ever

1

2

ITEM 6

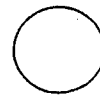
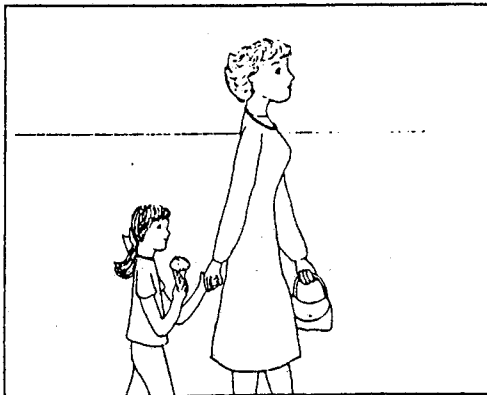
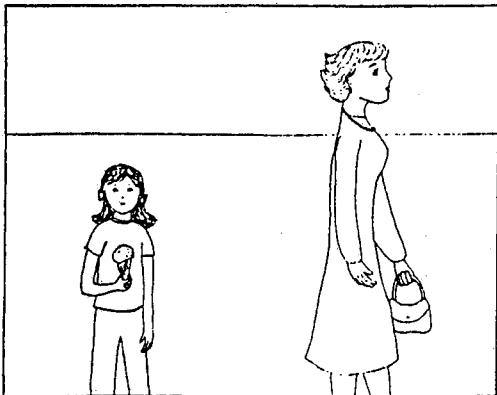




1
 Not very many places
 you like to go
 OR
 A few places
 This girl's mom doesn't take her to very many places she likes to go
 Does she like you to?

2
 Pretty many places
 OR
 A whole lot of places
 you like to go
 This girl's mom takes her to a lot of places she likes to go.
 Does she like you to?



ITEM 8



The girl knows the names of pretty many colors.

Do you know the names of:



A whole lot of colors OR Pretty many

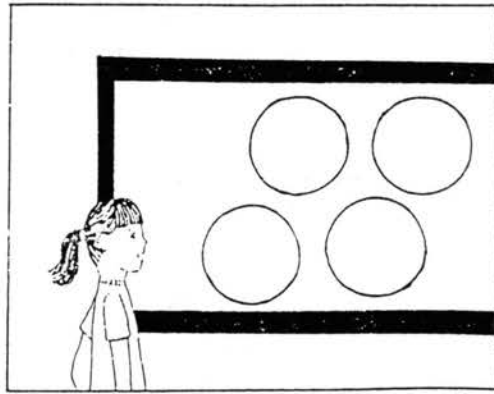
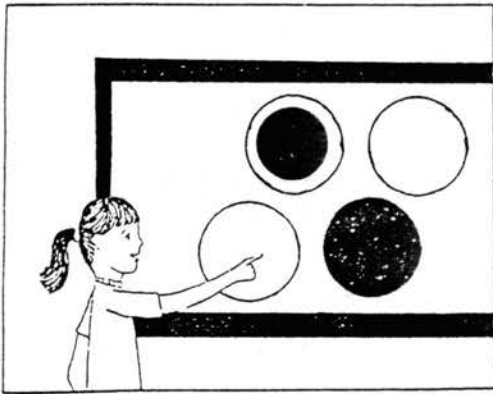
The girl doesn't know the names of very many colors.

Do you know the names of:

A few OR Hardly any colors

ITEM 9



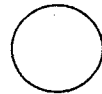
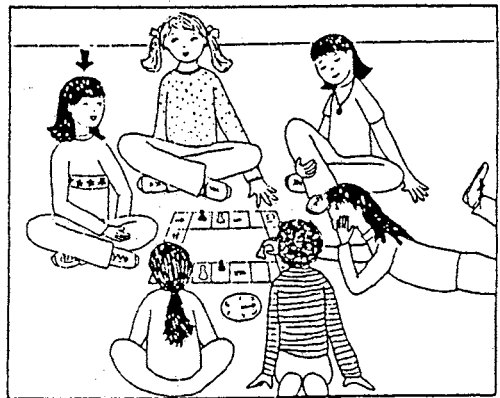
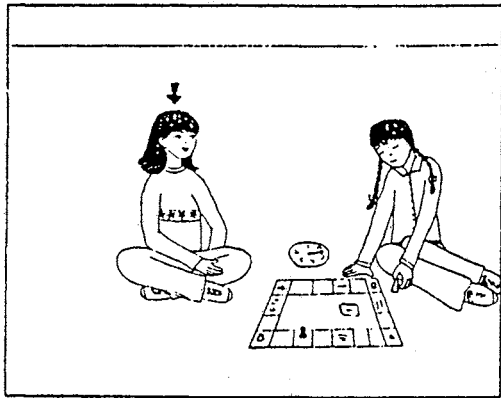
This girl doesn't have a lot of friends to play games with.
Do you have:

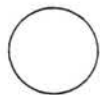
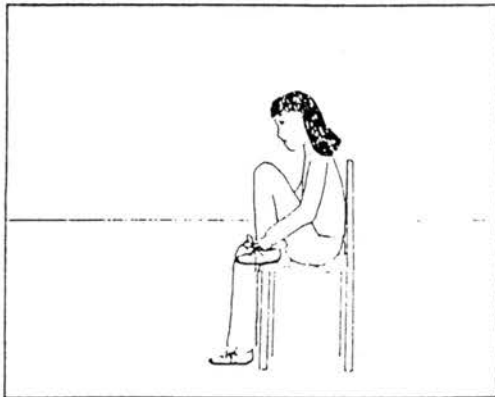
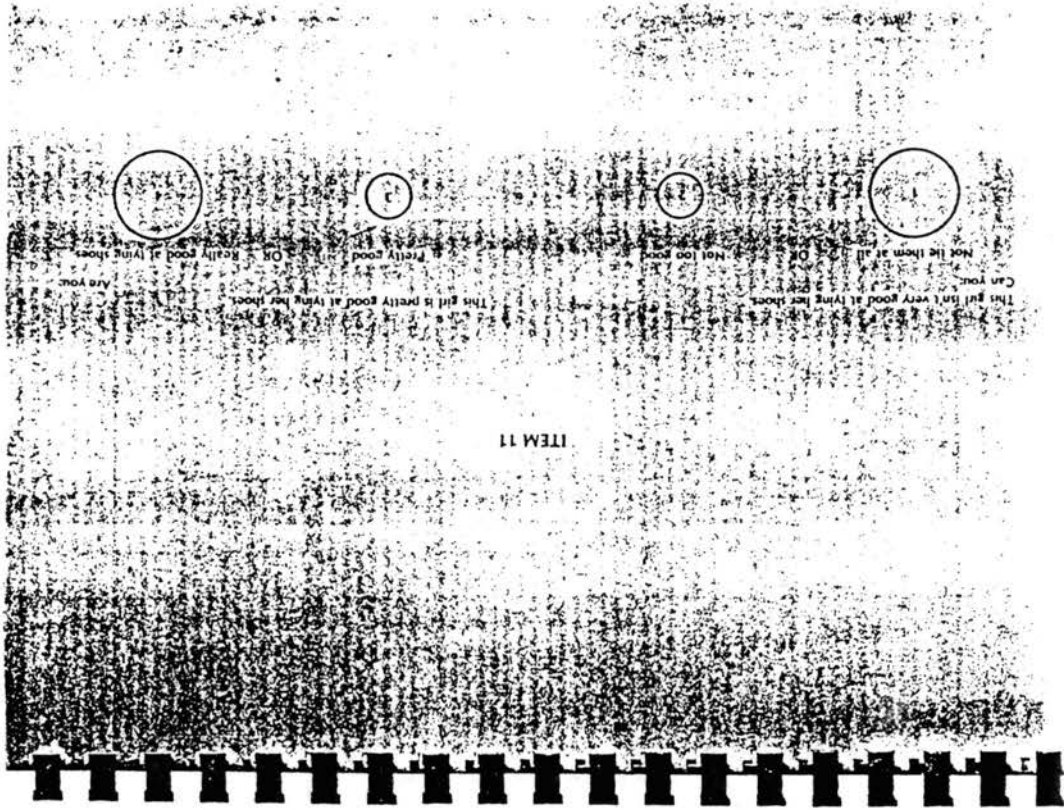
1. A lot of friends to play games with.
OR
2. Hardly any friends to play games with.

This girl has pretty many friends to play games with.
Do you have:

1. Pretty many friends to play games with.
OR
2. A lot of friends to play games with.

ITEM 10





This girl's mom cooks a lot of the food she likes. From the

Always cook the foods you like OR Most of the time

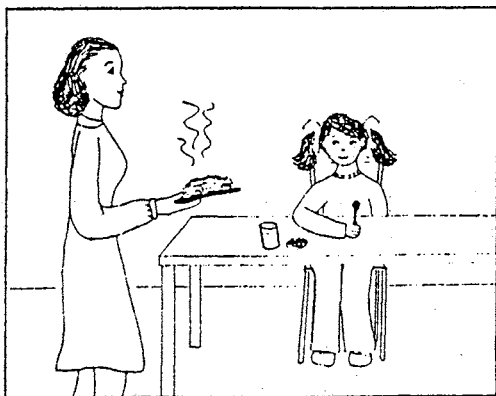
1

This girl's mom only cooks a few of the foods she likes. From the

Hardly ever cook the foods you like OR Sometimes

2

ITEM 12



4
 Really good at counting
 OK

1
 Pretty good

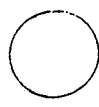
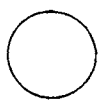
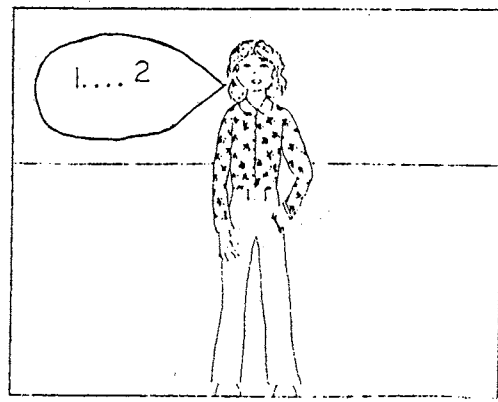
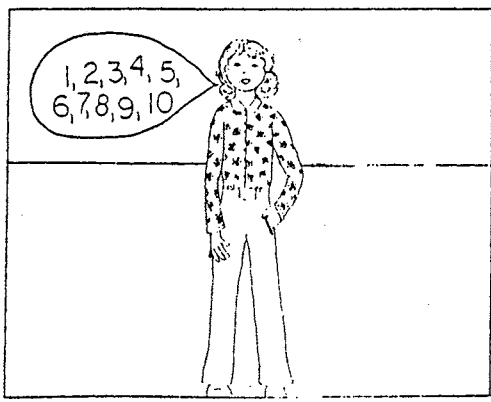
2
 Sort of good

1
 Not too good at counting
 OK

1
 This girl isn't very good at counting
 Are you?

This girl is pretty good at counting

ITEM 13

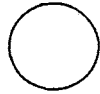
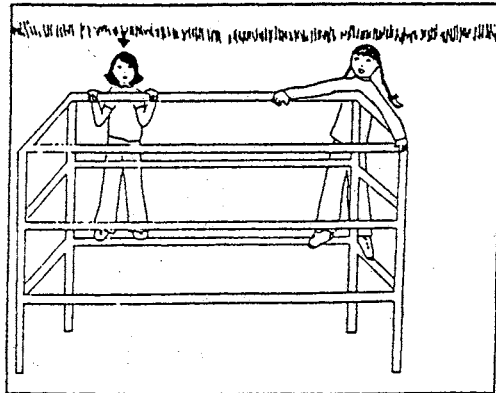
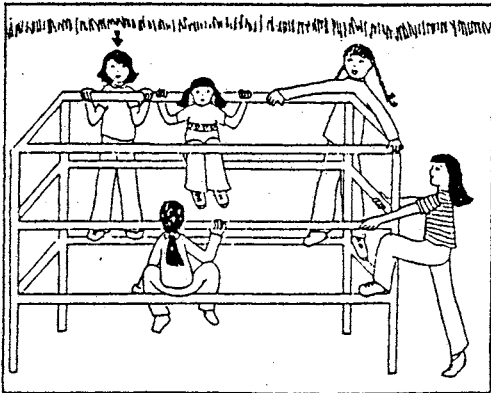


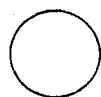
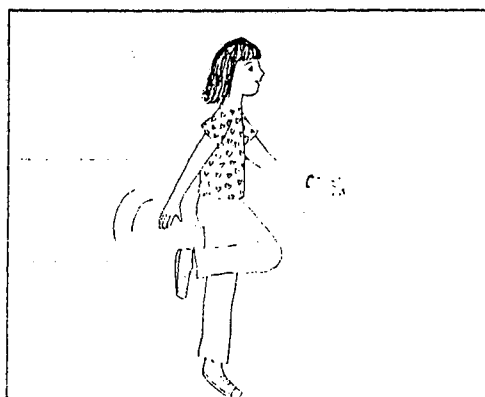
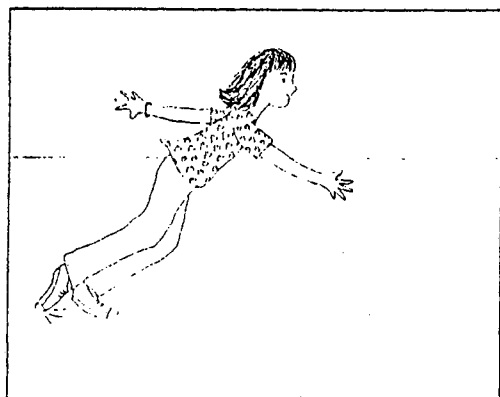
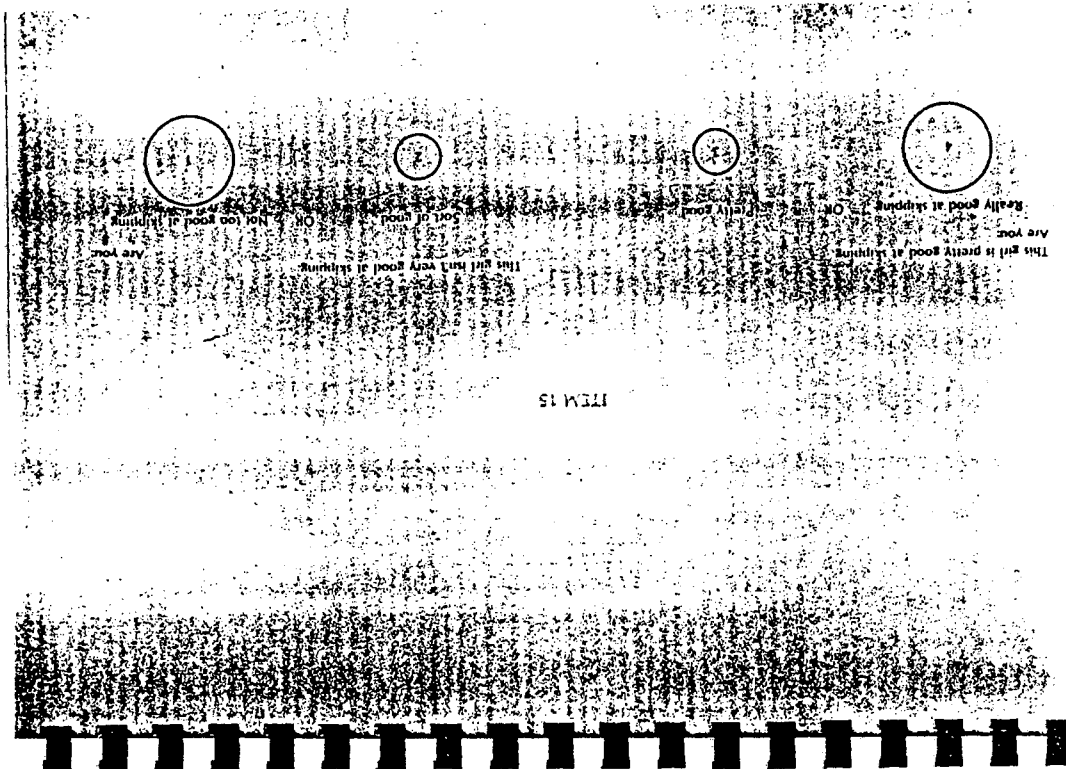
This girl doesn't have very many friends to play with on the playground.
 The girl doesn't have very many friends to play with on the playground.
 The girl doesn't have very many friends to play with on the playground.
 The girl doesn't have very many friends to play with on the playground.

OR

This girl has lots of friends to play with on the playground.
 The girl has lots of friends to play with on the playground.
 The girl has lots of friends to play with on the playground.
 The girl has lots of friends to play with on the playground.

ITEM 14





This girl's mom reads to her a little every day.

OR

Never read

1

OR

Sometimes

2

OR

Pretty much

3

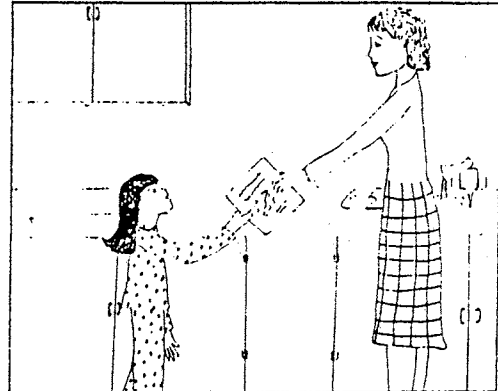
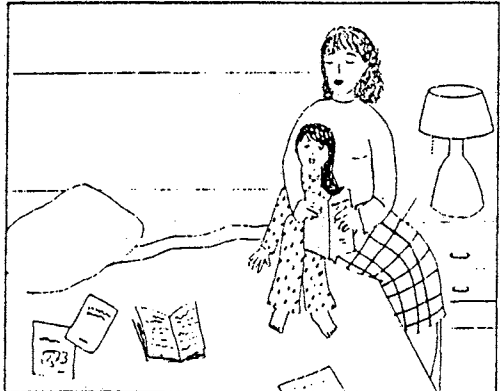
OR

A whole lot

4

This girl's mom reads to her a lot every day.

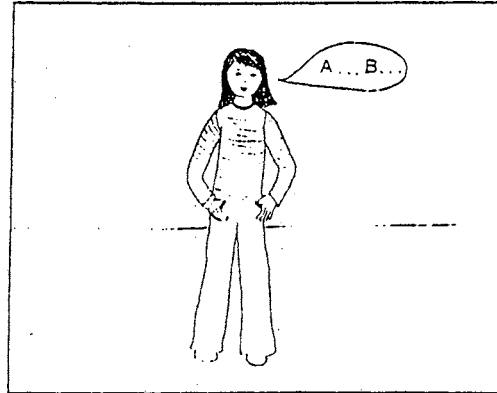
ITEM 16



Are you Really good at saying the alphabet OK Pretty good Sort of good Not too good at saying the alphabet CR OK

This girl is pretty good at saying the alphabet. Are you Really good at saying the alphabet OK Pretty good Sort of good Not too good at saying the alphabet CR OK

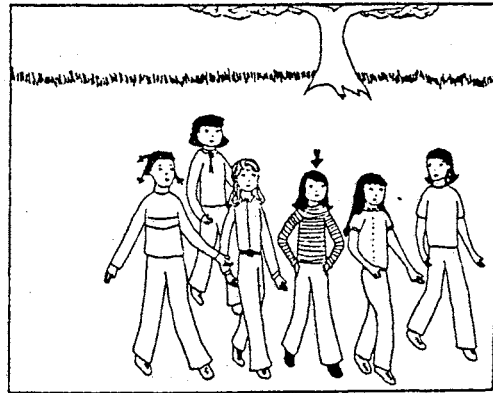
ITEM 17

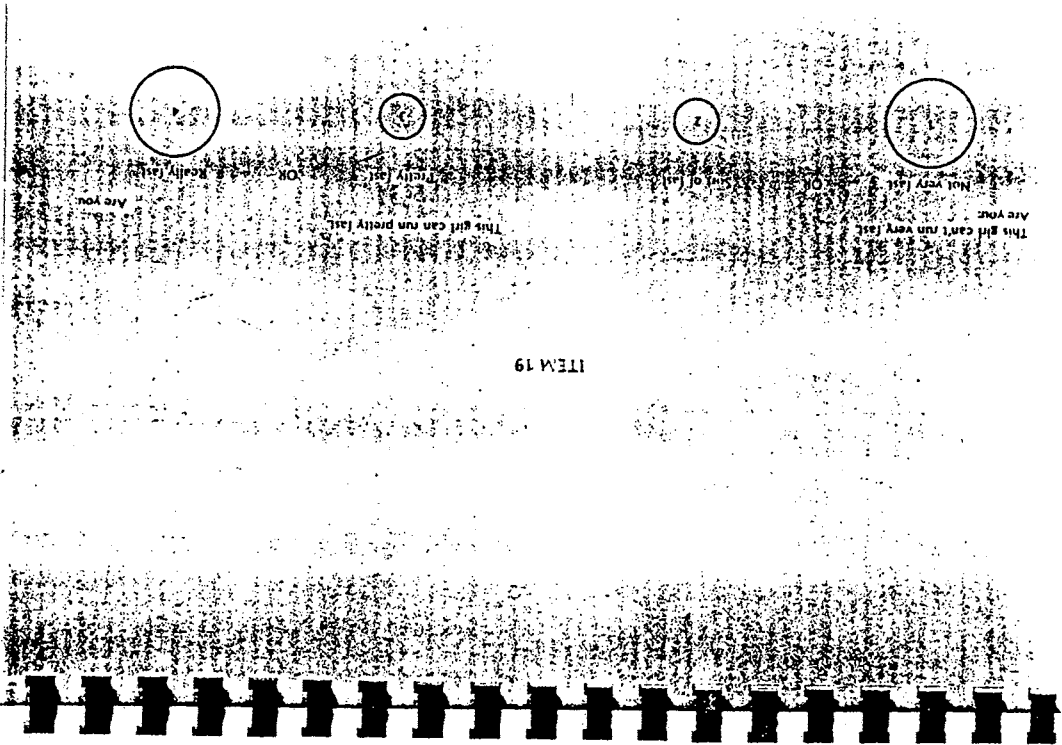


1
 2
 OR
 Sometimes
 OR
 Hardly ever get asked to play
 OR
 Never
 This girl gets hardly ever sometimes because the other kids don't ask her to play

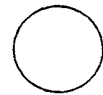
1
 2
 OR
 Always get asked to play
 OR
 Usually
 OR
 Often
 This girl usually gets asked to play with the other kids

ITEM 10





ITEM 19



This girl's mom plays with her a lot from she

1 Play with you a whole lot OR

2 Pretty much

3 This girl's mom plays with her a little

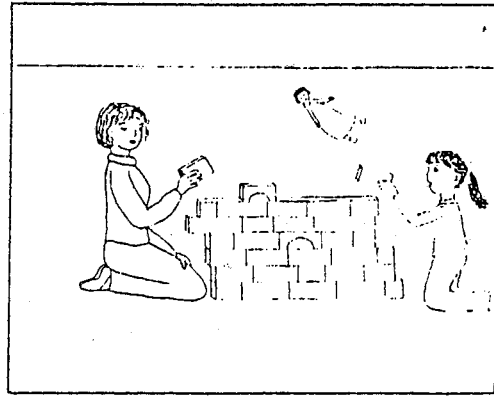
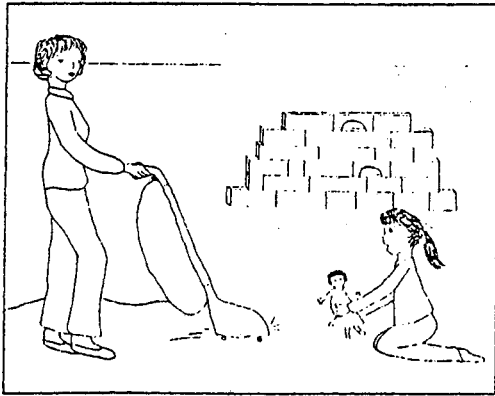
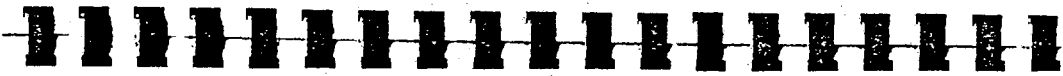
4 Does she

5 Sometimes

6 OR

7 Usually ever play

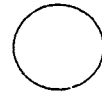
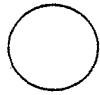
ITEM 20



1
 OR
 Not very well
 OR
 Not know it at all
 Do you
 This girl has trouble remembering the first letter of her name

2
 OR
 Pretty well
 OR
 Kelly well
 Do you
 This girl knows the first letter of her name

ITEM 21



This girl usually gets to eat dinner at friends' houses.
Do you eat over?

Never get to eat over. 1

OR

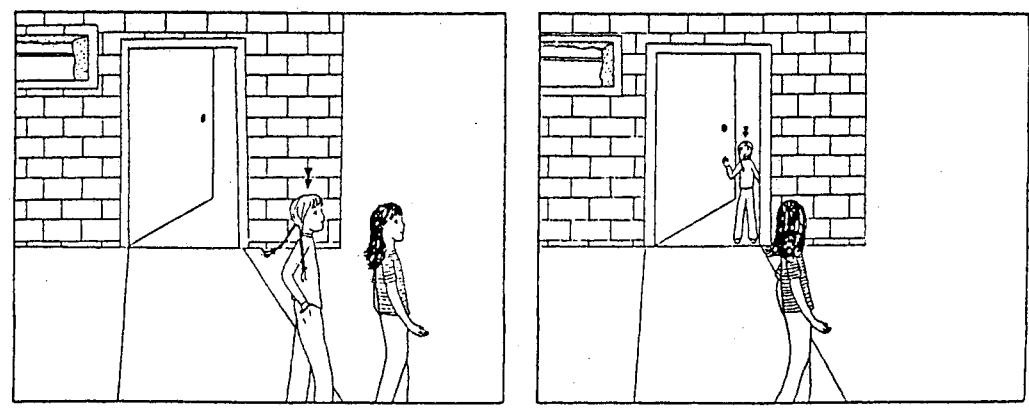
Sometimes. 2

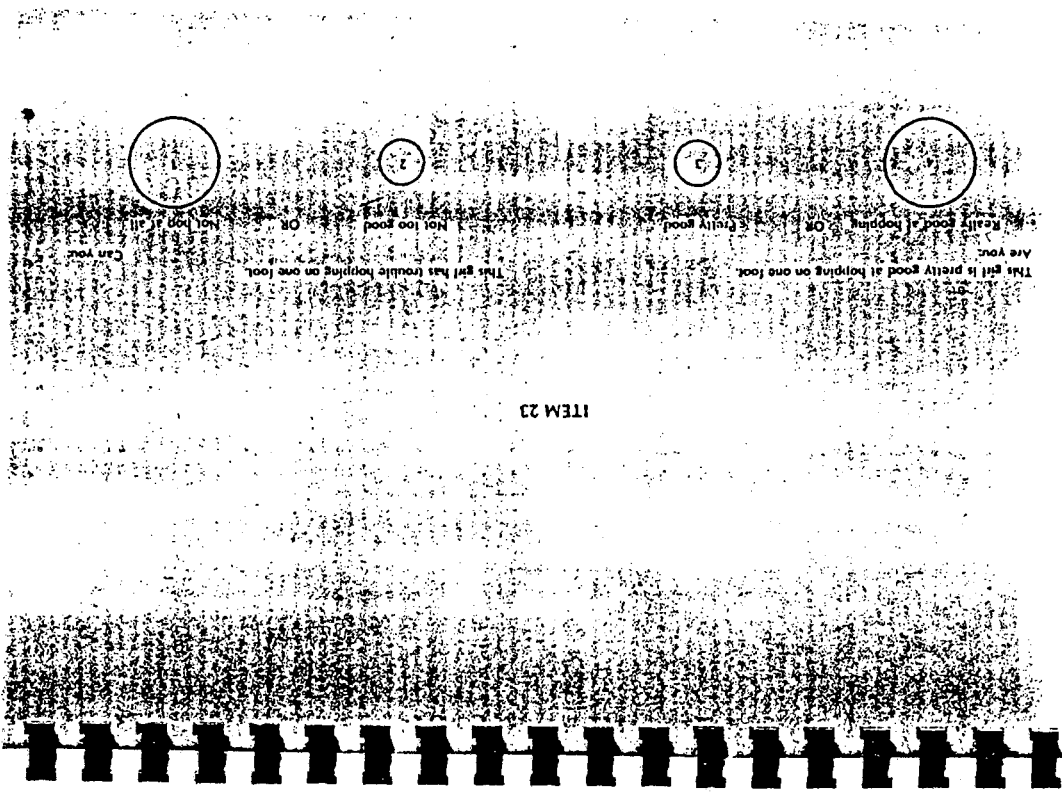
Pretty much. 3

OK. 4

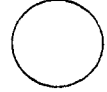
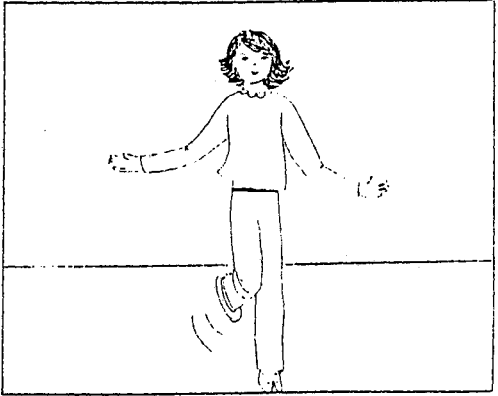
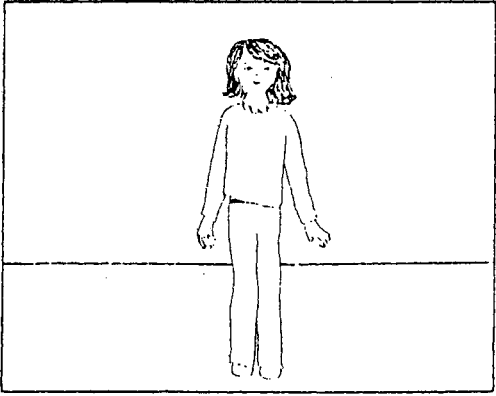
A whole lot. 5

ITEM 22





ITEM 23



Does she
 This girl's mom talks with her a little
 OR
 Hardly ever talk with you
 Sometimes

1

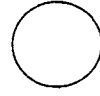
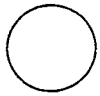
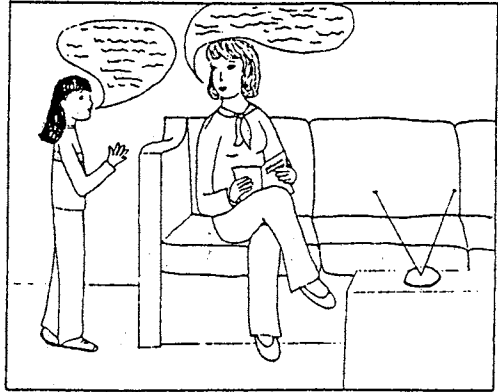
2

3

4

OR
 Talk with you a whole lot.
 Pretty much

ITEM 24



**The Pictorial Scale of
Perceived Competence and Acceptance
for Young Children**

**Plates — Preschool and Kindergarten, Male
Susan Harter and Robin G. Pike**

*In collaboration with Carole Efron and Christine Chao
Illustrated by Deborah Kolbo Ellsworth*

1980

INSTRUCTIONS

The child is given a sample item at the beginning of the booklet and instructed as follows:

I have something here that's kind of like a picture game and it's called WHICH BOY IS THE MOST LIKE ME. I'm going to tell you about what each of the boys in the picture is doing.

Sample: In *this* one (examiner then points to picture on the left), this boy is usually kind of *happy*, and this boy (examiner points to the picture on the right) is usually kind of *sad*. Now, I want you to tell me which of these boys is the most like (Child's Name).

After the child has pointed to the picture appropriate for him, the examiner points to the circles directly below that picture and emphasizes the key qualifying words to help the child refine his choice further. The examiner should always start with the extreme (larger) circle and proceed to the smaller circle. Thus, if the child points to the happy picture in response to the question concerning which is most like him, the examiner would say:

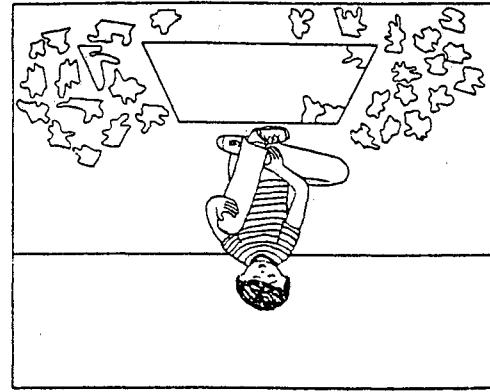
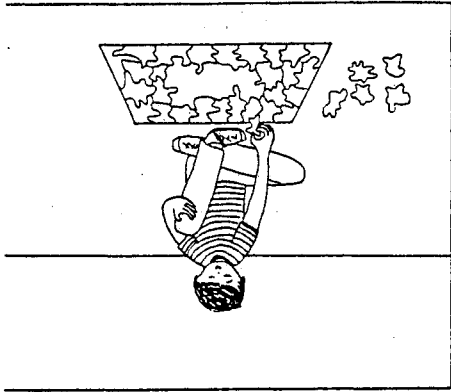
Are you *always* happy? (pointing to the larger circle)

Or are you *usually* happy? (pointing to the smaller circle)

Occasionally a child will point to the middle of the two pictures and say that both are like him. The examiner should then say: Yes, sometimes we do feel both ways, but if you had to pick which one of these boys is the way you are *most* of the time, which one would you choose?

The number value corresponding to the child's choice should be recorded on the Scoring Sheet for Individual Child Responses. Any comments should be recorded in the space provided at the bottom of the sheet.

The examiner continues for each plate, reading the descriptions, verbatim, as she/he points to the picture accompanying each description. In some pictures there is a target child central to the description, designated by an arrow pointing to that child. Be certain that on these items you point to that particular child.



ITEM 1

This boy is pretty good at puzzles. Are you:

This boy isn't very good at puzzles. Are you:

Really good at puzzles

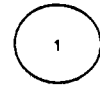
OR

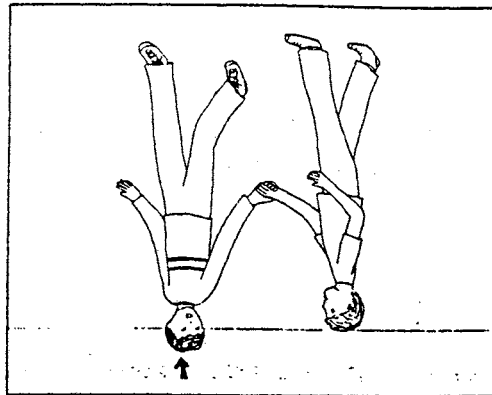
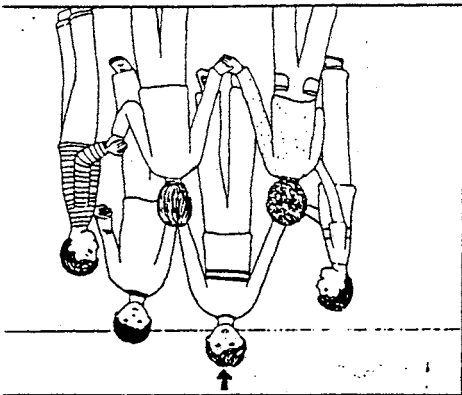
Pretty good

Sort of good

OR

Not very good at puzzles





ITEM 2

This boy has lots of friends to play with. Do you have:

A whole lot of friends to play with

OR

Pretty many



This boy doesn't have very many friends to play with. Do you have:

A few

OR

Hardly any friends





Really good



Pretty good

OR



Son of good

OR

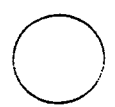
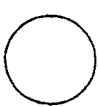
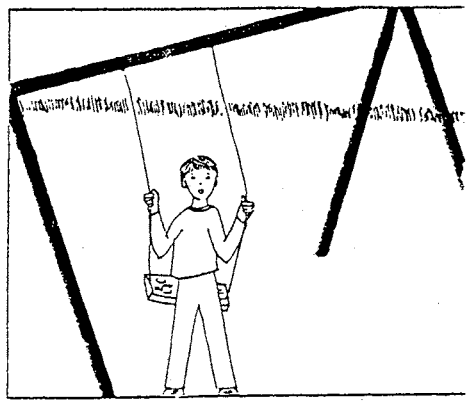
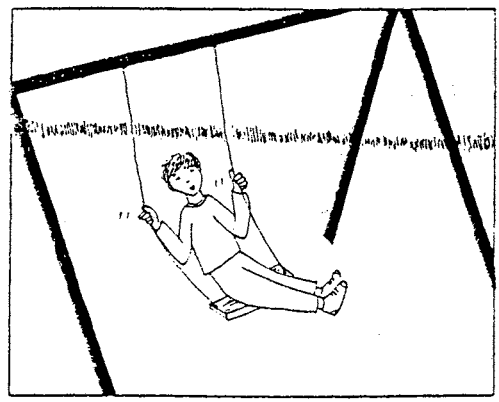


Not too good

Are you
This boy is pretty good at swinging by himself.

Are you
This boy isn't very good at swinging by himself.

ITEM 3





Smile a
whole lot



Pretty much

OR



Sometimes
smile

OR

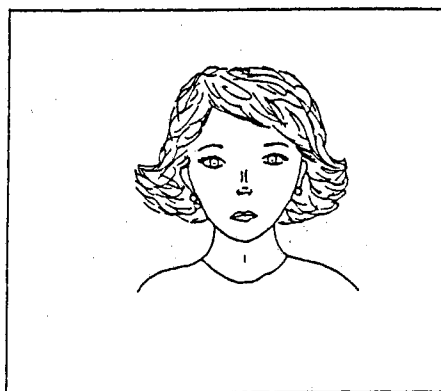


Hardly ever
smile

This boy's mom smiles at him a lot. Does she:

This boy's mom doesn't smile at him very much. Does she:

ITEM 4





Never get stars



Sometimes



Most of the time



Always get stars

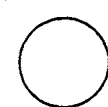
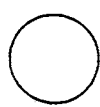
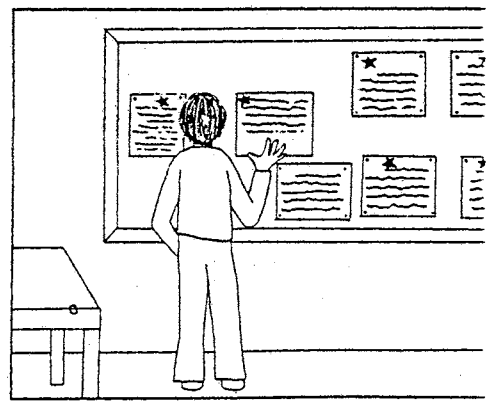
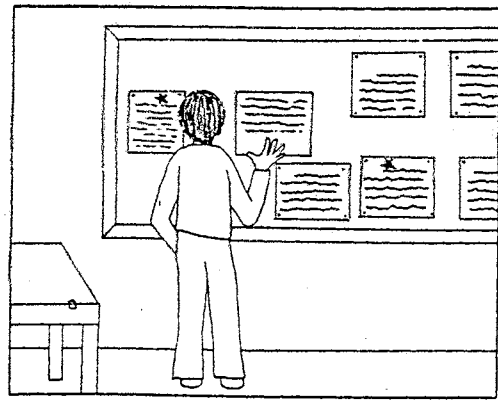
OR

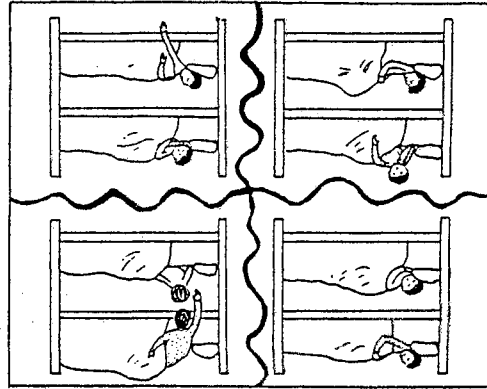
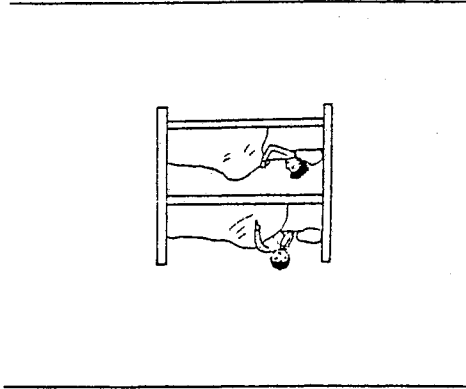
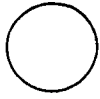
OR

This boy usually doesn't get stars on his papers. Do you:

This boy usually gets stars on his papers. Do you:

ITEM 5





ITEM 6

This boy doesn't stay overnight at his friends' houses very often. Do you:

Never stay over

OR

Hardly ever



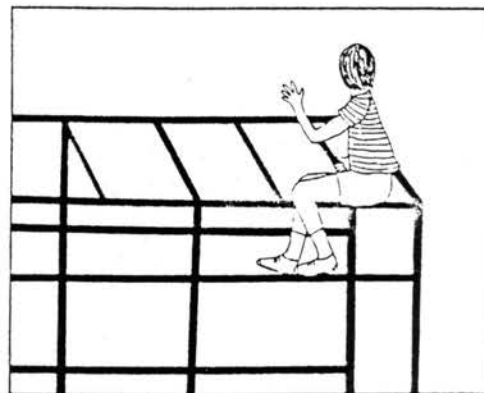
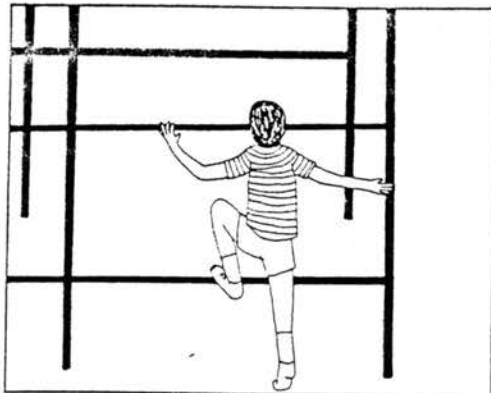
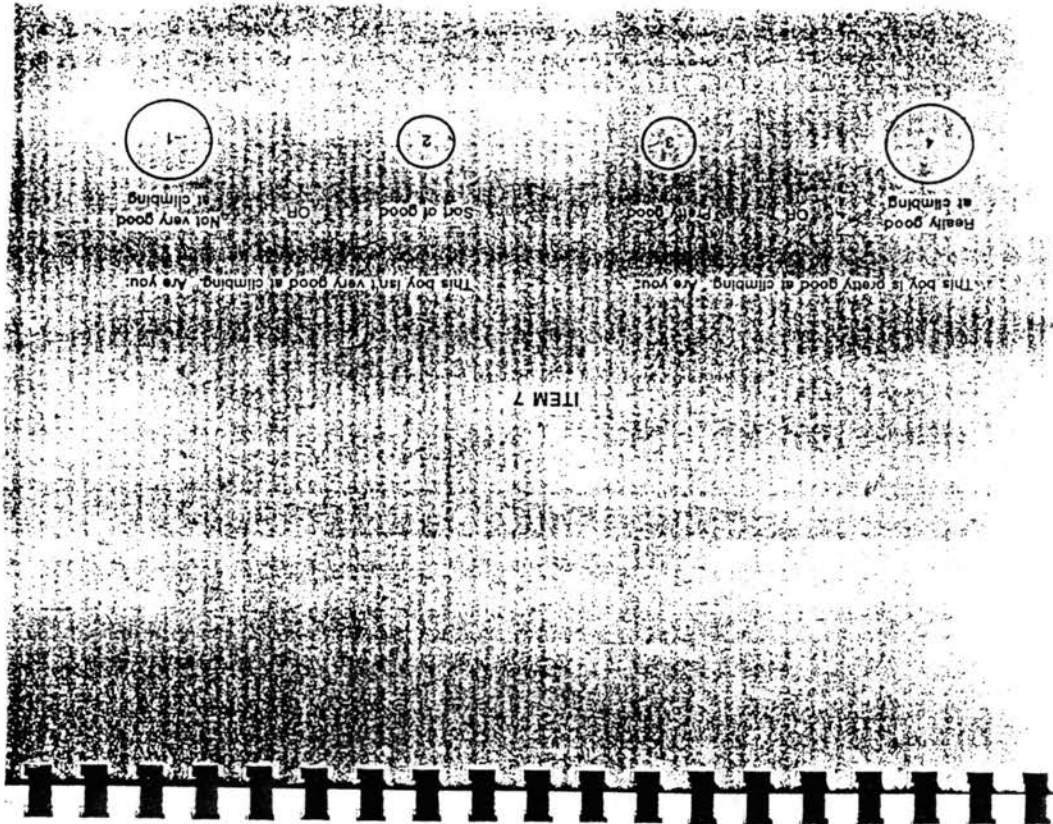
This boy stays overnight at his friends' houses. Do you stay over:

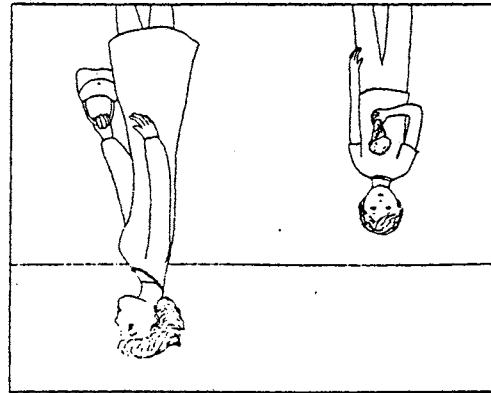
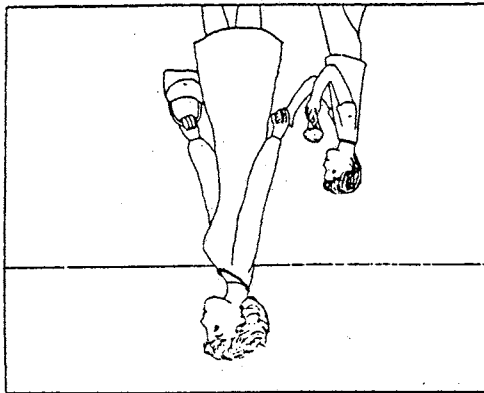
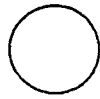
Pretty much

OR

A whole lot







ITEM 8

This boy's mom takes him to a lot of places he likes to go. Does she take you to:

A whole lot of places you like to go

OR

Pretty many places



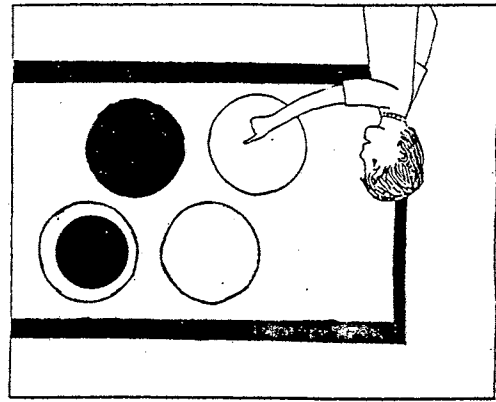
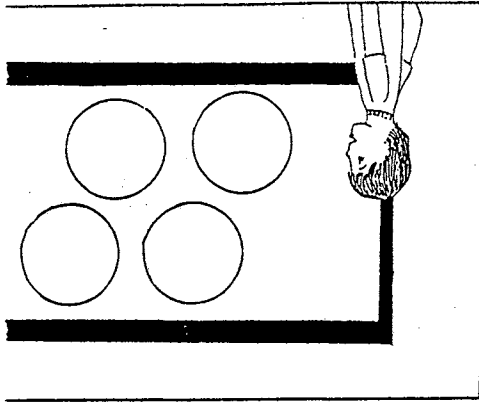
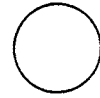
This boy's mom doesn't take him to very many places he likes to go. Does she take you to:

A few places

OR

Not very many places you like to go





ITEM 9

This boy doesn't know the names of very many colors. Do you know the names of:

Hardly any colors

OR

A few



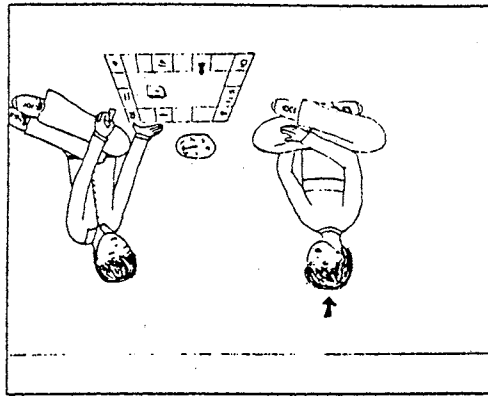
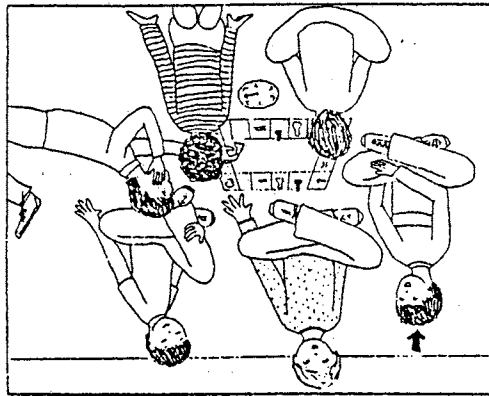
This boy knows the names of pretty many colors. Do you know the names of:

Pretty many

OR

A whole lot of colors





ITEM 10

This boy has pretty many friends to play games with. Do you have:

A lot of friends to play games with

OR

Pretty many



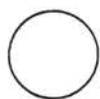
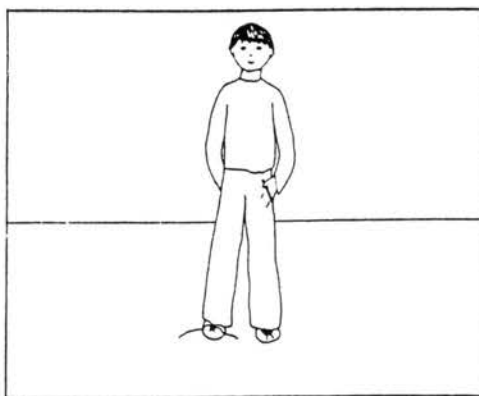
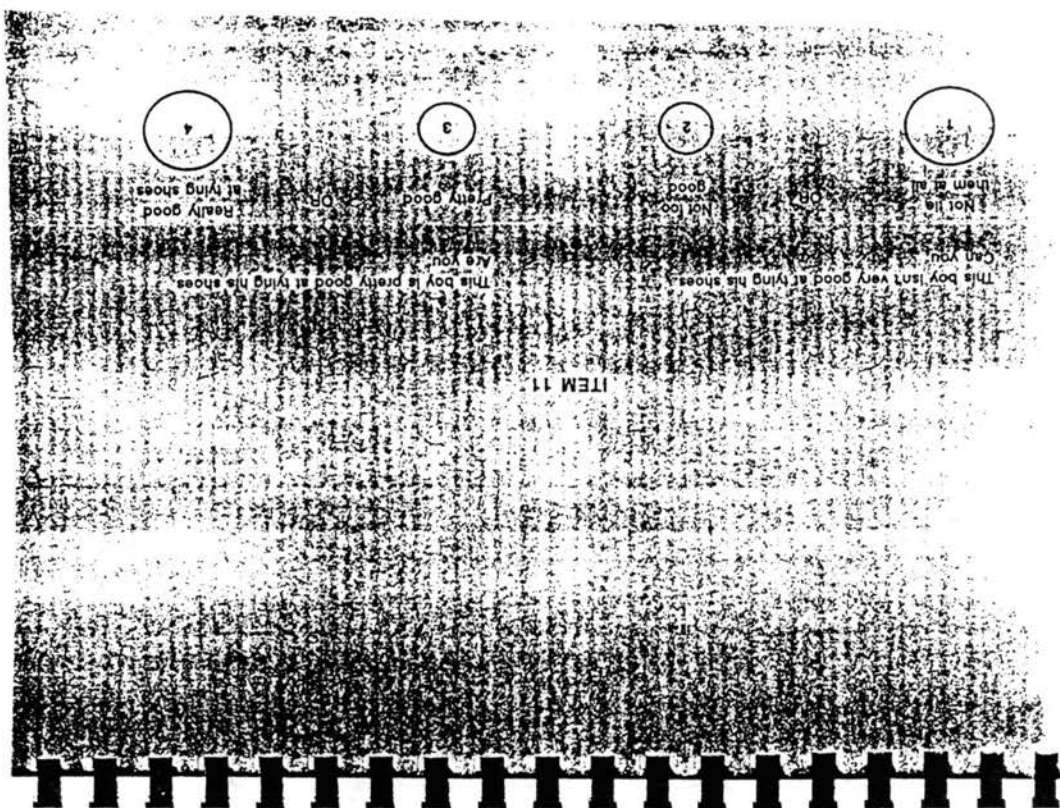
This boy doesn't have a lot of friends to play games with. Do you have:

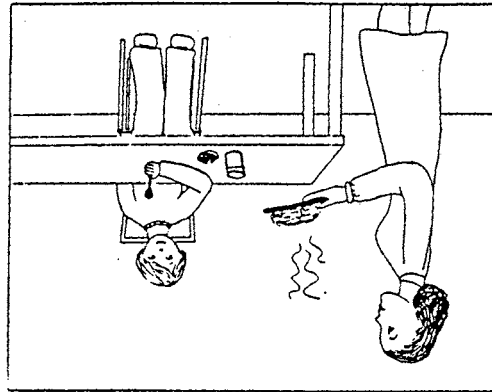
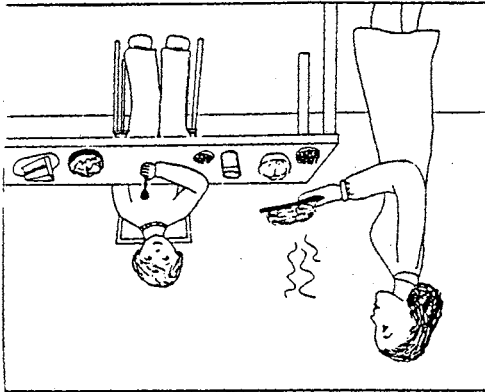
A few

OR

Hardly any friends to play games with







ITEM 12

This boy's mom cooks a lot of the food he likes. Does she:

Always cook the foods you like

OR

Most of the time



This boy's mom only cooks a few of the foods he likes. Does she:

Sometimes

OR

Hardly ever cook the foods you like





Really good at counting



Pretty good

OR



Sort of good

OR

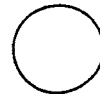
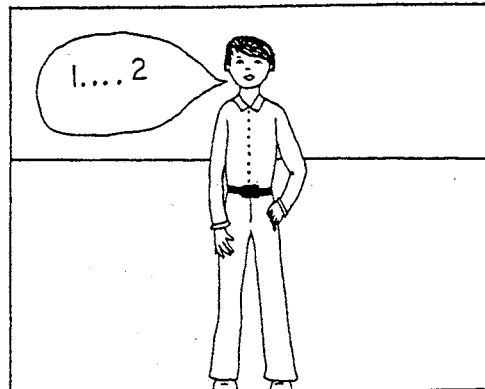
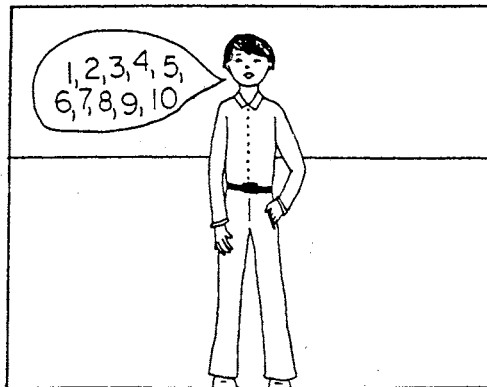


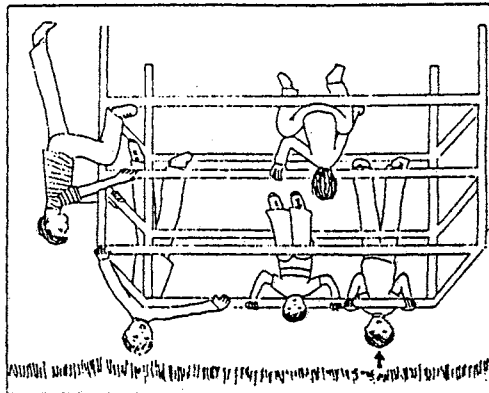
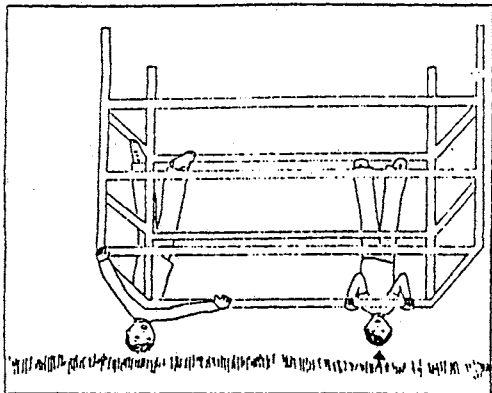
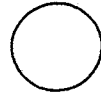
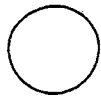
Not too good at counting

This boy is pretty good at counting. Are you:

This boy isn't very good at counting. Are you:

ITEM 13





ITEM 14

This boy doesn't have very many friends to play with on the playground. Do you have:

Hardly any friends

OR

A few



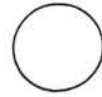
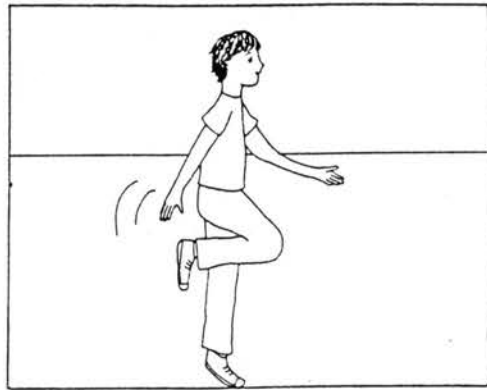
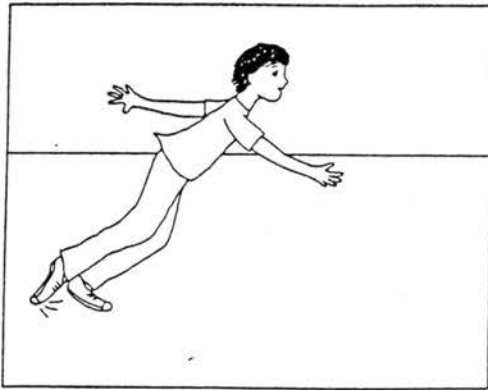
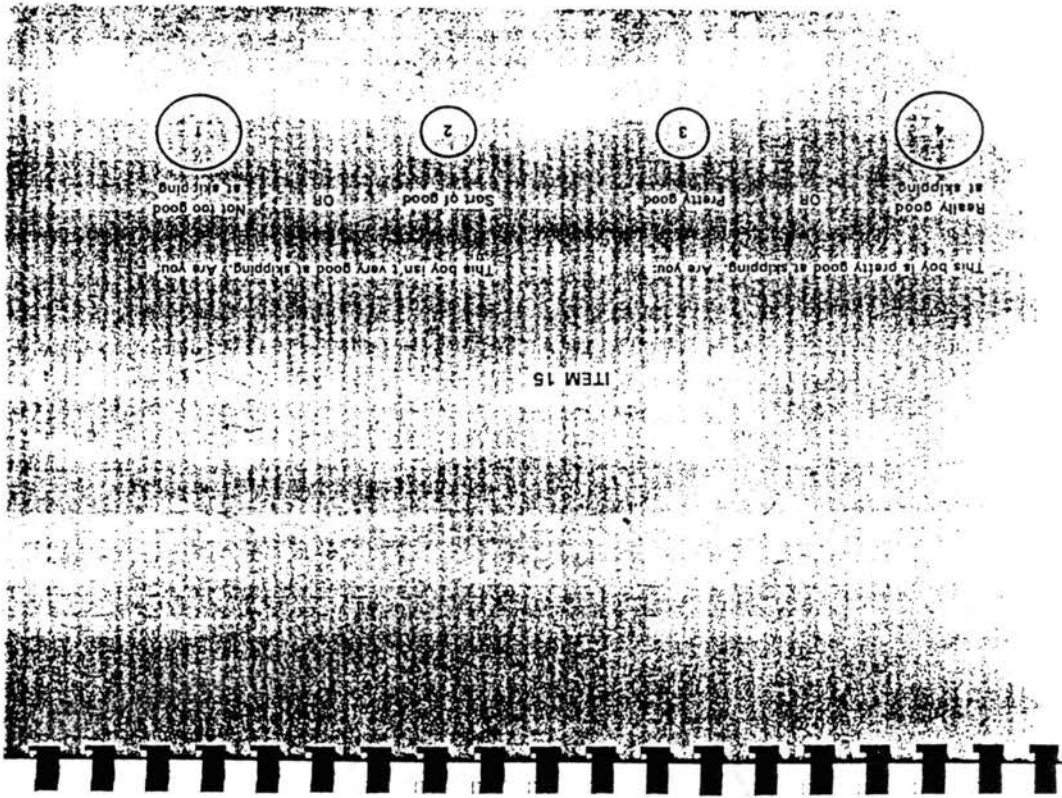
This boy has lots of friends to play with on the playground. Do you have:

Pretty many

OR

A whole lot of friends







A whole lot



Pretty much



Sometimes



Never read

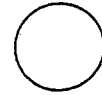
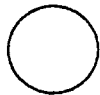
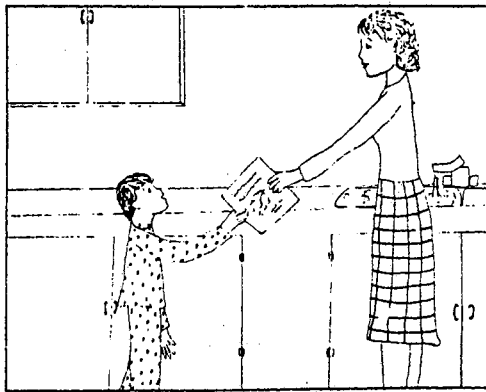
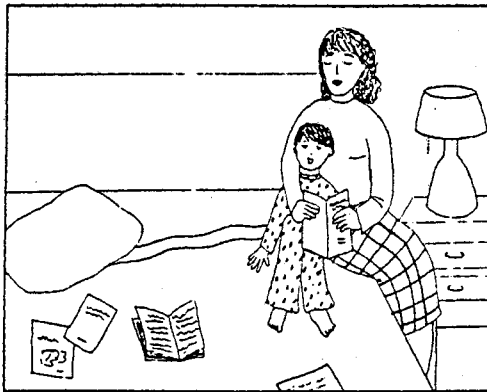
OR

OR

This boy's mom reads to him a lot. Does she read:

This boy's mom reads to him a little. Does she:

ITEM 16





Really good at saying the alphabet



Pretty good

OR



Son of good

OR

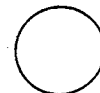


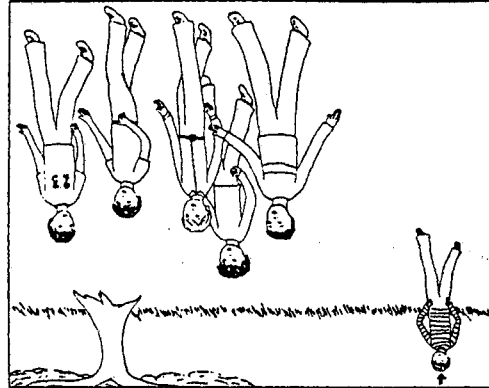
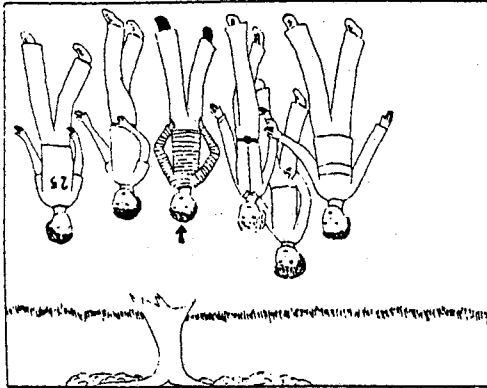
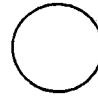
Not too good at saying the alphabet

Are you:
This boy is pretty good at saying the alphabet.

Are you:
This boy isn't very good at saying the alphabet.

ITEM 17





ITEM 18

This boy usually gets asked to play with the other kids. Do you:

Always get asked to play

OR

Usually



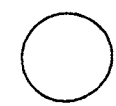
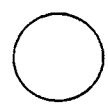
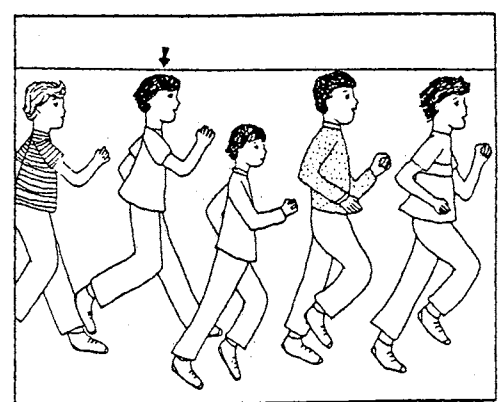
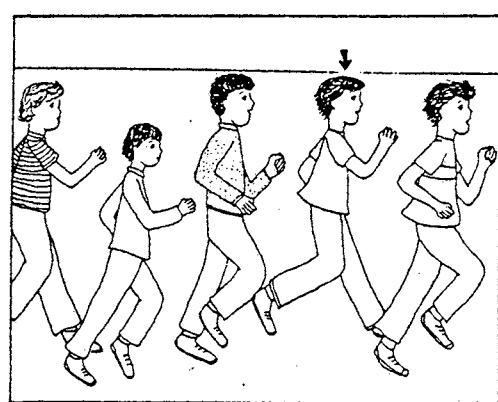
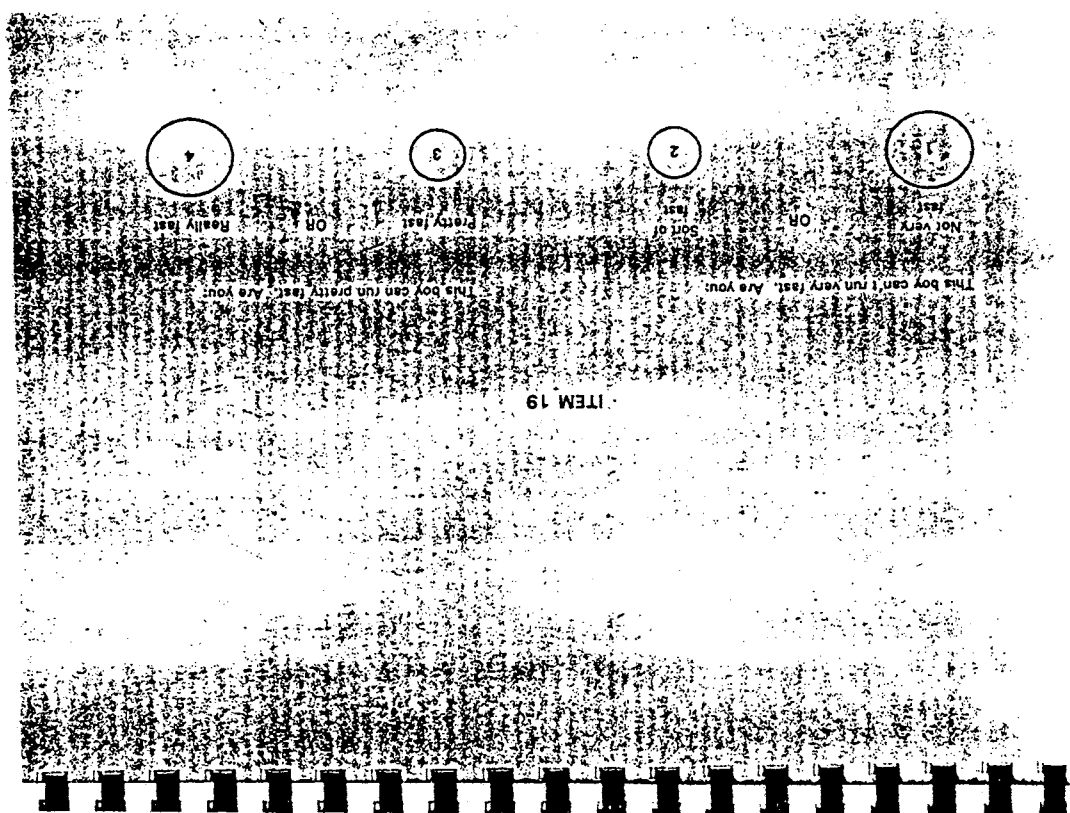
This boy gets lonely sometimes because the other kids don't ask him to play. Do you:

Sometimes

OR

Hardly ever get asked to play







Hardly
ever play



Sometimes

OR



Pretty much

OR

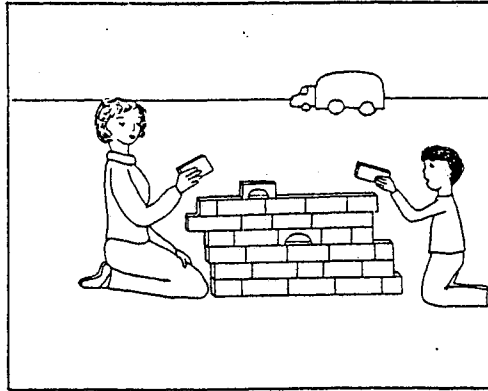
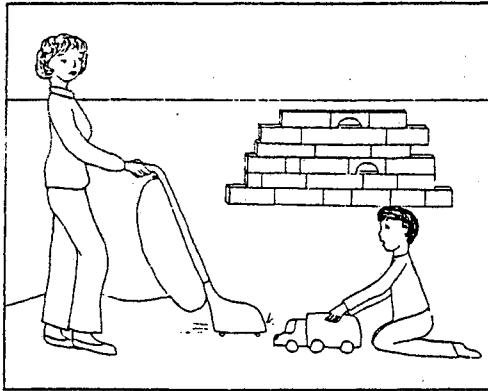


Play with you
a whole lot

This boy's mom plays with him a little. Does she:

This boy's mom plays with him a lot. Does she:

ITEM 20





Not know
it at all



Not very well

OR



Pretty well

OR

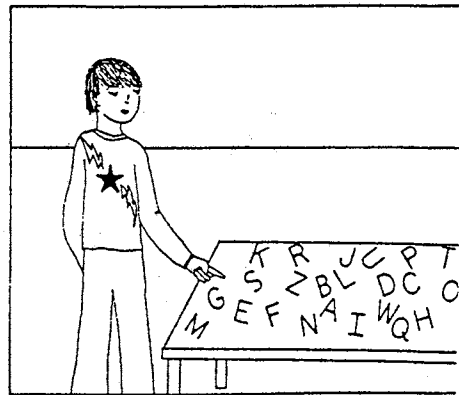
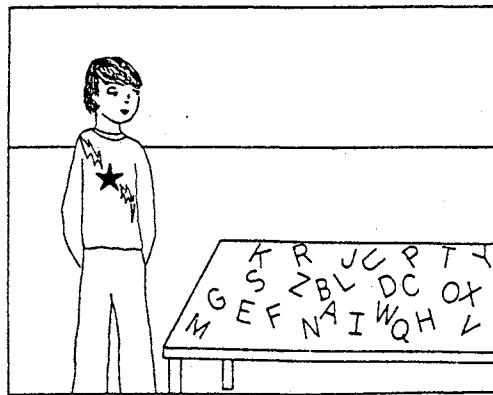


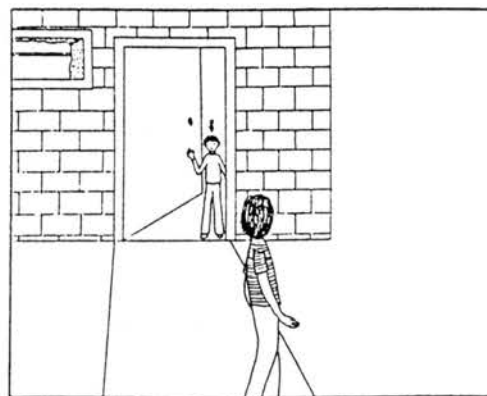
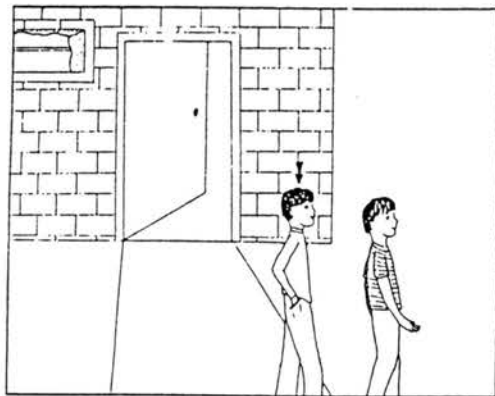
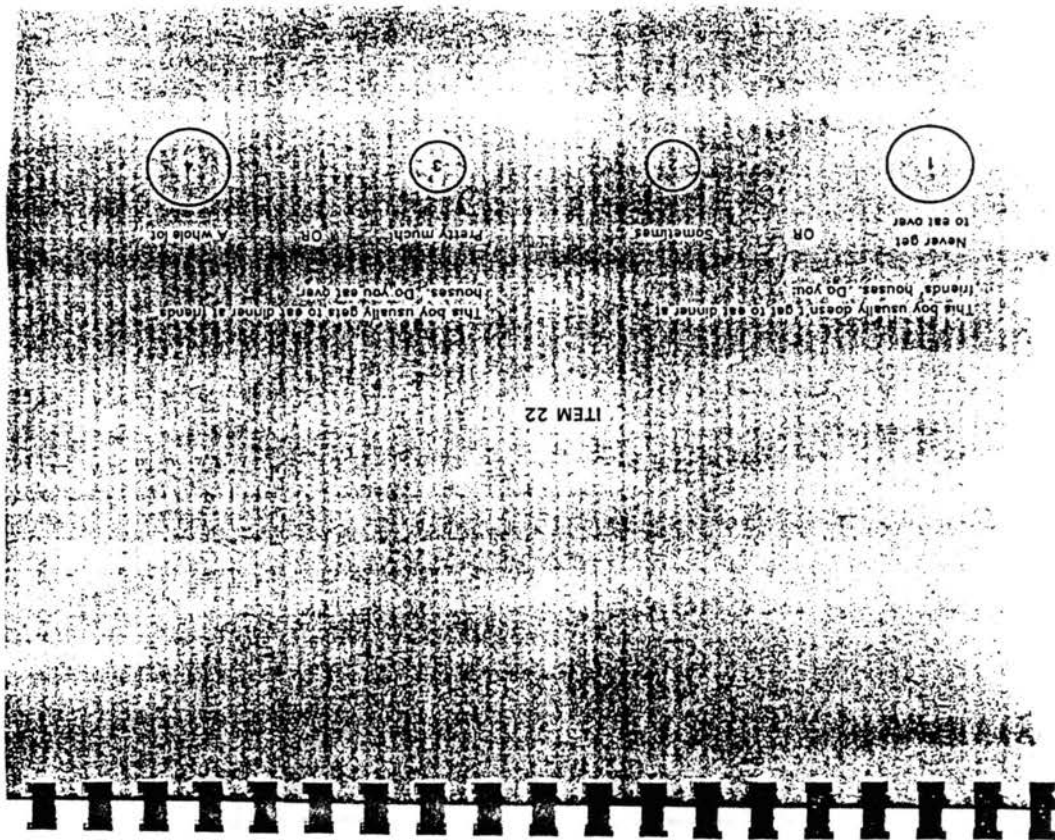
Really well

This boy has trouble remembering the first
letter of his name. Do you:

This boy knows the first letter of his name. Do you
know it:

ITEM 21







Not hop
at all



Not too good

OR



Pretty good

OR

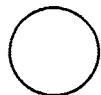
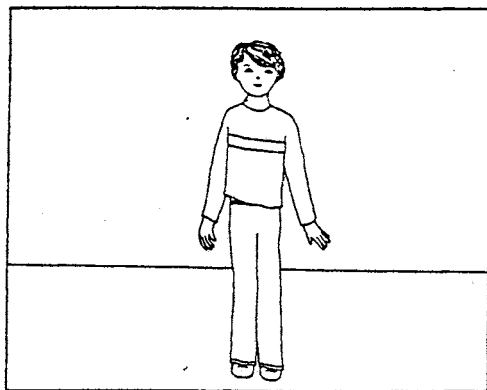


Really good
at hopping

Can you:
This boy has trouble hopping on one foot.

Are you:
This boy is pretty good at hopping on one foot.

ITEM 23



VITA

Saigeetha Jambunathan

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: PERCEPTION OF SELF-COMPETENCE AMONG FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN AS PREDICTED BY PARENTAL ATTITUDES ABOUT CHILDREARING AND GENDER

Major Field: Human Environmental Sciences

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Bangalore, India, on July 23, 1969. The daughter of Mrs. Malini Jambunathan and Mr. S. Jambunathan

Education: Graduated from Vana Vani Higher Secondary High School, Madras, India in May 1987. Received Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from the University of Madras in May 1990. Also received a Masters Degree in Human Development and Family Dynamics from the University of Madras in May 1992. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Child Development at the Oklahoma State University in July, 1996.

Experience: Has extensive teaching, research, and service experience. Has taught several undergraduate classes, and been a part of several ongoing research projects. Currently involved in helping the public schools mainstream the mentally challenged children.

Professional Memberships: American Educational Research Association
Kappa Omicron Nu
Society for Research in Child Development