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EFFECTS OF THE STEP PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM ON
PARENTING STYLES AND REPORTED CHILD BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Three groups of parents were given a nine week parent education course using Dinkmeyer and McKay's Systematic Training for Effective Parenting. Three control groups were given no training. Pretest and posttest data were obtained from all six groups to test the hypotheses: Training with the STEP program will change parent attitudes toward a less authoritarian parenting style, and these changes will result in fewer problems reported by the parents in child behavior. Using Ernhart and Loevinger's Authoritarian Ideology Scale no significant differences in authoritarianism were found after training [$F(1,5) = 2.45, p = .123$]. Using McKay's Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale significant differences were found [$F(1,5) = 7.41, p = .009$]. Implications for parent education are discussed.

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Introduction

Social structures and family patterns have been undergoing steady change in the past century in the United States. The two wars have had a disturbing impact on social and family relationships. Industrialization has brought radical changes in our society, both in the function of the family within society and in the function of each family member within the family unit (Anthony & Koupernik, 1970; Talbot, 1976). Also, the increasing proximity of the nations of the world to each other through advanced communication techniques and space age travel has made cooperation among nations not only an economic necessity, but also a necessary strategy for survival. Dreikurs and Soltz (1964) believe that we are beginning to see democracy as "not just a political ideal, but a way of life" (p. 7), and they note the effects of this change on western culture, on all interpersonal relationships and especially on family life.

The family today is set in the midst of this changing social environment, having difficulty acquiring the skills to survive in the democratic social culture of the community, of schools, of nations and of the world. Parents too often employ methods of parenting which were appropriate in the agrarian, hierarchy-structured family and community life of our forebearers where each adult and each child knew his place, his function and his value to the other members of his family (Talbot, 1976).

There is evidence that these methods do not produce children who can function well in today's society. There is also evidence that parents can be trained to use methods more appropriate to today's democratic society.

The Nature of Authoritarian and Democratic Personality and Parenting

In a review of the copious literature concerning the authoritarian personality and authoritarian parenting, the democratic personality and democratic parenting, authors have been vague and assumptive in their use of these four terms; however, they have been quite descriptive. Presented below is a summary of the descriptions of these terms given by other authors and researchers, extrapolating from them summary definitions which will define the terms for use in this particular research project.

Authoritarian personality. Adorno, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) in their classic study of the authoritarian personality, describe this type of person as one who holds rigidly to conventional middle-class values and submits uncritically to society's officials while rejecting those who are critical of conventional values and of society's structure. The authoritarian personality is concerned with power and status, avoiding subjective, creative, imaginative thinking both in self and others.

Rokeach (1960) states that the primary motive of the authoritarian personality is the need to "defend against threat" (p. 70) with a closed belief-disbelief system in which others are accepted or rejected "because they agree or disagree with one's own disbelief system" (p. 77). He also cites a number of investigators who find that people

high in ethnic prejudice and/or authoritarianism are "more rigid in their problem solving behavior, more concrete in their thinking, and more narrow in their grasp of a particular subject; they also have a greater tendency to premature closure in their perceptual process, and a greater tendency to be intolerant of ambiguity" (p. 16).

Scodel and Mussen (1953) describe authoritarian personalities as "rigid, extrceptive, repressed, conforming, stereotypical in their thinking" (p. 181). Kates and Diab (1955), on the other hand, reiterate some of the above descriptions and also describe the authoritarian person as having "contempt for mankind" (p. 13).

Ernhart and Loevinger (1969) in their monograph, Authoritarian Family Ideology, describe the authoritarian personality as "characterized by rigidity, distrust, conformity, stereotypy, worship of the past, and a hierarchical conception of human relations." They further add, "To the authoritarian, all individuals (and above them, God, fate, destiny, etc.) can be placed in a pecking order. Those more powerful are to be submitted to, those less so are to be used and scorned" (p. 5).

Maslow (1943) states that authoritarians "consider the world a jungle and people wild animals." He goes on to say that these people "categorize all others as superior (to be feared, resented, bootlicked, admired) or inferior (to be scorned, humiliated, dominated" (p. 403). Maslow also ascribes the following characteristics to the authoritarian personality: (a) drive for power, (b) hostility, hatred, and prejudice, (c) judgment by external standards, (d) judgment by one's own

value scale only, (3) use of people, (f) sadistic-masochistic tendency, (g) inability to be satisfied, and (h) intrapsychic conflicts.

In this paper, a person who has a need for the security of receiving or administering external control and a need to reinforce social conventions and hierarchical schemes, who is concerned with power and status, who is occupied with concrete banal matters--i.e., trite, commonplace matters, and who has a need for stereopathy will be considered to be authoritarian.

Authoritarian parenting. Of the literature surveyed, Ernhart and Loevinger's monograph (1969) provides the most descriptive summary of the dynamics of an authoritarian family. Their summary is taken from Schaffner's (1948) description of the patriarchal German family, which they consider to be the prototype of the authoritarian family. The father is at the top of the hierarchy. His duty is "to be a good provider, to be strict and justly punitive, to guide the children's education, and to set an example of manliness, industry, and consistency" (p. 7). Warmth to wife and children is considered a sign of weakness. The wife honors and fears her husband, and is passive and dependent on him. Her status is derived from him and from her domestic attainments. The duties of the children are to honor and fear their father, and to love their mother due to her self-sacrificing for them and her genuine affection for each family member. A child must learn "orderliness, industry, self-control, submission to authority, and the role appropriate to his sex." Further, a child "may vent his hostility under his [the father's] oppressive discipline upon younger siblings, servants, pets" (p. 7).

In general, Ernhart and Loevinger describe authoritarian parenting as enforcing a family hierarchical system in which the father, then mother, then children in order of age are ranked with respect demanded by all higher ranked members from all those lower in the scale. Parents may intrude in the lives of their children at will. Stereotyping and banal interactions are the tendency.

Elder (1965) describes a continuum in which autocratic parenting is at one end and democratic parenting at the other. The criteria for placement along the continuum are the degree of the children's participation in decision-making and the amount of consideration given to the ideas and opinions of the children. Elder (1962) had earlier divided family structures into seven types of interactions. A combination of two of his classes--autocratic parenting, in which children may not assert views or make choices, and authoritarian parenting, in which children may contribute ideas but make no choices--is considered in this paper to be authoritarian parenting.

In this study authoritarian parenting will be defined as that type of parenting in which a hierarchical family system is imposed by the parents. Order and control are enforced externally from the top of the hierarchy downward and decisions are made at the top of the hierarchy and imposed upon those below. Infractions of rules are met with punishments, and common controllers are the use of guilt and shame and the stressing of respect and duty.

Democratic personality. In collecting descriptions or definitions of the democratic personality and of democratic parenting, a great deal of confusion is found to exist between authors and researchers. Some

authors describe non-authoritarians in ways that seem to match other descriptions of democratic personalities, while others describe non-authoritarians in ways that fit more laissez-faire types of relationships. It is obviously incorrect to assume that the absence of authoritarianism will be democracy. We can, with Elder (1965), place authoritarianism on a continuum with democracy on the opposite pole. While the absence of authoritarian characteristics does not guarantee the presence of democratic characteristics, the opposites to the characteristics which describe authoritarianism do seem to define democracy. For example, Maslow (1943) describes the democratic person as one who believes in the current prevalence of love, goodness, kindness and cooperation. This person respects others as different, not as better or worse than self or others. These descriptions are directly opposite to his description of the authoritarian personality quoted above. Likewise, Scodel and Mussen (1953) seem to be describing the democratic personality when they talk about the "non-authoritarian" and they characterize that person as "flexible, intrceptive, having greater capacity for intense interpersonal relationships" (p. 181) than the authoritarian. Also, Rokeach's (1960) description of the "open mind" seems to make it possible to interchange his "open pole" terminology with the "democratic pole" understanding presented here. In fact, the clearer terminology here is "open mind" versus "closed mind," "open pole" versus "closed pole," and "authoritarian" versus "democracy" continuum. Rokeach goes on to state that with the "open mind" the need to know outweighs the need to defend against threat, and that there is a decreasing need to rely on authority as the continuum is

traced toward the open pole. A person low in authoritarianism has open belief systems and uses authority as a check system rather than as a control.

In this study, the democratic personality will be defined as one who is flexible and non-rigid in belief systems, one who sees others as unique and worthy of respect independent of any rigid judgmental system, and one who has a low need to defend against threat or to impose his or her will on others.

Democratic parenting. According to Elder's continuum again, the more democratic the parenting the greater the degree of participation of all the family in decision making, and the greater the amount of consideration given to ideas and opinions of each family member. Bernhardt (1970) defines democratic family life in nearly identical terms, adding, "The individual must have plenty of opportunities to learn to choose and to experience the results of such choices" (p. 22). He talks synonymously of the "democratic pattern," the "equality family," and the "companionship family" (p. 23).

Baldwin (1948) describes democracy in the family system as "characterized by a high level of verbal content between parent and child, appearing as consultation about policy decisions, as explanation of reasons for the family rules, and as verbal explanation in response to the child's curiosity. Accompanying this flow of verbal communication is a lack of arbitrariness about decisions and a general permissiveness plus restraint on emotionality" (p. 129). Earlier, Baldwin, in conjunction with Kalhorn and Breese (1945), had listed these characteristics of the democratic family system: justification of policy,

democracy of policy, non-coerciveness to suggestion, readiness of explanation, direction of criticism, clarity of policy, understanding of child, and non-restrictiveness of regulations.

According to Dinkmeyer and McKay (1973, 1976), democratic parenting involves social equality and mutual respect, and an opportunity for each family member to make choices and to be responsible for the results of the choices. In this study, democratic parenting means parenting which respects each family member as unique and individual, which respects each member's rights and ideas, and which gives each member the opportunity to make decisions and to be responsible for the results of the decisions. The parent education program utilized in the present investigation was designed by Dinkmeyer and McKay (1976).

Studies of the Results of Authoritarian and Democratic Parenting

A survey of outcome studies on the results of authoritarian versus democratic parenting seems in every case to support Karl Bernhardt's (1970) statement: "We are sure that the equality relationship on the democratic pattern provides the best atmosphere for the training of the child" (p. 22). Bernhardt's work spanned the central third of the twentieth century and his published works reiterate this theme. The edited version of his collected works bears the subtitle, "Unchanging Values in a Changing World," which seems to be borne out by the results of studies spanning his publishing era to the present time.

As a result of her extensive experience in working with troubled families, Virginia Satir (1972), too, believes that an open family system is needed to foster change, to offer choices, and to successfully meet reality. In addition, Thomas Gordon (1970), creator of the

Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) system, states that "the stubborn persistence of the idea that parents must and should use authority in dealing with children has, in my opinion, prevented for centuries any significant change or improvement in the way children are raised by parents and treated by adults" (p. 164). Studies of children of all ages and their parents show that democratic parenting styles produce children with fewer adjustment problems and with fewer problems in the home regardless of the age of the child. Studies of children of pre-school, elementary, and high school age as well as longitudinal studies support this finding.

Longitudinal study. In their study of the 150 children registered with the Fels Research Institute, Baldwin, Kalhorn and Breese (1945) identified three syndromes which, in various combinations, definitively divide parents into well developed clusters. Seventy-five percent of the parents studied fell into seven combinations of these three clusters in which they measured low, high, or too inconsistent to categorize on each scale: (a) democracy in the home, (b) acceptance of the child, and (c) indulgence. Children from pre-natal days through 14 years were studied at the Institute by home visits every six months. Data were examined from five home visits spanning two and one-half years. A highly trained home visitor completed Champney rating scales covering 30 behavioral and attitudinal variables after each visit. Correlations between variables from visit to visit ranged from .51 to .90, with correlations remaining unusually stable and with lowest correlations between first and fifth visits. Ratings were initially standardized and were re-standardized every six months for each

variable, with a sigma index position computed for each child, and a profile chart plotted. The Harvard Growth Study Technique was used to analyze syndromes, and data from each parent group were tabulated and analyzed. Validity was confirmed by reasonable interrelations between variables, by the separation of parents into groups which respond fairly uniformly with each group, and by the general uniformity of responses of the children of parents within these groups.

Analyzing the collected data, and studying various family case studies in the research population, the authors conclude that "the democratic group would be evaluated as better than average on almost any aspect of parenthood" (p. 44). They find the children of democratic parents to be emotionally secure, serene, unexcitable, and significantly high in the variables of originality, playfulness, patience, curiosity and fancifulness. They also find the democratically parented child "has a close attachment to his parents and is able to adjust well to his teacher" (p. 67).

Studies of pre-school and kindergarten children. In preparation for her own study reported below Marian Radke (1969) surveyed studies in the 1930s and 1940s on the relationship of parental authority to children's behavior and attitudes. In general, these studies found that children who were allowed to profit from the results of their behaviors were better adjusted, more self-reliant, and perceived as more attractive by peers and adults than children who are reared by more autocratic methods. Even though they were completed over four decades ago, two of these studies cited are valuable for further

perusal due to the thoroughness of research and the pertinence of the findings for present times.

One of these studies (Hattwick, 1936) analyzed data from 335 nursery school children in 18 schools who were one year and eleven months to five years and eight months of age. The children were of various ethnic backgrounds (146 indigenous white Americans, 100 black Americans, and 89 of foreign extract). The author and co-researchers devised rating sheets to gather information about the child's behavior and attitudes, and the parental atmosphere of the home. Teachers completed rating forms after parent conferences and home visits. Reliability coefficients of .73 to .96 were obtained in repeated teacher ratings one week apart, and coefficients of .80 to 1.00 were obtained on repeated home rating sheets one week apart. Validity computed by an inter-rater comparison, ranged from .77 to .98. Significant relationships between rated items led the author to conclude that the development of children can be furthered by the fostering of self-reliance and by the encouragement of definite responsibilities in the home.

Another study surveyed by Radke and reviewed also in preparation for this present research was done at two Pennsylvania State College nurseries by Ayer and Bernreuter (1937) using 40 pre-school children. Three to seven raters completed four scales of the Merrill Palmer Personality Rating Sheets for each child. All mothers and as many fathers as possible were interviewed to determine disciplinary patterns. They responded to examples of child behavior problems and the examples of disciplinary methods on a scale of zero (never) to four (all of the time). Types of discipline were divided arbitrarily into eight

categories. Biserial coefficients of correlations were computed to determine the relationship between the personality rating scores and the type of discipline. One of the 16 concluding statements made by the authors at the completion of the study is that attractiveness of personality and independence of adult affection or attention are fostered when children are allowed to profit by the natural results of their acts rather than the use of other--by earlier definition in this paper--more autocratic forms of discipline.

In a more comprehensive and in-depth study than any of the studies she had surveyed, Marian Radke (1969) gathered data on 43 children and their parents at the University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare. A questionnaire-interview given to parents of these children covered eight areas of discipline, amount and areas of parental supervision, and parent-child rapport. The first half of the interview covered the parents' recollections of the ways they were parented as children, while the second half covered the parenting of the children being studied, with a subjective comparison of the two parts of the interview. Also, interviews were held with the children and data were taken from questionnaires, projective cards, observations while the children were playing with dolls, free associations, and three experimental compliance situations. In addition, rating blanks on personal and social behaviors were completed by teachers for each child. Reliability coefficients of .48 (SE+ .04) on nursery school and .60 (SE+ .03) on kindergarten children were determined by correlating teacher rating scores with each other. The Lindquist t-test was applied to behavior variables in relationship to democratic or

autocratic home atmosphere, and significant F's were obtained on 30 variables. These results led the authors to conclude that "children whose homes were characterized by a relatively autocratic atmosphere were rated by pre-school teachers as more unpopular with the other children, more inconsiderate of others, more emotionally unstable, more uninhibited and daring, less rivalrous, and more insensitive to praise or blame than children from the more democratic atmospheres" (p. 76).

In addition to his earlier longitudinal study with Kalhorn and Breese (1945), Baldwin (1948) researched the behavior of 67 four-year-olds (at the Fels Research Institute of Antioch College in Ohio) who attended nursery school for one month each year and during that time were rated on a battery of child behavior variables. Again, the children were observed in free play at the school, and a highly-trained home visitor observed the children in their homes. Child behavior variables were correlated and syndromes analyzed where correlations were above .50. Variables in the Parent Behavior Rating Scales were factor analyzed, and three particular interrelated variables--democracy, control and activity level--were factored out. These three factors were each related to the child behavior variables. Baldwin found that each factor and combinations of these three factors decrease or increase certain behavior variables. The results of his analysis of the data collected led Baldwin to conclude that parents who are undemocratic and strict in methods of discipline produce children who are likely to be quiet, well-behaved, unaggressive, and low in curiosity, originality, and imagination. He concluded that "democracy . . . seems generally to raise the activity level, and to produce an aggressive,

fearless, planful child, likely to be a leader in the nursery school situation" (p. 129).

Studies of older children. Although Piaget's landmark studies in regards to The Moral Judgment of the Child (1965) were not in any way aimed toward elucidating the democratic or authoritarian relationships of children and their parents, or children and their peers, his findings and conclusions provide pertinent philosophical information for this study. As Piaget studied children and their games, he found that when there is no superior pressure, children by the age of 11-13 are able to work out democratic procedures through individual internal processes. He finds that children are able to develop internal respect for law and order when they are autonomous with three results: (a) obedience becomes spontaneous, (b) the child understands the reasoning behind the law and will not cheat, and (c) children can distinguish constitutional innovation from lawless whims.

Several studies involving parents of problem children have been reported. Shoben's (1949) study using a parent attitude scale found that mothers of children with problems requiring clinical or legal intervention were more likely to agree with statements approving strict discipline than parents of non-problem children. In his review of the literature in connection with this study, Shoben concludes that:

(a) Childhood personality and behavior problems seem to be related to parental policies and their manner of execution. (b) Over protection, rejection, repressiveness, severity, domination, and undue submissiveness seem to be the parental traits which are associated with children's difficulties. (c) The provision of a home in which the child can grow up feeling emotionally secure seems to be the basic requisite in the socialization of the child. (pp. 105-106)

Mark's (1960) study of mothers of schizophrenic children found them to be restrictive in their ideas of controlling children, to believe in little freedom of choice, to frown upon sexual expression, and to withhold sexual information. Also, in a study of a selected University of Oklahoma students, Kates and Diab (1955) used four well established scales and sound statistical principles to find that college students "high in authoritarian ideology tend to hold attitudes on parent-child relationships similar to those held by the parents of problem children" (p. 14) as measured by Shoben (1949) and Radke (1969).

Studies of adolescents. Two extensive studies of adolescents (Elder, 1962; Stone & Landis, 1953) as well as other studies of high school and college students (Anderson, 1946; Miles, 1945; Kates & Diab, 1955) produce findings to the effect that democratic parenting produces fewer problems in the parent-child relationship, children who are better adjusted, and who are leaders.

An extensive and carefully worked out study by Stone and Landis (1963) of 4,310 high school seniors representative of all high school seniors in the state of Washington was undertaken to measure family authoritarianism in relationship to residential and occupational groups, and to relate family authority patterns to teenage adjustment problems. These researchers grouped the students into three categories according to their Likert scale responses to six questions about parental interactions chosen by the authors from 12 authoritarian or democratic questions selected by the Sociology Faculty of the State College of Washington. The questions were scaled, dichotomized, and the six questions with the fewest errors were used. Three groups were

formed: democratic, intermediate, and authoritarian. A coefficient of reproductibility of .9082 was achieved for boys and of .9363 for girls, and content was checked for validity both by the opinions of the Sociology Faculty, and by correlation with five other questions developed as a cross-check. A chi-square significant difference was found ($p < .01$). After students had been categorized according to the reported parental interactions from response to the questions, Likert type questionnaires covering a number of areas of parent-child interactions and attitudes were given to the seniors. Results pertinent to this study include such findings as:

- 1) Three times as many youngsters from authoritarian than democratic families checked problems of "quarrelling in the family" and "getting along with my parents."
- 2) Teenagers from democratic families have fewer adjustment problems than those from authoritarian families.
- 3) More seniors from authoritarian families were anxious to leave home than from democratic families.
- 4) Children of democratic families more often wanted to be like their parents when they grow up, and more of these children wanted to choose their parents' occupations.

Elder (1962) at the University of North Carolina studied the results of the Stone and Landis research reported above and became interested in the specific area of the typology of the relative involvement of parents and adolescents in deciding rules of behavior for youth. Since independence of parental control is a major developmental task of adolescence, he decided that a study of variations in type of control and the results of each type would be of value in learning about child-rearing. Elder's population, 7,400 seventh to twelfth grade adolescents, was an even larger population than the Stone

and Landis study, and he divided the population into seven groups rather than three. Elder conducted extensive interviews with a pilot group of ninth and twelfth grade students from public and parochial schools in Ohio and North Carolina who were from white, unbroken homes, and who represented the extreme poles of social adjustment and social class status as measured by school special placement standards and the U.S. Census occupational grouping of the parents. He found that seven types of parent-adolescent interdependence emerged:

- 1) Autocratic--in which the parents do not allow the youth to express views, assert leadership, or take initiative in self-government,
- 2) Authoritarian--in which parents allow the child to contribute to problem-solving, but in which the parents make all of the decisions,
- 3) Democratic--in which the youth contributes to the discussion of behavior and may make decisions, but the final decision is formulated by the parents or meets their approval,
- 4) Egalitarian--in which parents and youth are involved in an equal degree in decision making,
- 5) Permissive--in which the youth make more of the input in decision making than the parents do,
- 6) Laissez-faire--in which the youth can yield to or disregard parental wishes at will, and
- 7) Ignoring--in which the parents do not attempt to direct or influence the behavior of the youth.

Elder does not give his rationale for choosing these particular types of students for interviewing, nor does he specify his methods of categorizing the responses into the seven types.

In his study Elder measured each type of parenting by two seven-response category items and also classified each child by occupational class, again by the U.S. Census categories. Elder ran a large number

of correlations of parental control groupings to demographic data and to questions about parent-child attitudes and interactions in various areas. He found that one-third of the subjects reported democratic child rearing structures. Data pertinent to this study include results which show that 85% of the subjects in the democratic category consider their parents fair, while 59% in the authoritarian and 55% in the autocratic groups consider their mothers fair, and 75% in the authoritarian and 50% in the autocratic consider their fathers fair. Feelings of rejection are reported far less frequently in the democratic group (11% mothers, 8% fathers) than in the authoritarian group (25% mothers, 18% fathers) or in the autocratic group (42% mothers, 40% fathers). As expected, feelings of rejection run quite high in the laissez-faire and ignoring groups (57% mothers, 58% fathers). This follows Baldwin, Kalhorn, and Breese's (1945) observation that parents may reject children by tight autocratic control, or by ignoring them.

Elder's study is valuable for his description of types of parental interactions and the relationship of demographic variables to parental styles. His results are not presented with the statistical precision of the Stone and Landis study; however, his percentage reports can certainly point to general patterns which have heuristic value, and the wide scope of the study has enriched the general knowledge in the areas which he addressed.

In addition to these two extensive studies of adolescents, Anderson (1946) reports on several studies, one of which is an unpublished dissertation of Katherine A. Miles on a study of the 500 high school students in a small town. Miles used five criteria to divide students

into six leadership styles from successful leaders to outcasts. Thirty-eight boys and 32 girls for whom the criteria were most definitive were given the Bell Adjustment Inventory and the Rundquist-Sletto Survey of Opinions, and the parents were interviewed separately. Statistical methods used are not reported by Anderson and for this reason a clear evaluation of the study cannot be given. However, the reported results seem valuable, and worthy of consideration here. Anderson reports that Miles found parents of successful leaders to be less protective, to not shield their children from responsibilities, to be less controlling, to encourage decision-making and risk-taking, and to give respect to the child's personality, rights, and opinions. According to Miles then, democratic parents produce adolescents who are leaders.

Variables that Relate to and/or Determine
Authoritarian and Democratic Personalities

In general, the literature shows that democratic parenting is related positively to educational level and I.Q., to economic level, and to level of emotional maturity. In a report of two studies, one in Turin, Italy, and one in Washington, D.C., Melvin Kohn (1977) found that authoritarianism and egalitarianism are related to social class, and that parent-child relationships can be structured along support-constraint axes. He found that middle class parents are "oriented toward maintaining order and obedience" (p. 109). He also cites other studies in Taiwan, France, Great Britain, Ireland, and the United States which confirm his own findings. He further cites a 1972 study

of Simpson that found an inverse relationship between authoritarianism and level of education.

Elder's 1962 study finds autocratically structured family relationships most common in parents of low socioeconomic levels who are Catholic and who have large families, and who have less education. Baldwin, Kalhorn, and Breese also found a higher level of education in democratic families as well as a positive relationship between I.Q. and democratic parenting. They found these variables related to the democratic personality: originality, playfulness, patience, curiosity, and fancifulness as well as sociability, passivity, and good humor.

Several researchers have considered intrapsychic variables in addition to demographic variables. Rokeach (1960) has equated "ideological dogmatism" with "an authoritarian outlook on life" (p. 4) and he shows high correlations in groups tested throughout the United States and England between dogmatism and anxiety. Baldwin, Kalhorn and Breese (1945) warn that the attempt to practice parenting may be disastrous for those parents who do not have the level of emotional maturity or the bent of personality needed to espouse these principles. They find in looking at the case studies connected with their research that level of emotional maturity is a predetermining variable of democratic parenting.

Other authors find that authoritarian parents rear children who become authoritarian also. Adorno (1950) reports that children reared with authoritarian parents and harsh discipline copy these patterns, and Talbot (1976) reports in a summary of the results of an extensive Harvard Interfaculty Seminar on the problems of children growing up in

America, that 90% of the parenting problems are repeated problems of the parenting styles of their parents. Bronson (1959) studied patterns of authority and affection in two generations and found that parents actually behave the way they describe their own parents' behavior, and Radke (1969) reports that there is some tendency (.33) for parents to use disciplinary measures similar to those received in childhood.

Trends

In view of the positive outcomes reported by various studies on the effects of democratic parenting, we may be encouraged by reports of trends in the United States as well as in a number of other countries toward more democratic parenting. Over the past 130 years, methods of child rearing in America have been undergoing steady change. At the time of the Civil War, parents were still led by the urging of their Puritan forebearers not to "spare the rod and spoil the child." However, by the close of the Civil War voices began to be heard attacking the goal of "breaking the child's will" and advocating a decrease in the use of corporal punishment (Miller & Swanson, 1958, p. 6). Newly established women's magazines began to advocate a more reasonable method of shaping the behavior of children. May Belle suggests in the June issue of the first year's publication of The Ladies Home Journal (1884) that children are often punished when the parents themselves need a "dressing down" (p. 2) and Sister Theresa in the same issue comments on the sad results which often occur as a result of parents' too rigid discipline.

Miller and Swanson report that by the turn of the century "arbitrary use of parental authority drew less and less support" (p. 6).

They comment on the era of the 1920s and the 1930s as a time when many parents began to have as their goal training their children to be independent. By 1945 child-rearing experts began to advocate letting a child set his own stages of development, encouraging self-control and the teaching of active and independent behavior. Edith Grotberg's survey of 200 Years of Children (n.d.) for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare states that

the overriding shift in attitudes toward children is reflected in a change in the status of children in society. This change essentially is a shift from children's subordinate and incidental position in the family to one of greater equality and with individual needs and rights. (p. 405)

In preparing for this study on Class and Conformity, Kohn (1977) surveyed related studies to find that changes in child-rearing practices have occurred during this century. During the mid-part of this century middle class parents became more permissive than working class parents, although this had not been true at the turn of the century. He believes that parents began to view childbearing as problematic and a matter for consideration and as a result began to look for more ways to achieve parenting goals.

Elder (1962) found in his study of adolescents that the democratic parenting structure is the most commonly reported type of parenting style of the seven styles which he studied. He later (1965) surveyed the literature of five different countries to find a decline in autocratic parenting. He also surveyed the literature in this country from 1935 to 1965 to conclude that democratic ideology has become more widespread, especially in the middle class. Also, Anthony and Koupernik (1970) report "radical changes in family structure and process"

(p. xv). They see one of the basic changes as a shift "from the consanguineous, authoritarian, patriarchal, multifunctional, and rural family to a smaller, conjugal, democratic, and urban family type" (p. xx).

Although Radke (1969) found in her study of the relationship of parental authority and child behavior that parents tend to use disciplinary measures similar to those which they remember their parents having used, the changes in style occur toward a decrease in authoritarian parenting and toward an increase in the egalitarian treatment of children. On the autocratic-democratic scale a significant difference ($t = 5.37, p < .01$) toward democratic behavior had occurred. In parent-child rapport a significant difference ($t = 4.59, p < .01$) toward improved rapport was found, and in relative responsibility for discipline ($t = 1.89, p < .01$ to $.05$) a shift from maternal responsibility toward equal parental responsibility was found. Radke also found changes in types of punishment between the two generations. Spanking was less frequent ($CR 3.44$) and isolation ($CR 6.95$) was more frequent. Shaming and frightening the child were less frequent ($CR 6.95, 6.33$), and child control by temper tantrums ($CR 5.50$) was less effective. Radke concluded that the parents of her research subjects were moving away from methods of discipline of their parents toward principles taught by child psychologists showing greater respect for the child, and toward democratic, reasonable, less emotional discipline.

Parent Training

In spite of the trends mentioned above, and in spite of the fact that more parents than ever before are conscious of their need to

parent skillfully and responsibly (Kohn, 1977), the family is in trouble. This is evidenced by the rapidly increasing incidents of child abuse in the United States (Martin & Klaus, 1978), increases in crimes committed by children and adolescents (Talbot, 1976), and the waiting lists of children and families to be seen at local Mental Health Centers.* Although writing over 40 years ago, Stodgill (1936) cited a difficulty which parents had in furthering their parenting ideas. He measured attitudes of parents toward parent control and reported that although parents said that they believed children should have freedom and be self-controlling, they insisted on parental control so that freedom and self-control were impossible. Also, parents and other adults approved of introverted behavior exhibited by children, while disapproving of extroverted behavior. Bronfenbrenner (1970) reported on changes in child-rearing patterns since World War II and made a plea for renewed opportunities for parents to be more effective in their relationships with their children: "There is a substantial body of data demonstrating the powerful effect of parents as models in shaping the behavior and psychological development of the child" (p. 139). Since many parents may not know how to effect the democratic parenting principles which they are beginning to espouse, and since many parents need to learn to model desired behavior, and since the family is very often in trouble, what is the answer?

Several researchers and authors offer solutions. Radke (1969) states, "Retraining in procedures per se, must be the goal of parent

*In Orlando, Florida area Mental Health Centers, waiting time ranges from one week to three months.

educators For the parent educator the results point to a need for education of parents in the authority-discipline area of home relationships" (p. 106). Maslow (1943) states that the authoritarian personality can definitely be changed, and Davis and McGinnis (1926) found in a review of three studies that parent attitudes can indeed be modified through training, and furthermore that "changes of opinion in groups instructed by professionally trained leaders were in the direction of expert opinion" (p. 86).

A number of researchers have found that the use of the Gordon (1970) P.E.T. system produces positive changes in parenting. Stern (1971) found a significant difference on the authoritarian variable between those who participated in Parent Effectiveness Training and those who did not. He also found that parent attitudes toward control change in a more democratic direction, and that children of parents who undergo this training gain in self-esteem. Knowles' 1974 study of P.E.T. trained parents found a significant reduction in authoritarianism in parental interactions. Schmitz (1975) found a significant difference on the authoritarianism, dogmatism, and close-mindedness variables in an analysis of covariance using Rokeach's Dogmatism scale and the Hereford Parent Attitude Scale for pre- and posttesting with groups who had participated in training and control groups who had not. Sister Bernadette Mee (1977) studied 194 middle class Catholic, caucasian men and women in Washington, D.C. She divided this population into six control groups who did not receive training, and six groups who received P.E.T. training. Six variables were measured—five therapeutic counseling variables and the authoritarian variable since

Gordon teaches the resolution of conflict without the use of parental authority. Analysis of covariance was computed of pre- and posttest scores on the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory, the Blaine-Porter Parent Acceptance Scale, and the Cross and Kawash Parental Attitude Research Instrument. Substantial gains ($p < .001$) were found in all six variables: empathetic understanding, personal regard, unconditionality of regard, congruence, acceptance, and the decrease of authoritarianism.

In 1976, Dinkmeyer and McKay developed a parent education system called Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP). (See Appendix A for a summary of the program.) This system was built on the principles of democratic parenting which the authors are convinced is the most effective method of child rearing and which they developed in large part as a result of the philosophical influence of their mentor, Rudolf Dreikurs. The system has gained recent widespread use in mental health centers, with school guidance counselors, with public agencies which deal with parents and children, and in churches and community centers. Margaret Reddy (1976) reviewed the program in The School Counselor and reported that though she had taught many parent education courses, "I find the STEP program to be one of the best sources available today for a comprehensive approach to parent education" (p. 76).

Since the STEP program is a relatively recent development, STEP research is not as abundant as research on the P.E.T. system. However, Losoncy (1978) studied two types of parent education, compared them to a no-treatment group and found significant gains in empathy and self-concept of mothers. There was no difference between the Microparenting

and the STEP program, yet both differed significantly from the control group. McKay (1976) himself made an assessment of the STEP program, finding that mothers who participated in the STEP program perceived their Target Child's behavior more positively than mothers in the control group. McKay looked at the two variables of mother's perception of the child's behavior, and the verbal behavior of the mother. He used the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale which he developed, and the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise developed by Goula and McKay. Twenty-six volunteer mothers from a Tucson upper-class area were randomly assigned to either the STEP group or the control group, and analysis of covariance was computed on pre- and posttest data. Compared with the control group the STEP system is more effective ($p < .05$) in changing the mother's perception of their child's behavior. No significant difference was found in number of facilitative or non-facilitative verbal statements of mothers toward children.

A number of studies have been undertaken to find that the P.E.T. system of parent education does indeed change parents toward more democratic parenting. This researcher has uncovered no studies to the effect that the STEP program produces change in parenting toward more democratic parenting--the goal of the system. The purpose of this study, then, is to test the following hypotheses:

- 1) Training with a STEP program will result in less authoritarian parent attitudes and parenting style.
- 2) STEP training will result in a significantly more positive parent perception of child problem behaviors.

Method

Subjects

Six groups of parents were tested on a pretest, posttest basis:

1. Parents who applied for or were referred for services at the Seminole County Mental Health Center, Altamonte Springs, Florida, and who completed the STEP program there led by a staff psychologist beginning April 7, 1980.
2. A no-treatment control group made up of parents on the waiting list of the above facility who were planning to attend the parent education classes when space became available, or when other details such as schedule, babysitting and the like could be arranged.
3. Parents who completed the STEP course led by this researcher at the Tusawilla Presbyterian Church, Maitland, Florida, beginning April 13, 1980.
4. A no-treatment control group composed of parents who attend the Tusawilla Presbyterian Church and who did not attend the classes, chosen randomly, and asked to participate in the study.
5. Parents who completed the STEP course taught at Lawton Elementary School, Oviedo, Florida, led by the guidance counselor and a special education teacher, beginning April 14, 1980.
6. A no-treatment control group composed of parents of children who attend Lawton Elementary School, who did not attend the STEP classes, chosen randomly, and asked to participate in the study.

Although the April 7 STEP group at the Mental Health Center consisted of 14 parents, only five were present at both the initial and the final sessions, and these five completed pretest and posttest data. Group 2 consisted of 12 parents from the Mental Health Center waiting list who were willing to participate in the study. Of the 16 parents who began

the church STEP sessions, 13 completed the course and completed the pretest and posttest data, comprising Group 3. Group 4 consisted of 12 parents who completed the forms, and who did not attend the course. Data were obtained from 7 of the 10 parents who attended the school STEP course, comprising Group 5, and Group 6 contained 8 parents of Lawton school children who completed the data and had received no treatment. Thus, the experimental group was composed of Groups 1, 3 and 5, whereas Groups 2, 4 and 6 comprised the control group.

Tables 1 and 2 provide demographic information about these subjects including breakdowns by sex, age, number of children, age of children, income level and educational level. Although all of the original groups contained both males and females, final compilations resulted in two all female groups. The average age of parents in all groups was in the mid-thirties, and parents of all groups had an average of 1.6 to 2.6 children with the mental health and school experimental groups reporting the largest number. The school experimental and control groups reported the highest average ages of children, while the church experimental and control groups reported the lowest ages.

A fairly large discrepancy in income level was reported between the school experimental group and the two other experimental groups who reported more similar incomes, although all three experimental groups reported fairly comparable educational levels. Average income of all three control groups was higher than any of the experimental groups although educational level was considerably more varied.

Table 1
Description of Subjects

	<u>n</u>	Sex of Reporting Parent	Average Age of Parent		Average No. of Children	Average Age of Children
			Mean	<u>SD</u>		
Experimental Groups						
Mental Health	5	4F,1M	33.0	3.54	2.6	9.1
Church	13	13F	36.5	5.97	1.6	8.6
School	7	5F,2M	35.4	3.60	2.6	10.1
Control Groups						
Mental Health	12	10F,2M	33.2	4.70	2.0	8.9
Church	12	6F,6M	35.0	11.50	2.3	8.4
School	8	8F	34.3	5.20	1.9	9.3

Table 2
Education and Income of Subjects

	Average Income ^a of Family		Average Education ^b of Reporting Parent	
	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Experimental Groups				
Mental Health	15,600	8,600	13.6	2.2
Church	16,300	6,811	13.5	1.9
School	10,800	3,810	13.1	1.6
Control Groups				
Mental Health	17,700	6,520	12.5	1.5
Church	23,000	7,180	15.3	2.0
School	18,000	7,780	14.8	3.0

^aTo obtain a comparative income figure, the category "8,000 and under" was tabulated as 8,000, and "30,000 and above" as 30,000.

^bNumber of years of education was tabulated with high school as 12 years.

Materials

Parents who participated in the research were given a packet to complete containing a release form (see Appendix B), a form for demographic data, and two scales. Demographic data included place, date, last four digits of social security number for pretest, posttest matching, last four digits of spouse's social security number if that spouse was attending, age and sex of children, age and sex of respondent, income and education of the respondent (see Appendix C).

To test the first hypothesis, Ernhart and Loevinger's Authoritarian Family Ideology Scale (AFI) (see Appendix D) was given to the experimental groups before and after the nine week training period and to the control groups at the beginning of the study and nine weeks later. The AFI developed as a strong cluster in the Family Problem Scale (FPS) developed earlier by Loevinger and Sweet. The content of this cluster is

concerned with inclusive control of the child, usually by punitive or shaming methods, and by expectation of respect from the child. Anti-intracception, lack of toleration for inner life, is suggested by a number of items. The basic hierarchical family structure . . . is clearly present. (Ernhart & Loevinger, 1969, p. 9)

Researchers found this AFI cluster to have a Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 value high enough "to be considered well-established" (p. 10). The cluster was strengthened by adding further items, and deleting any item when its two highest corrected point-biserial r 's differed by less than .01, deleting any items which had less than .30 point-biserial r with the AFI and if its inclusion increased the correlation of Cluster AFI with any other cluster. At present the scale is a 41 item measure

which scores items which match authoritarian ideology (Ernhart & Loevinger, 1969). It is being used by permission of Claire Ernhart.

Respondents to the scale were asked to choose one of a pair of statements which were lettered "A" or "B," placing the letter of their preferred response on a space in front of the pair. One statement is authoritarian and the other non-authoritarian. Items were scored one point for each matched choice (authoritarian) and zero for each non-matched response. Total score was the number of authoritarian responses selected by that respondent. Therefore, the higher the score the stronger the authoritarian ideology.

Orval Johnson (1976) reported that several studies (which he did not identify) have yielded Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 reliability values of between .85 and .90 in the use of the AFI scale. The scale was originally standardized by the homogeneous keying of the responses of 939 women of varied races and educational levels. Johnson also reported that several yet unpublished scales (which he also failed to identify) have found the scale acceptable to males, and that sex differences were not a significant variable. He also found that evidence from all studies which he surveyed was consistent with the construct of authoritarianism. We assume that he was defining this construct when he described the instrument as containing "items which reflect belief in the hierarchical family organization, demand respect from children, the right of parents to intrude in the lives of their children, and a tendency to stereotypy and banality" (p. 742).

This instrument was selected for use in measuring the amount of authoritarianism present in the beliefs of parents before and after

STEP training due to the singleness of purpose of the instrument, the care which the constructors of the instrument took in its formation, and the reliability which it has shown as reported by the authors and by Johnson (1976).

To test the second hypothesis, the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale (APACBS) was given before and after STEP training to the experimental groups, and at the time of the beginning of the study and nine weeks later to the control groups. The scale is a "seven point, 32 item Likert-type interval scale developed [by McKay] . . . to assess parent's perception of typical child behaviors dealt with in STEP and other Adlerian-based programs" (McKay, 1976, p. ix) (see Appendix E). In the pilot study and during research on the APACBS, reliability tests were conducted by the author. During the pilot study, Cronbach's alpha test for internal consistency ranged from .90 to .91, and the Pearson r test for stability over time was .97. During the research project the Cronbach's alpha range was .81 to .89 and the Pearson r test was .83.

This test contains 32 items to which respondents circle a one to seven scale to the right of each item in which one is "always," and seven is "never." Some test items state desired positive behavior and some negative behavior. Items 2-5, 8-11, 20-23, 28, 30 and 32 which are negative were reversed to score. These scores were added to the given score of the remaining positive items for a total score. The higher the score the more positive the perception of the child's behavior.

McKay's use of the APACBS has been reported in the first section of this study. Other uses of the scale have not been found by this researcher. The scale is being selected due to the lack of availability of Parent-Child problem check lists, and due to the fact that the scale was constructed specifically to measure the changes hoped for by the STEP training. This researcher realizes both the advantages and the liabilities inherent in the use of a scale constructed for use in the measurement of specific behaviors discussed in the STEP program. While it will answer the question, "Are there fewer problems between parent and child in the areas discussed in the STEP program as perceived by the parent?" it leaves unanswered, "Does more democratic parenting result in less problematic perception of the children as seen by the parents in all the areas generally considered problematic by most parents?" or the question, "Does teaching democratic parenting in specific areas generalize to other areas as well?"

Procedures

With the experimental groups (1, 3, 5) each leader said in her own words the following statement at the beginning of the first session:

You are being asked to participate in a study on the effectiveness of the STEP program. I am going to pass out some packets containing a release form and a packet of questionnaires. If you are willing to help with this study, please sign the release form and spend a few minutes completing the forms in the stapled packet. Your replies will be confidential, and your name will be in no way connected to your answers. You will be asked to fill out these forms again at the end of the course. If you prefer not to participate, pass your forms back, as is, with the others. Thank you for your help.

The packet of forms was again given out at the close of the last session with an appropriate statement of the same nature as the above statement.

Control group data was obtained from the three separate group locations. With group two, people on the Mental Health Center waiting lists were contacted by mail with a request that they fill out the forms and return them either by mail or in person (see Appendix F for cover letter). Nine weeks later the packet of forms were again sent with another cover letter making the same request (see Appendix G). With group four, parents of children attending Lawton Elementary School and who did not elect to attend the STEP program were selected at random by the guidance counselor. She contacted these parents by telephone with a statement asking for their help in the study. A release form and a packet were sent to the parent by the school child and were returned to the counselor by the child during the first week of the STEP course. Likewise, a packet was sent to the parent by the child during the final week of the course, and was returned by the child to the counselor. With group six, parents in the Tuskawilla Church who did not elect to attend the STEP course were selected at random by this researcher. They were contacted by telephone with a statement asking for their help in this study. A release form and a packet were sent by mail with a return envelope during the first week of the course. No cover letter was used. A packet with a return envelope was again sent during the final week of the course, following a telephone call to remind the recipient to expect the forms in the mail.

Results

The hypothesis was tested that training with the STEP program will change parent attitudes toward a less authoritarian parenting style. An analysis of covariance computed on AFI scores from the 25 parents in the three experimental groups and the 32 parents in the three control groups revealed no significant change in authoritarianism as a result of STEP training. However, group means did move in the expected direction with the experimental groups, while the control groups did not show this pattern. See Table 3 for a comparison of the group means on the AFI.

Table 3
Means of Groups on the AFI^a

	Pretest	Posttest
Experimental Groups		
Mental Health	18.20	13.80
Church	14.84	12.23
School	<u>18.42</u>	<u>17.28</u>
Total	51.46	43.31
Control Groups		
Mental Health	19.25	16.92
Church	16.66	17.17
School	<u>21.13</u>	<u>20.00</u>
Total	57.04	54.09

^aThe higher the mean, the stronger the authoritarian ideology.

An analysis of covariance was also computed to test the hypothesis that STEP training will result in fewer problems reported by the parents. This analysis of APACBS scores revealed significant change in the direction of more positive perception of their children's behavior by parents after they had completed the course; i.e., parents reported less difficulty with their children after STEP training. See Table 4 for comparison of group means on the APACBS.

Table 4
Means of Groups on the APACBS^a

	Pretest	Posttest
Experimental Groups		
Mental Health	115.80	145.60
Church	138.46	148.15
School	<u>121.57</u>	<u>132.32</u>
Total	375.83	426.07
Control Groups		
Mental Health	122.25	130.92
Church	144.66	143.00
School	<u>148.50</u>	<u>146.25</u>
Total	415.41	420.17

^aThe higher the mean, the less severe the problems and the more positive is the parent's perception of the child.

An ANOVA on pretest scores on the AFI showed no significant differences between groups [$F(5,51) = 1.61, p = .175$]. An ANOVA of pretest scores on the APACBS showed a significant difference between groups [$F(5,51) = 4.63, p = .001$]. Because of the significant

difference at the pretest period on the APACBS, ANCOVA statistical procedures were selected and used to analyze posttest data with both the AFI and the APACBS measures. An ANCOVA of AFI posttest scores of the combined training groups versus the combined control groups shows no significant difference [$F(1,5) = 2.45, p = .123$], while an ANCOVA of APACBS posttest scores of the combined training groups versus the combined control groups shows a significant difference after training [$F(1,5) = 7.41, p = .009$].

Using a General Linear Models Procedure and correcting for discrepancies in group sizes by the use of the Least Squares Means, an ANCOVA comparison of groups was run to determine where the significant differences in gains from pretest to posttest scores occurred. The mental health training group showed the only significant difference ($p = .005$) although the church group's gain approached significance ($p = .054$). Using the same procedures, an ANCOVA comparison of posttest scores on the AFI was not found to be significant between any of the experimental groups, between any of the control groups, or between any group and its corresponding control group.

Pearson product-moment correlation computations were completed to determine if there was a relationship between subject scores on the AFI and subject scores on the APACBS. No significant relationship was found either on pretest scores ($r = -.23, z = -1.72, p = .4599$), or on posttest scores ($r = -.15, z = -1.12, p = .3749$).

Discussion

It was hypothesized that parents who completed the STEP program would report fewer problems with their children after their training. The findings of this investigation support this hypothesis, and also support McKay's (1976) study which showed that STEP training moves parents toward a more positive perception of their children.

It was also hypothesized that parents who were trained by the STEP program would change toward a less authoritarian ideology. AFI means show that all three experimental groups moved in the direction of more democratic parenting with a mean group change of 2.75 points, while control groups were inconsistent in the direction of movement. Mean control group change was .85 points away from authoritarianism, although the church control group moved in a more authoritarian direction. While showing a consistent trend in the predicted direction, the results were not significant. The explanation for lack of significant change is not clear; however, several possibilities are offered.

First, does the STEP program actually teach democratic methods? According to the definition of democratic parenting in this paper, and after a review of the STEP method, there seems to be a resoundingly affirmative answer to this question. Did parents then, not learn what they were being taught? This question poses another: Can democratic ideology be taught cognitively or must it also be taught behaviorally?

A study of the results of teaching democratic parenting cognitively, behaviorally or with a combination of both might well give valuable direction to the constructors of parent education systems.

Second, does the ability to learn to relate to others in a democratic manner depend on a certain level of emotional maturity as suggested by Baldwin, Kalhorn and Breese (1945)? If this is true, it might be surmised that the mental health group would show the least amount of change due to the possibility that those who apply for services or who are referred for treatment at a mental health center might show a lower level of emotional maturity than church or school groups. Thus, parents in this group could be expected to have difficulty in absorbing democratic principles. An ANCOVA showed no significant differences between groups on pretest, posttest scores; however, an informal comparison of means (see Table 3) shows that the greatest change came in the mental health group. Therefore, we have no data to support or deny this suggestion. Third, is a nine week training period too short a time span to effect ideological change? A study of results of longer term STEP education in comparison to the present nine-week program could answer this question. Finally, are parents behaving with more democratic practices after training even though their ideology has apparently remained unchanged? Due to the cognitive nature of the training program and of the testing, this question is completely outside the scope of this study to ascertain, and is a worthwhile topic for future study.

Fourth, a comparison of means on the AFI in this study (see Table 3) with AFI means from Ernhart and Loevinger's 1969 study of 729 post

partum women shows a considerable difference in authoritarian ideology in the two samples. AFI mean for the entire sample in this study was 17.16, while the AFI mean for the entire sample in the Ernhart and Loevinger study was 28.7 with several groups scoring above 38. However, the scores of the group which seems most similar to the sample in this study, the white, high parity, part-college sample, resulted in a mean of 19.2, much closer to the mean of this study, though still somewhat higher. Since AFI means in this study are low compared to Ernhart and Loevinger's means of all groups, did little change occur because AFI scores showed a low level of authoritarianism initially?

The other large consideration in the discussion of no significant change in authoritarian ideology is the question of whether cognitive change did occur and was not measured. A review of the construction, standardization and validation of the AFI reaffirms that the scale does indeed measure the construct authoritarianism, although a review of the scale indicates that some of the items may be somewhat dated. For example, question four has a choice between the statements "Overalls are often the most practical thing for little girls to wear" and "A little girl should wear dresses instead of overalls." "Coveralls" and "overalls" seem synonymous in today's usage, and the word "jeans" seems more understandable. It may also well be that use of pants versus dresses is not as authoritarian-democratic an issue as it was a very few years ago. On the whole, however, this scale does seem to measure authoritarian ideology.

Several variables between groups may have affected the accuracy of the results of this study. Although the STEP program is a clearly

formulated nine week system, the emphases of training and interactions of the leader with group members most certainly varied with the personality of the leader, since each experimental group here was led by a different leader. Control groups also varied in at least one major aspect. The mental health control group was composed of people who had been referred for or who were applying for parent education. The school and church control groups were composed of parents who were not planning to undergo parent education. Also, the small number of subjects in the mental health experimental group made the model less statistically sound, even though adjustment was made for the discrepancy in the computations.

The results of correlation computations indicate that there was no relationship between the authoritarian ideology of the parents and their reported perception of child problems. In fact, correlation decreased from pretest scores ($r = -.23$) to posttest scores ($r = -.15$) after STEP training, leading to the conclusions that change in authoritarian ideology was not the major factor which produced the significant change in perception of child problems.

Other Studies

After having studied the literature on authoritarian and democratic parenting and after having studied research on the characteristics of children of authoritarian parents versus those of democratic parents, it is the conviction of this researcher that democratic parenting is superior to any other parenting style discussed in the present investigation. The STEP program is the system which this researcher found to present more than any other parenting program

investigated the goal of teaching democratic parenting principles. No other study was found that tests a change in parent authoritarian ideology after STEP training, although studies were cited after P.E.T. training (Knowles, 1974; Mee, 1977; Schmitz, 1975; Stern, 1971) which showed that parents had become less authoritarian after parent education.

In summary, we can, then, train parents to rear their children in ways that cause fewer problems as perceived by the parent. It is hoped that we can continue to find additional treatments and pinpoint more effective ways to help parents acquire skills to survive in today's changing social environment.

APPENDIX A

A SUMMARY OF THE STEP PROGRAM

The STEP program is a sequential series of nine studies designed by Don Dinkmeyer and Gary McKay (1976) to teach parents a philosophy of childrearing which guides children toward becoming healthy, mature, and socially responsible individuals. They believe that there are four basic requirements for producing this kind of child:

1. Democratic relationships based on mutual respect and a feeling that the child deserves to be treated with both firmness (showing the parents' self-respect) and kindness (showing respect for the child).
2. Encouragement that communicates respect, love, support and valuing of the child as a person. This can be accomplished verbally, or by nonverbal acts showing that the person cares, as well as by refusing to moralize, compare, or retaliate.
3. The use of natural and logical consequences to replace reward and punishment. This approach enables the child to develop responsibility, self-discipline, and judgment.
4. A basic understanding of human behavior that helps parents to maintain a consistent approach to human relationships (Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1973, p. 14).

Their program is an effort to translate these basic requirements into parental skills learned by the participants of this course.

The STEP system uses a leader's manual, the parent's handbook, cassette recordings, charts, discussion guide cards, and posters. Each of the nine chapters in the parent's manual is considered in a separate session.

Chapter 1 helps parents to understand children's behavior and misbehavior. Society's change from authoritarian to democratic systems is explained and reasons are given to explain why rewards and punishments no longer work in shaping behavior. This material teaches that a child's primary behavior motivator is the need to belong. Misbehavior results from four faulty beliefs with their resulting behavior goals:

1. I belong only when I am being noticed or served. The goal here is attention.
2. I belong only when I am in control or boss. The goal here is power.
3. I belong only by hurting others as I feel hurt. The goal here is revenge.
4. I belong only by convincing others that I am unable, helpless. The goal here is inadequacy.

In this session parents are taught to recognize each misbehavior goal by assessing their own emotions and reactions. Alternate reactions are suggested for each category of misbehavior. The need for mutual respect, for taking time for fun, for encouragement, and for communicating love is stressed.

Chapter 2 tells about the role of emotions in parenting, the influence of life styles in the growth of children, the disadvantages of trying to be a "good" parent by assuming responsibility for what the child does, and the advantages of learning to be a "responsible" parent who believes the child is capable of directing his own behavior and who has respect for the child as a person.

Chapter 3 teaches parents how to "encourage" rather than "praise" their children in order to foster internal evaluation and self-direction by the child rather than teaching the child to depend on external value judgments. Examples of types of encouragement are illustrated and practiced, and parents are taught to avoid negative expectations, to avoid unreasonably high standards, to avoid promoting competition between siblings, to avoid being overly ambitious and insisting on perfection, to avoid using a double standard for parents and children, to accept children as they are, to ignore tattling, to

be positive, to have faith in children, to focus on contributions, assets and strengths, to recognize effort and improvement as well as final accomplishment, in general--to encourage rather than praise.

Session 4 teaches parents a reflective listening technique to use in communicating with children and clarifies usual parental roles which stop open communication. Examples of "closed" and "open" responses are given and practiced.

Session 5 teaches a problem solving technique for use when the child has a problem. The technique includes reflective listening, brainstorming, choosing a solution, discussing possible results, obtaining a commitment, and planning a time for evaluation. The session also teaches parents how to construct and use "I-messages" when the parent has a problem with the child.

Session 6 presents an alternative to reward and punishment for behavior shaping which is called "natural and logical consequences." The disadvantages of punishment are outlined and explained, and the advantages of permitting the child to learn from the reality of social order are stated. Steps in applying consequences are outlined and examples given.

Session 7 applies natural and logical consequences to the problems of forgetting, clothing and hairstyle, cleanliness, kitchen chores, and non-kitchen chores, and relates the concepts of the past two sessions--I-messages and logical consequences, reflective listening and problem solving.

Session 8 teaches parents to plan a family meeting in order that each family member can be heard; in order that members be able to

share positive feelings and encourage each other; to distribute chores; to express concerns, feelings and complaints; to settle conflicts; and to plan family recreation.

Session 9 provides a time for helping parents with problems which they may have in implementing the new system, and explores some larger differences between autocratic procedures and democratic procedures.

APPENDIX B

RELEASE FORM

RESEARCH
WINTER 1980

You are being asked to complete two sets of scales as part of a study on the effectiveness of the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting program. You will be asked to complete these scales at the beginning and at the completion of the program. The results will be published as a Master's Thesis at the University of Central Florida by Patty H. Lee.

You will remain anonymous and will not be identified in any way in this study.

By signing below, you signify that you have been advised of this fact and that you agree to let the scales become a part of the study. Thank you for your help.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Place _____

Date _____

Last 4 digits of soc. sec. # _____
 If spouse is attending with you, last
 4 digits of his/her # _____

Children's age and sex:

Your age:

Annual Income:

<input type="checkbox"/> 0 - 2	<input type="checkbox"/> M	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 8,000
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 - 5	<input type="checkbox"/> M	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 26 - 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 - 11,999
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 - 11	<input type="checkbox"/> M	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 - 35	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 - 15,999
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 - 17	<input type="checkbox"/> M	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 36 - 40	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 - 19,999
<input type="checkbox"/> 18 & over	<input type="checkbox"/> M	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> 41 - 45	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 29,999
			<input type="checkbox"/> 46 - 50	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 & above
			<input type="checkbox"/> Over 50	

Your sex: M F

Your highest completed education: Did not finish high school,
 High School, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, Gradu-
 ate Degree

APPENDIX D

AUTHORITARIAN FAMILY IDEOLOGY SCALE

RAISING CHILDREN

This booklet contains opinions which some people have about parents and children. You will notice that there are two opinions about the same thing with the same number in front of them. One opinion is marked "A" and the other is marked "B". To the left is a blank. Put the letter of the opinion you agree with in the blank. Mark one opinion for each pair.

Sometimes you will find that you don't agree with either one. Then choose the one that is closer to your own ideas, or the one that is a little better. If you agree with both, choose the one you like better.

Work quickly and do not linger over any one item. Mark one opinion of each pair.

Examples:

- A A. Most married couples want to have at least one child.
 B. Many married couples don't ever want to have children.

- B A. When a new-born baby cries, his mother can always quiet him quickly.
 B. When a new-born baby cries, his mother sometimes does not know what to do for him.

Notice that sentence "A" is marked in the first example and sentence "B" in the second example. Now go ahead with the others. Choose one of each pair.

- 1) A. You can spoil a tiny baby by picking him up every time he cries.
 B. You cannot spoil a tiny baby by picking him up every time he cries.
- 2) A. Parents should not pay attention when small children use naughty words.
 B. Parents should punish small children when they use naughty words.
- 3) A. A father should be his son's best pal.
 B. A father should not try to be his son's best pal.
- 4) A. Overalls are often the most practical things for a little girl to wear.
 B. A little girl should wear dresses instead of overalls.
- 5) A. If a mother trains her baby properly, he will not need diapers after he is one year old.

- B. It is better not to start toilet training a baby until he is at least one year old.
- 6) _____ A. Teen-agers cannot be expected to be grateful to their parents.
B. After all the sacrifices parents make, teen-age children should be grateful to them.
- 7) _____ A. It is more fun to watch a child play than to watch him eat well.
B. It is more fun to watch a child eat well than to watch him play.
- 8) _____ A. If a young mother finds her baby puzzling, she should talk to some older, more experienced woman about her problems.
B. If a young mother finds her baby puzzling, she should talk to friends her own age who have the same kinds of problems.
- 9) _____ A. Small babies should be fed when they are hungry.
B. Small babies should be fed on a regular schedule.
- 10) _____ A. A three-year-old who wets his pants should be made to feel ashamed of himself.
B. There is no use making a child feel ashamed when he wets his pants.
- 11) _____ A. A child of 8 should have a little money to spend without telling his parents.
B. A child of 8 should tell his parents how he spends his money.
- 12) _____ A. The best kind of family life is the kind where the whole family does everything together.
B. Everyone, even a child, needs some privacy in his life.
- 13) _____ A. A three-year-old is likely to be more disturbed than a six-year-old by having his tonsils taken out.
B. It is better to have tonsils taken out at three than at six, since a three-year-old soon forgets.
- 14) _____ A. A house that looks a little untidy is more attractive than one where everything is always picked up.
B. An attractive house has a place for everything and everything in its place.
- 15) _____ A. It is up to the parents to train a child to have regular toilet habits.
B. If too much fuss isn't made, a child's toilet training will take care of itself.

- 16) _____ A. If a boy of six or seven lies or steals, he should be punished severely.
B. Lying or stealing aren't serious in boys of six or seven.
- 17) _____ A. No child should be permitted to strike his mother.
B. A mother should not be harsh with a small child who strikes her.
- 18) _____ A. Mothers should prepare good meals and let children eat what they like.
B. Mothers should teach children to eat everything on their plates.
- 19) _____ A. Parents should not ask about a five-year-old's bowel movement unless he is sick.
B. A child of five should be reminded every day to have his bowel movement.
- 20) _____ A. More people are doing a good job of raising children today than 30 years ago.
B. Fewer people are doing a good job of raising children today than 30 years ago.
- 21) _____ A. If a little girl is a tomboy, her mother should try to get her interested in dolls and playing house.
B. If a little girl is a tomboy, her mother should let her play boys' games.
- 22) _____ A. It is important to see that a young child does not form bad habits.
B. If a young child is happy, he will not form bad habits.
- 23) _____ A. If a three-year-old still sucks his thumb, his mother should prevent it or punish him.
B. A mother should not prevent a three-year-old from sucking him thumb, or punish him for doing so.
- 24) _____ A. If parents taught their children obedience, the children wouldn't get into trouble with the law.
B. When a child gets into trouble with the law, it is usually because his parents don't love him enough.
- 25) _____ A. Children should be allowed to criticize their parents.
B. Children should not be disrespectful of their parents.
- 26) _____ A. If an older child strikes a younger one, he should always be punished.
B. If an older child strikes a younger one, he may have a good reason for it.

- 27) _____ A. Boys like to date "fast" girls, but when it comes to getting married they choose girls for whom they have more respect.
B. Most boys marry the same kind of girl they have been going out with.
- 28) _____ A. A four-year-old is more interested in sex differences than an eight-year-old.
B. An eight-year-old is more interested in sex differences than a three-year-old.
- 29) _____ A. Punishing a child doesn't do any good if you make up to him right afterwards.
B. It is best to make up with a child right after punishing him.
- 30) _____ A. It is foolish for a woman to spend time cleaning house when she has a bad cold.
B. A woman should keep her house neat even when she has a bad cold.
- 31) _____ A. Most children nowadays aren't taught to respect their parents enough.
B. Children have as much respect for their parents nowadays as they ever did.
- 32) _____ A. It is fun to hear a five-year-old tell big stories.
B. A five-year-old should be taught not to tell big stories that aren't true.
- 33) _____ A. Most mothers nowadays let their children get away with too much.
B. Most mothers nowadays do a pretty good job of raising their children.
- 34) _____ A. In the long run, how much you achieve is what gives you satisfaction.
B. In the long run, it's not where you get but how much fun you have getting there that counts.
- 35) _____ A. It is best for small children not to watch their parents get dressed and undressed.
B. It is all right for small children to watch their parents get dressed and undressed.
- 36) _____ A. Once you've made rules for your children, you should never go back on them.
B. In family living it is often best not to be too strict about rules.

- 37) _____ A. It is silly for a woman to worry about coming home alone at night.
B. A woman should never be alone on the streets at night.
- 38) _____ A. It is all right to tell a lie to save a friend.
B. It is not all right to lie, even if someone will be hurt by the truth.
- 39) _____ A. It is more important to have pretty things in a house than to keep it spotless.
B. It is more important to have the house spotless than to have pictures and flowers in it.
- 40) _____ A. If a wife doesn't like housework, she should let some of it go and do things she likes better.
B. There is no excuse for a wife not keeping up with her housework.
- 41) _____ A. Nowadays what most children need is more time to themselves, even if they waste time.
B. Children should make good use of their time after school and on vacations.

REMEMBER! We would appreciate it if you mark every item, even if it is hard for you to decide on a choice.

APPENDIX E

ADLERIAN PARENTAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILD BEHAVIOR SCALE*

DIRECTIONS: Please circle the number for each item which best describes your child's (the child with whom you have the most problems) behavior as you see it. Please try to respond to every item.

	ALWAYS	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	VERY SELDOM	NEVER
1. Has to be called more than once to get out of bed in the morning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Gets dressed for school <u>without</u> being reminded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Remembers to take lunch money, books, etc., to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Leaves for school <u>without</u> being reminded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Makes helpful suggestions during family discussions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Involves you in resolving verbal arguments with other children (for example: brothers or sisters, or children in the neighborhood).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Involves you in resolving physical fights with other children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Does chores <u>without</u> being reminded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Figures out solutions to his/her own problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Changes behavior when told that it bothers you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Puts dirty clothes in hamper <u>without</u> being reminded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Argues with you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Leaves belongings scattered around the house.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Interrupts you at inappropriate times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	ALWAYS	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	VERY SELDOM	NEVER
15. Is on time for meals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Eats most foods offered <u>without</u> being coaxed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Has table manners which are acceptable to you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Tattles on other children (for example: brothers or sisters, or children in the neighborhood).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Throws temper tantrums.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Shares problems (s)he is facing with you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Is considerate of your feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Requests help on tasks (s)he can do independently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Cleans up after snacking <u>without</u> being reminded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling annoyed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling discouraged, believing that the child <u>cannot</u> improve.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Stays with difficult tasks until they are completed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Disturbs you when you are driving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	ALWAYS	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	VERY SELDOM	NEVER
30. Remembers where (s)he puts belongings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Has to be told more than once to go to bed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Is quiet after going to bed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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APPENDIX F

INITIAL LETTER TO MENTAL HEALTH CONTROL GROUP

(Mental Health Center Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear (name of parent),

Due to one of several reasons--problems with transportation, too-late registration, problem with scheduling, and the like--you were unable to enter our parent group which begins this week, or the program which has just been completed.

A fellow staff member is completing a study on the effectiveness of the STEP parenting program. She needs information from parents who were referred to the group and who were unable to attend.

If you are willing to help us in this study, please sign the enclosed release form and complete the forms in the stapled packet. You will be asked to fill these forms out again in nine weeks.

Enclosed please find a stamped envelope for the return of these forms, or drop them by the Center's reception desk at your convenience.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

(The Leader)

APPENDIX G

FINAL LETTER TO MENTAL HEALTH CONTROL GROUP

(Mental Health Center Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear (name of parent),

Enclosed is the packet of forms to be filled out to complete our study of the effectiveness of our parent education program.

Please complete the forms again, and return them by mail in the enclosed envelope, or drop them by the Center's reception desk at your earliest convenience.

Thank you very much for your help in the study. If you are interested in attending the next Parent Education Group, please let me know, and you will be notified concerning the details of the group and a place will be reserved for you.

Sincerely,

(The Leader)

APPENDIX H

SUBJECT SCORES

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Pretest</u>		<u>Posttest</u>	
	AFI	APACBS	AFI	ACACBS
Group 1				
#1	25	128	21	140
#2	21	124	15	147
#3	20	89	14	104
#4	12	138	8	199
#5	<u>12</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>138</u>
Total	91	579	69	728
Group Mean	18.20	115.80	13.80	145.60
Group 2				
#1	25	128	16	131
#2	23	164	19	159
#3	21	124	13	147
#4	18	136	30	144
#5	17	147	12	160
#6	16	116	11	120
#7	16	143	14	142
#8	13	129	11	142
#9	13	130	11	160
#10	11	141	8	158
#11	8	129	8	131
#12	6	148	3	160
#13	<u>6</u>	<u>165</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>172</u>
Total	193	1,800	159	1,926
Group Mean	14.84	138.46	12.23	148.15

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Pretest</u>		<u>Posttest</u>	
	AFI	APACBS	AFI	APACBS
Group 3				
#1	24	124	18	126
#2	24	150	15	165
#3	21	96	23	92
#4	17	136	14	160
#5	16	111	14	132
#6	14	120	15	128
#7	<u>13</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>124</u>
Total	129	851	121	927
Group Mean	18.42	121.57	17.28	132.32
Group 4				
#1	32	132	28	131
#2	25	101	20	100
#3	23	156	27	149
#4	21	109	23	131
#5	20	133	19	125
#6	19	166	9	125
#7	19	109	18	165
#8	18	101	21	120
#9	15	103	8	121
#10	14	105	9	144
#11	14	98	11	100
#12	<u>11</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>152</u>
Total	231	1,467	203	1,571
Group Mean	19.25	122.25	16.92	130.92

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Pretest</u>		<u>Posttest</u>	
	AFI	APACBS	AFI	APACBS
Group 5				
#1	25	139	21	149
#2	21	160	18	155
#3	19	143	17	140
#4	19	147	19	160
#5	18	147	24	145
#6	18	160	28	139
#7	17	136	22	162
#8	16	138	14	142
#9	15	111	18	112
#10	14	167	15	147
#11	10	145	10	126
#12	<u>8</u>	<u>142</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>139</u>
Total	200	1,735	206	1,716
Group Mean	16.66	144.66	17.17	143.00
Group 6				
#1	30	133	28	116
#2	24	133	16	128
#3	26	169	32	164
#4	23	146	21	156
#5	20	147	24	152
#6	19	170	22	157
#7	16	158	10	161
#8	<u>11</u>	<u>132</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>136</u>
Total	169	1,188	160	1,170
Group Mean	21.13	148.50	20.00	146.25

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