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Gender Socialization of Preschoolers : The Influence of Parental Orientation and Preschool Environment

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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Alice Blackwell Passannante for the Master of Science in Sociology were presented July 2, 1998, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Alice Blackwell Passannante for the Master of Science in Sociology presented July 2, 1998.

Title: Gender Socialization of Preschoolers: The Influence of Parental Orientation and Preschool Environment.

Because there are different sets of attitudes and standards that are applied to girls and boys, and because society is permeated with messages delineating the differences between females and males, there is a rapid accumulation of knowledge by children about those differences. There is a need for further examination of the overall impact of different facets of gender socialization.

The purpose of the present study was to clarify the ways in which parental beliefs and practices as well as daycare environment affect the gender-typing of preschoolers. Seventy-nine children from three different preschools were interviewed using Likert, forced-choice, and open-ended items. Their parents were surveyed using questions relating to their attitudes and behaviors around gender.

The head teacher from each classroom study site was interviewed about how and what kinds of gender messages are presented at school.

This study sought to test the following hypotheses: 1) Girls will be less gender-typed than boys; 2) Mothers will have less traditional gender attitudes than fathers; 3) Younger children will be less sex-typed than older children; 4) Children in gender-progressive daycare environments will be less gender-typed than children in gender-traditional daycare environments; and 5) Children's degree of gender-typing will be positively associated with their parents' degree of gender-typing.

Of the five hypotheses tested, two were supported, two had mixed findings, and one was not supported. Boys exhibited significantly less flexibility than girls in toy preferences. Mothers had less traditional scores than fathers on the paired toy preference task, and differentiated less between girls and boys than did fathers. It appears that the children's toy preferences were not strongly influenced by preschool gender issue consciousness. The analysis of parents' toy preferences showed that mothers had toy preferences that were very different from those of their sons, but ones that were relatively similar to those of their daughters. When the preferences of daughters and sons were analyzed together, the correlation with their fathers' preferences was highly significant. Although correlations between age and gender-flexibility scores did go in the expected direction for both girls and boys, they were not statistically significant.

GENDER SOCIALIZATION OF PRESCHOOLERS:

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL ORIENTATION AND PRESCHOOL

ENVIRONMENT

by

ALICE BLACKWELL PASSANNANTE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
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Portland State University

1998

This thesis is dedicated to Soleil and Kaya Blackwell Passannante,
who gave me the inspiration.

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CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

"I deny that anyone knows, or can know, the nature of the two sexes as long as they

have only been seen in the present relation to one another."

--John Stuart Mill

What is the first thing everyone asks about a newborn baby? Indeed, what is

the first information new parents usually offer to friends and family members? Of

course, it is whether the baby is a girl or a boy. Why is this one-word summary of

the child's sex deemed of primary importance? It is because this information will in

large part shape the subsequent course of the child's life. While it may not be a

reliable predictor of the child's specific life events, it is certainly a fair predictor of

what kind of name per* will be given, what color clothes per will wear in infancy

and childhood, and what type of toys and nursery décor per will have. It is also, as it

turns out, a good indicator of how and how much per will be held and talked to as an

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*Throughout this manuscript, the term "per" is used as both a singular and plural gender-neutral pronoun and singular possessive pronominal adjective. It is an abbreviated form of the word "person", and was first made known to me in Marge Piercy's novel *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

infant, how much attention per will receive in school, and how much freedom per will be given as an adolescent.

Adults use the knowledge of a child's biological sex to make a multitude of decisions about how to interact with that child. Because there are different sets of attitudes and standards that are applied to girls and boys, and because society is permeated with messages delineating the differences between females and males, there is a rapid and enormous accumulation of knowledge by children about those differences. By the age of 28 months most children can tell you what sex they are and can identify the sex of others, and by the age of 48 months most children can name the gender associated with different items (Fagot and Leinbach, 1989). Eager to learn and to fit in, children begin to display the approved characteristics for their sex, and to suppress the behaviors and feelings associated with the other sex. This eventually amounts to a warping and stunting of any given child's potential talents, inclinations, and personality.

Prior to the most recent wave of feminist movement in the 1960's, it was generally assumed that gender, i.e. the possession of traits associated with femininity and masculinity, is a "natural" phenomenon, inseparable from one's biological sex. This belief is still very much alive in the 1990's. However, although the terms "sex" and "gender" are often used interchangeably, they actually describe two very different things. Sex refers to dimorphic biological characteristics primarily related to reproduction. Gender is a complex and multidimensional social construct that

divides most actions, feelings and attributes into "feminine" and "masculine" categories.

The question of how individuals acquire a gendered identity is one that has been hotly debated, especially in the last 35 years or so. It has been only since then that research on the topic has been conducted which does not assume the inevitability and desirability of traditional feminine and masculine roles for girls and boys. It is my position that these polarized roles are neither desirable nor inevitable, but rather that they are so ingrained in society that they appear to be natural. It would only be through the most concerted and sustained efforts that parents could begin to neutralize the effects of such a vast tide of culture and tradition in order to allow a child to develop without this cultural bias.

What are the means by which gender is transmitted to new members of society? They are many and varied. The primary socializing agent for any child is per family, but the lessons don't end there. As infants become toddlers, they are increasingly exposed to more outside socializing agents. Among these are extended family members, family friends, community residents, teachers, and other members of society. There are also numerous ways in which gender is transmitted other than through human contact. Consider the pervasiveness of television. It is a rare child who has little or no exposure to television programming. There are also radio programs, songs, and visual commercial advertisements which routinely convey both subtle and overt messages about gender. Even children's books contain a host of

gendered images, dialogues, and meanings. Another vehicle for gender socialization is language. The English language, while less sexist than some, certainly makes its share of gender distinctions.

Admittedly, gender roles have been changing during the past few decades, but the dominant paradigm is still very much intact. Women are still perceived as less intelligent, weaker, and less competent than men, and are valued only as sexual objects in many contexts. Recent role changes, when taken together, reflect an interesting pattern. The vast majority of the newly accepted changes involve women's behavior becoming more like men's, while very little difference is to be found within the masculine role. For example, it is extremely common for mothers of young children to work outside the home. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1995), enrollment in daycare has been steadily rising over the last twenty-five years. In 1970, one in five three- and four-year-olds attended some type of nursery school. In 1990, almost half (44%) did so. It is uncommon, however, for fathers to stay at home with their children rather than work for wages.

Another example is that of occupational patterns. Two fields traditionally dominated by men - medicine and law - have become almost equally common for women. In 1993, 38% of medical students and 43% of law students were women (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). One of the few professional occupations traditionally reserved for women is nursing, and nursing schools have not seen a corresponding increase in male enrollment. In 1990, only 5% of nurses were men

(U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). This pattern is evidence of the overall devaluation of the feminine role. It is understandable for women to want to have high-paying, prestigious careers, but how many men voluntarily pursue the low-paying and little-celebrated fields of child care, kindergarten teaching, or secretarial work? By 1994, none of these jobs was done by men more than 4% of the time (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995).

This devaluation of the feminine is not limited to occupational statuses. It also applies to emotions and personality characteristics. While anger and logic are often perceived as valuable tools for men to use in life, crying and concern about human relationships are seen as hindrances that keep women from being truly powerful. Despite the obvious fact that all human beings have emotions, including anger, men do not typically describe themselves as "emotional" (Shotola and Farr, 1990). Instead, most emotions are perceived as feminine and placed in perceptual opposition to rationalism and logic – hence the stereotypical view of women as "feeling" and men as "thinking". This stereotype serves to perpetuate the idea of male intellectual superiority.

Even children are not exempt from the devaluation of the feminine. Most people like, or at least tolerate, a tomboy, but to call a boy a sissy is the worst sort of insult. In adopting masculine appearance or behaviors, a girl is seen as demonstrating her ability to be as strong, independent and capable as a boy. A boy

who adopts a feminine appearance or behavior is challenging the birthright of masculine power by demonstrating an affinity for anything feminine.

Are there variations in gender socialization that to a greater or lesser degree restrict gender identity and devalue the feminine? While there is some research pertaining to these questions, there is a need for further examination of the overall impact of different facets of gender socialization. The present study sought to clarify the ways in which parental beliefs and practices as well as daycare philosophy and curricula affect the gender-typing of preschoolers. I designed a three-phase interview and survey study to examine this relationship. I interviewed children from three different preschools using Likert, forced-choice, and open-ended items. I also surveyed their parents, using questions relating to their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors around gender, as well as demographic items. The head teacher from each classroom study site was interviewed about the frequency with which gender issues are addressed at school.

The three daycare sites selected for study were all located in Portland, Oregon. One was a university-operated center with overt anti-bias policies. The other two were branches of two separate child care franchises, with no formal policies relating to bias in curriculum.

My general expectations were that girls would be less gender-typed than boys, and that mothers would be more flexible than fathers in their attitudes about

appropriate gender behavior for children. Additionally, I expected to find differences in the gender-typing of children at the three preschools, and between children of different ages. Most importantly, I expected to find a relationship between the attitudes of the parents and the responses of their children.

The next chapter reviews relevant theoretical perspectives and the most pertinent of recent research related to patterns of gender socialization in young children.

CHAPTER II:
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This chapter will discuss theories and findings of previous research

pertaining to the gender socialization of young children. Gender socialization has

proved to be fertile ground for social research. A multitude of studies examining

different aspects of the acquisition and significance of gender roles have been

conducted since the 1960's. Given the abundance of background material to build

on, I have selected for review only the works most relevant to this research. The

overall message is clear - from infancy on, girls and boys still grow up with quite

different sets of rules and expectations.

THEORIES OF GENDER ACQUISITION

Psychoanalytic Frameworks

Sigmund Freud

Psychoanalytic theory, first advanced by Sigmund Freud, offers one

explanation of the forces which shape the gender identity of children. The

psychoanalytic perspective focuses on unconscious mental processes and structures

as determinants of behavior and personality. At birth, the infant is seen as driven by

the id (quasi-biological drives), and only gradually do psychic processes differentiate into the id, ego and superego. This differentiation is a result of early childhood experiences and relationships. Freud (1905, 1931) emphasizes children's identification with their same-sex parent as the driving force behind gender socialization. According to Freud, girls and boys go through distinct developmental phases. Freud assumes that girls are as envious of and anxious to get a penis as boys are to avoid losing theirs. Boys learn that some people (females) don't have penises, and out of fear that they too may be "castrated", they are motivated to identify with their father. This is difficult, because they must then "separate" from their mother who, until this point, had been at the center of their world. Girls, on the other hand, are supposed to have a different experience. They continue to be close to and identify with their mother, never completely individuating themselves from this essentially dependent relationship. The most traumatic aspects of a girl's development are facing the knowledge that she will never have a penis and getting over the idea that she can't displace her mother and marry Daddy to get one. The closest she can come to getting her own phallus is to use femininity to attract a male and (re)produce a male child. For one brief moment during childbirth, she will have a penis between her legs which is actually connected to her body. This desire for a male child meshes nicely with culturally embedded preferences for male children. A boy child is often seen by fathers as an extension and validation of his manhood, as well as a perpetuation of the family line. Women often get special satisfaction from

having a male child, especially as a first-born child, because a son generally confers a higher status upon her as a mother.

Feminist / Psychoanalytic Integration

The Phallocentric View

Although psychoanalytic theory has come under heavy fire from feminist critics, some theorists have attempted to integrate feminist and psychoanalytic approaches (Stockard and Johnson, 1992). One way of doing this, sometimes referred to as the phallocentric view, is by asserting that Freud was not condoning the patriarchal structure of society, but rather was accurately outlining the effects of such a society on the psychical development of individuals. This view holds that penis envy does exist, but can be interpreted by regarding the penis as a symbol of male dominance, rather than as an innately superior organ. Thus, the route to a feminine identity is difficult because it involves giving up an original active and "masculine" orientation, and accepting and adapting to the societal oppression of women.

The Gynocentric View

The gynocentric view accepts Freud's ideas less wholeheartedly, although still retaining the basic foundations "of the unconscious, of repression, and of the importance of sexuality in human society" (Stockard and Johnson, p. 190). This view is quite different from the phallocentric one in that it emphasizes a feminine orientation as primary for children of both sexes. For girls, then, penis envy is a

result of guilt related to the Oedipus complex and a desire to separate from the mother. As girls develop, they find other ways to deal with these issues, and the need for this defense lessens, although it is never completely overcome. Boys are seen as having a less stable gender identity than girls, because the child's basic identification is feminine. The process is more difficult for boys, because "adult males tend to be remote from the world of children and are not available for identification... Because what he knows most intimately is feminine, the boy comes to define masculinity as that which is not feminine. Internally he rejects his early attachment to and dependence on the mother. Externally he devalues what is feminine and denies his attachment to the feminine world" (Stockard and Johnson, p. 193). Masculine identity is seen as essentially a negative reaction to fear and envy of the feminine.

Nancy Chodorow

Chodorow (1978) uses the identification framework in her emphasis on the role of mothering in the gender development of children. She argues that because of the institutionalized family structure in which only women "mother", boys learn to deny their capacity to nurture and empathize. Due to the relative absence of fathers in their children's lives, boys must learn about masculinity through identification with cultural images. This facilitates a severe polarization in boys' psyches between "masculine" and "feminine". In assuming a masculine identity, boys must repudiate and eventually dominate the "other", i.e. woman and all things all things feminine.

Cognitive Development

Mead's Symbolic Interaction Theory

The cognitive developmental perspective differs dramatically from psychoanalytic theories in that it emphasizes intellectual developmental progression rather than subconscious fears and desires. A precursor to more modern cognitive theories, George Herbert Mead's ideas about identity development through symbolic interaction offer a method for framing the development of gender. According to Mead (1934), infants do not perceive themselves as separate from the rest of the world. They think only in terms of the "I", or the "natural" part of the self. As they acquire language skills and begin to think in terms of symbols, children can see themselves as objects distinct from others. They then develop what Mead calls the "me", which represents the social part of the self, and can react and adapt to the norms and demands of society. Thus, this perspective could be used to examine the idea that children acquire a gendered identity as part of the socialization process.

Cooley's Looking Glass Self

Charles Horton Cooley's 1902 concept of a "looking-glass self" offers a similar explanation of identity development. He outlines three basic steps in the development of the self: first comes a perception of how our behavior appears to others, then a perception of others' judgments about our behavior, and finally an evaluation of our behavior based on the responses of others. In short, "people's sense of self can thus be said to reflect what they think others think of them"

(Popenoe, 1993, p. 131). This perspective meshes nicely with the cognitive developmental framework initially put forth by Lawrence Kohlberg.

Kohlberg's Developmental Theory

Lawrence Kohlberg's (1966) cognitive developmental theory proposed that only when children arrive at the knowledge that their sex is fixed and unalterable (gender constancy) do they begin to place a more positive value on behaviors and characteristics associated with their own sex and avoid those associated with the other sex. Since children typically achieve gender constancy at about six years of age, one would not expect to see much in the way of sex-typed behavior before that age. Generally, as we shall see, the research has failed to support this theory.

Bem's Gender Schema Theory

Sandra Bem's gender schema theory (see Bem, 1981) has probably inspired more research than other contemporary theories. While similar to cognitive developmental theory, it has some important differences. First, children are not thought to require complete gender constancy in order to be motivated to exhibit gender-linked behavior. Second, gender schema theory emphasizes information-processing as a function of gender conceptions. Gender schema are cognitive tendencies to utilize gender when attending to, categorizing, and remembering information. Children who are highly gender-schematic pay more attention to gendered attributes and behaviors, and are more likely to encode and retrieve information relevant to gender. This is not to say that highly gender-schematic

children are more accurate in their retention of gender information. In fact, highly gender-schematic children presented with a gender-inconsistent scenario are likely to inaccurately recall the scenario as gender-consistent (Carter and Levy, 1988). How do individuals become gender-schematic? Bem (1985) suggests that two conditions are necessary in order for a category to become a schema:

> (a) The social context makes it the nucleus of a large associative network, that is, if the ideology and/or the practices of the culture construct an association between that category and a wide range of other attributes, behaviors, concepts, and categories: and (b) the social context assigns the category itself broad functional significance - that is, if a broad array of social institutions, norms, and taboos distinguishes between persons, behaviors, and attributes on the basis of this category (p. 211).

As the research bears out, both of these conditions are still firmly in place in our culture, although one could speculate that the intensity varies for individuals depending on a number of factors.

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory emphasizes environmental factors along with cognitive development as agents of gender-related development.

> Because gender-related cues are available for gender labeling...children learn to label their own and others' gender before they learn to label and categorize objects, activities, tasks, and roles

that, in and of themselves, have no inherent gender-linkage. It is from children's social and observational experiences that gender-linked knowledge emerges. As children develop stronger gender-linked preferences, their knowledge of the constellations of attributes that are linked to gender increases. ...(C)hildren's growing cognitive competence is but one factor involved in their gender-related development. Proximal social influences of parents, teachers, and peers, as well as distal social and symbolic influences from the mass media and cultural institutions, all serve to promote gender development. In this theory of triadic reciprocal causation, the social environment, children's knowledge structures and cognitive capabilities, and their behavior interact to produce gender-related standards and action (Bussey and Bandura, 1992, pp. 1237-1238).

Social cognitive theory also outlines the means by which children are guided and motivated to produce and self-regulate gender-typed behavior. At first, children internalize the environmental messages about gender. Once the standards have been absorbed, they are motivated to adhere to gender-consistent behavior through "anticipatory self-sanctions." In other words, children want to fit in and feel good about themselves, so they avoid engaging in activities that contradict their internalized standards.

Feminist Frameworks

Feminist theories add to the social cognitive framework by explaining why environmental influences exist in their present state. In general, feminist theorists typically examine the impact of patriarchy on society and on individuals. For the

purposes of this discussion, patriarchy can be defined as a heirarchical organizational form, accompanied by an ideology, which emphasizes power over others and devalues that which is feminine. In this system, power is created and maintained by violence and/or the threat of violence. At the top of the hierarchy is a small group of elite men who maintain power over women, children, and other men (Farr, 1993). Feminist theories assert that in order for patriarchy to continue to function, new members of society must be taught to view gender differences as natural and inevitable correlates of biological sex. The power, prestige, and status that come with maleness must be accepted as the norm, while the feminine role is seen as complementary, even necessary, but certainly not worthy of high regard. There are many different feminist theories of gender, but one of the things they have in common is a dissection of the multitude of social factors which combine to produce the naturalization of gender.

There are several overarching categories of feminist theory; liberal, socialist, radical, anti-racist, psychoanalytic (discussed previously), and postmodernist. There is a fair amount of overlap between and among these conceptual frameworks, and they are not typically invoked as mutually exclusive to the degree that they once were. Indeed, many contemporary feminists argue for a more inclusive theoretical framework which would encompass the ideas in each of these frameworks. Also, a strict reliance on or alignment with one of the three traditional perspectives – i.e., liberal, socialist, and radical – is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, but a basic

understanding of their origins and emphases facilitates a greater understanding of feminist thought as a whole.

Liberal Feminism

Probably the most popular and mainstream feminist perspective, liberal feminism grew out of ideas generated during the Enlightenment, namely individual liberty and the power of reason over tradition. Liberal feminism has no quarrel with some basic social structures, such as a market economy and organized religion, but rather is concerned with socialization, education, and legal freedoms and opportunities. The goal of liberal feminism is to achieve equality for women by working within the current system, focusing on legislative and other pragmatic means of introducing change (Elliot and Mandell, 1995, pp. 5-8). The gender socialization of children would presumably change over time as educational and occupational avenues open for women.

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism also has roots in the era of rapidly increasing industrialization, but developed an alternative explanation for women's condition in society. "(S)ocialist feminists see women's relationship to the economy as the origin of women's oppression. Gender is conceptualized as a social, political, ideological, and economic category that takes a particular shape under capitalism" (Elliot and Mandell, 1995, p. 9). Socialist feminism emphasizes the ways in which capitalism and family structure enable the exploitation of women and the working class, and

pays particular attention to "the social and economic organization of work in capitalist systems,... the relations between paid and unpaid labour, and the interconnection between production and reproduction, the private and the public" (Elliot and Mandell, 1995, p. 9). This focus provides an account of the ways in which traditional gender roles support the capitalist system. The father-as-breadwinner and mother-as-homemaker arrangement inculcates values which produce men oriented towards success in the marketplace and women oriented towards consuming the products and services created in the marketplace, as well as (re)producing the next generation of gendered and classed members of capitalist society.

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism denies the primacy of economic structure as a source of women's oppression. Instead, it views sexism as the first and most entrenched form of oppression, an understanding of which can be used to analyze other forms of oppression, such as racism, heterosexism, etc. The root of sexism was thought by early radical feminists to be biological differences in reproduction, and more contemporary radical feminists have expanded this view to include not only reproduction, but sexual relations, and male control over female sexuality. "Socially constructed gender and reproductive roles restrict women's identity and behaviour and make it exceedingly difficult for women to identify and develop their own sexual desires and needs. As long as women's sexuality is interpreted in terms of men's

sexuality, women will never be men's full political, economic, or social equals and heterosexual relations will not be egalitarian" (Elliot and Mandell, 1995, p. 15). Radical feminists call for female-oriented restructuring of the family, the state, and technology in order to eliminate women's oppression.

Anti-racist Feminism

Feminism as a whole purports to advocate equality for all women, yet most feminist movement has consistently maintained a white, middle-class, heterosexist bias both in theory and in action. Women of color have been among the first to point out the gaps in the theoretical frameworks of various feminist perspectives, most notably the assumption of a universal (white) female experience. Time and again, feminist women of color have called on their white sisters to take up the responsibility for educating themselves about racism, and to fully incorporate anti-racism as part of a complete feminist perspective. Anti-racist feminism advocates the acknowledgment and study of concrete and historical situations of all women. Such a perspective would do much to shed light on the multi-faceted nature of gender socialization. The limited amount of research on gender development and identity in Black and other minority children indicates that these processes do not have the same results as they do in white children. For example, the widely cited 1994 AAUW study reported a shocking drop in self-esteem as girls enter adolescence. What is not mentioned as often is that Black girls' self-esteem actually *rose* between elementary and high school, although they still did not catch up to

Black boys (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). This finding indicates that differences in family life and culture may have a dramatic impact on the outcome of gender socialization.

Postmodern Feminism

Although there is no one definition of the term "postmodern", many descriptions include common beliefs. Patti Lather describes these as "a conception of the individual as unstable, contradictory, and socially constructed; a conception of what forms of authority or knowledge are legitimate, namely multiple, anti-hierarchical, and participatory forms; a conception of history as non-linear, not necessarily progressive, and as always read through particular social contexts; and a conception of community as an achievement based on valuing differences without opposition" (1991, p. 160). In agreement with anti-racist feminists' insistence on understanding the unique positions of oppressed women, postmodern feminist theory warns about the dangers of essentialism. No group as large and diverse as "women" can be said to share a universal experience. What this perspective seeks is a way of analyzing sexism by examining all of its components and manifestations. While not as intuitively easy to grasp, postmodern feminism is promising new ground for future theoretical growth

PRIOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Gender-typed Behavioral and Attitudinal Differences

Girls and boys display different patterns of behavior, and these differences

have been observed consistently in research. The bulk of this research indicates that when differences are found, it is boys who manifest the most sex-typed behavior. Again and again, boys have been shown to be less flexible than girls regarding toy preferences, play behavior, and sex-role beliefs. This may be partially explained by the fact that more severe negative sanctions are imposed on male cross-sex behavior than on female cross-sex behavior (MacCoby and Jacklin, 1974) due to societal devaluation of the feminine.

According to Lloyd (1989, p. 64) "Girls and boys share a common set of social representations in which masculinity is salient and associated with exclusivity." Her research found that preschool-age boys "avoid feminine toys and employ masculine toys to mark their membership in a gender category, while girls do not use toys to mark their gender identity" (p. 62). In two studies of children between eighteen months and four years of age, she found that boy pairs, but not girl pairs, spent more time playing with same-sex toys. Boys also used open spaces more, although there was no particular spatial zone in the classrooms that was used more than another by girls. While girls evenly split their time between creative play, role play, directed play and construction play, boys focused heavily on construction play. Another way to describe the differences Lloyd observed in the play behavior of these children would be to say that "boys assert an exclusive masculine identity while girls reject a narrow and exclusive definition of their femininity" (p. 62). It is

possible that even at a very young age, children comprehend that prestige and power are associated with masculinity.

Boys as young as two years show a greater propensity to assimilate information relevant to the masculine role. Bauer (1993) found that among 25-month old children, girls showed equal recall of feminine, masculine, and gender neutral activity sequences. Boys, however, showed better recall of masculine and neutral sequences than of feminine ones in both immediate and delayed recall tasks. A related finding by Boston and Levy (1991) showed that when asked to unscramble gender-typed activity scripts, boys demonstrated significantly more accurate sequencing of masculine than of feminine scripts.

Preschoolers also display gender-differentiated orientations to story-telling and imagination. In an interesting 1989 study, Libby and Aries presented three- to five-year-old girls and boys with story beginnings and asked the children to complete the stories. Girls' stories contained themes of caretaking and concern for others, while boys' stories contained significantly more attempts to master situations through aggression. Another telling finding was that while girls told stories with approximately equal numbers of female and male protagonists, not a single boy specified a central character as female.

Different stages in gender development may influence gender-typed toy preferences. In a 1993 study, Lobel and Menashri assessed the gender-typing of

preschoolers using toys that varied not only in stereotypical gender association, but in attractiveness. The results showed that children with higher levels of reasoning, but not higher gender constancy levels, had less rigid toy preferences. Again, girls made fewer gender-typed toy choices than boys.

Although girls do engage in gender-typed behavior, it is generally less extreme and less consistent than the gender-typed behavior of boys. Bussey and Bandura (1992) found that both girls and boys engaged in more same-sex than cross-sex typed behavior. However, when left with only highly cross-sex typed toys, girls engaged in significantly more play with the toys. In fact, most of the boys expressed some form of displeasure when left in a room with dolls and kitchen toys.

Parental and Other Early Influences

Infant Socialization

There is no question that sex is one of the most salient characteristics of an infant. Indeed, with the increasingly widespread use of ultrasound and other technology, many parents begin acting on differential gender expectations even before the baby's birth. Sweeney and Bradbard (1987) interviewed parents of newborns, finding that prior to birth, parents assume an "active" fetus to be male.

Almost immediately, newborn infants are characterized according to gender stereotypes associated with their biological sex. In 1974, Rubin examined the perceptions of parents of newborns, finding that within 24 hours of a baby's birth,

parents expressed stereotypical sentiments about their children. Girls were described as smaller, finer-featured, and less attentive than boys, despite the fact that the infants did not differ significantly on measures of weight, length, or APGAR scores. Two decades later, Monte (1994)replicated Rubin's study, finding that parents still make stereotypical assessments of their newborns based on sex, even when no differences are observable. There were also striking differences in mothers' and fathers' perceptions of their newborn infants, with mothers typically expressing less stereotyped expectations for their children than did fathers. Parents also expressed greater desire for sons than for daughters to have gender-consistent toys and clothing.

Adults perceive and treat babies, even the same baby, differently based on what sex they are told the baby is. Paludi and Gullo (1986) assessed adults' perceptions of infant behavior. When told the baby was a girl, the behavior was seen as feminine, and when told the baby was a boy, the behavior was seen as masculine. Will, Self and Datan (1976) discovered that although mothers claim not to treat girl and boy infants differently, when mothers were given the opportunity to interact with a baby girl or boy (actually the same infant dressed in pink or blue), they were more likely to offer a doll to the "girl" and a toy train to the "boy". It seems that adults consistently project certain judgments about children's behavior and characteristics based on sex, even when consciously asserting that they do not.

Parental Influence Beyond Infancy

There can be no doubt that adults function as teachers and role models for children as they are learning about most aspects of life. Adults raising young children impart a great deal of information about the many distinctions between and evaluations of gender roles, both intentionally and unintentionally. Caldera, Huston, and O'Brien (1989) noted that adults more closely structure and direct the play activities of girls than of boys. In their study of parent-child dyads, children showed greater involvement with same-sex toys than with cross-sex toys, even when controlling for the behavior of the parents. However, they also observed that parents had more positive initial reactions to toys associated with their child's sex.

The messages adults give children about gender are indeed absorbed. A longitudinal study conducted by Fagot and Leinbach (1989) revealed that some parents gave more positive and negative responses than did other parents to the sex-typed toy play of their 18-month-old children. The children of those parents were the earliest to "pass" a gender labeling task, showed more stereotypical play behavior at age 27 months, and scored higher on a sex role discrimination inventory at age four years.

Can a parental feminist orientation counteract some or all of the effects on children's attitudes of societal conditioning of gender roles? Connors (1982) examined the relationship between feminist and non-feminist mothers and their three- and four-year old children on measures of sex-role beliefs. Both groups of

mothers agreed that while sex-typing is not a desirable phenomenon, children are sex-typed. The children of feminist mothers, however, had much less rigid sex role attitudes on almost every measure than did children of non-feminist mothers, especially concerning feminine sex roles.

Nontraditional fathering can influence children's behavior as well. The findings of a longitudinal study of families in which fathers are the primary care providers and the mothers work full time address this point. According to the researcher, when the children "were 4 or 5...the stage at preschool when boys leave the doll corner and the girls leave the block corner, these children didn't give up one or the other" (Newsweek, 1990, p. 65). This lends credence to the "nurture" side of "nature vs. nurture". Having an example in the home of men as nurturers and women as breadwinners may counteract some of the cultural stereotypes imparted to children.

Even parents' occupations can have an effect on children's gender-typing. Barak, Feldman, and Noy (1991) discovered that the traditionality of mothers' occupation influenced the traditionality of preschoolers' occupational interests.

Not only do adults convey messages about the social appropriateness of various types of gendered behavior, they also attribute differentially to female and male children such characteristics as scholastic aptitudes and physical talents. Eccles et al. (1990) use attribution theory to explain the results of several studies which

show that parents have distorted perceptions of their children in gender-typed activities, such as math, English and sports. Parents' causal attributions for their children's performance in these activities are affected by the child's gender and by the parents' belief in "natural" differences between girls and boys. While the effects of these biases are not large, they are consistent. In turn, these biases in parental perception influence the activities and perceptions of the children themselves.

Another consistent finding in gender socialization research is that fathers generally display more stereotypical attitudes and behaviors than do mothers, especially when it comes to their sons. Mothers and fathers may also have differential influence on the development of gender in their children. Idle, Wood, and Desmarais (1993) asked mothers and fathers to rate the desirability of feminine, neutral, and masculine toys for their daughters and sons. Although both mothers and fathers of boys gave the lowest rating to feminine toys, fathers of boys gave the highest rating to masculine toys, and mothers of boys gave the highest rating to neutral toys. Both mothers and fathers of girls gave the highest rating to neutral toys. Monte's research (1994) revealed that fathers described their children, especially sons, along much more stereotypical lines than did mothers.

Toys

When adults select gender-typed toys for children, they are encouraging particular types of behaviors. Traditional toys for girls facilitate role-playing, nurturance, and play with others. Traditional toys for boys lend themselves to

motor-skill development and solitary play. It is also telling to note that many toys, even for infants and toddlers, symbolically relate to gender-typed occupations.

Adults, especially parents, can have a major influence on the types of toys young children play with - even aside from the obvious influence of selecting and purchasing the toys. Idle, Wood, and Desmarais (1993) found that preschoolers of both sexes responded with enthusiasm to feminine, masculine, and neutral toys presented by parents, suggesting that a "natural" gravitation to same-sex toys may actually be an artifact of parental selection. However, Caldera, Huston and O'Brien (1989) found that sex-stereotyped toys influenced parent-child interaction, even when controlling for the sex of parent and child. Feminine toys brought forth more comments and questions from parents, as well as a closer physical proximity between parent and child. Masculine toys elicited more frequent correction of children by parents, and more verbal "sound effects" rather than statements or queries. Children playing with masculine toys also maintained a greater distance from parents.

Cultural Representations of Gender

Critics of feminism often lament that feminist objections to stereotypical gender portrayals are nit-picky or trivial in nature, and that all the changes in gender relations that needed to take place already have. As Goffman so aptly explains in *Gender Advertisements*, no matter how "trivial some of these little gains and losses may appear to be, by summing them up across all the social situations in which they

occur, one can see that their total effect is enormous" (1979, p. 6).

As one example, Crabb and Bielawski (1994) examined illustrations in Caldecott Award children's books and found that representations of females and material culture have remained fairly stable since the 1930's. Female characters are still shown using mostly domestic artifacts and few production artifacts. Given that these books have received awards for their purported excellence, this finding is quite remarkable.

Caldecott Award books, though, may not be representative of the books children are exposed to in the real world. A more representative study of children's books was conducted by Kortenhaus and Demarest in 1993. They looked at the frequency of depiction of females and males as well as the characterizations associated with each over five decades. They found a more even distribution of sexes in recent books than in older books. However, the pattern of passive dependence in female characters and instrumental independence in male characters changed only subtly over time. "Girls, it would seem, are still busy creating problems that require masculine solutions. These characterizations provide children with a strong message as to the gender appropriateness of active and passive roles" (p. 230). When faced with a problem, girls cried and boys solved it. There also remained an emphasis on the valuation of female characters on the basis of their beauty.

In an analysis of children's greeting cards, Murphy (1994) discovered distinct differences between cards for girls and boys. About three-quarters of all cards were designated for one sex only. Among cards for girls, the dominant images and themes were beauty, sweetness, and passivity. When girls were shown engaged in an activity, it tended to be stereotypical in nature (shopping, talking on the phone, cheerleading, etc.). Boys' cards had dominant images and themes of competition, adventure, and occupation (astronaut, athlete, cowboy, etc.). Perhaps the most disturbing pattern was the denigration of emotion in boys' cards. Several cards targeted to boys contained text which "mocked or undercut" the very sentiments which would presumably motivate the sending of the card - love and affection. As Murphy notes, greeting cards send messages to the recipient not only about the specific holiday, but about what the sender perceives the recipient's characteristics and preferences to be. Given that these types of cards are usually given by significant people in the child's life, their messages have special import.

Based on her research, Cadoff (1992) comments on television as an agent of gender socialization. Given that American children watch an average of twenty hours of television each week, the content of children's programming carries considerable weight. Almost without exception, the main characters and heroes of children's programming are males. When females are featured, they tend to be portrayed in stereotypical ways. Another study (Smith, 1994) showed that boys are featured more often than girls in television advertising during children's

programming, and that boys were shown in more settings outside the home. Overall, the advertisements portrayed stereotypical gender roles. When Hoffner (1996) examined why children identify with favorite television characters, she found that both girls and boys identified with male characters. Further, identification with male characters was predicted by the character's strength for boys only, while only girls identified with male characters based on their humor. In contrast, only girls identified with female characters, and attractiveness was the only significant predictor. Clearly, children are influenced by gender roles as portrayed in children's television programs.

Of increasing popularity among children are video and computer games. Provenzo's 1992 examination of video games revealed essentially the same pattern. Very few female characters exist, and those who do are typically victims to be rescued, not "hero" characters whose identities players can assume. Video games are primarily played by boys, and their themes revolve around violence and aggression.

Aside from explicitly child-oriented media, children are exposed to a multitude of advertisements, television shows, magazines, billboards and the like which are aimed at adult markets. These, too, are loaded with messages about what it is to be female and male, and no doubt play a role in children's formulation of gender conceptions.

Preschool Environment

As more children spend substantial amounts of time in preschool settings, the process of gender acquisition in such settings becomes more salient. Unfortunately, little research is available. How do differing daycare environments influence gender development? How does the effect of daycare interact with that of parents? These are questions which are worthy of further research efforts, and the answers to which have important implications for the future of gender relations.

Girls and boys have different experiences within the preschool setting. Levy (1994) suggests that girls and boys inhabit different environments within preschool settings, and that these contrasts in environment lead to cognitive differences. Boys spend more time in outdoor and active play, while girls spend more time in static, indoor play. These play patterns affect the types of information children are exposed to, and consequently, their social and cognitive activities.

Preschool teachers have a potentially tremendous influence on the messages the children will be exposed to while in their charge. Gender stereotypes may be so entrenched, however, that even teachers with the most egalitarian intentions still convey traditional gender values. While studying two daycare programs, Lloyd (1989) heard teachers express a desire to allow children to experience an environment free of gender constrictions. Indeed, the teachers did manage to encourage mixed-sex play groups in organized activities, but group composition remained largely single-sex when the teachers were not directly overseeing the

activity. Additionally, when girls could not gain access to the construction and vehicle toys in the classroom due to the boys' complete control of these areas, teachers were hesitant to intervene. The head teacher cited the "natural" tendency for boys to be more active and to require more space. Despite the teachers' verbal agreement with non-sexist ideals, they still tended to naturalize gender differences.

A key component of the traditional feminine role is the exclusive and obligatory care of children. The vast majority (more than 95%) of child care workers are women (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). One way in which children, young boys in particular, could gain some concrete experience in non-traditional gender roles would be to observe and interact with male preschool teachers. Robinson (1988) explains the difference in attitudes between 1968, when he was first hired as a child care teacher, and today. "There was concern that little boys were being feminized by all-female teaching staffs, and more men in the lives of young children became a popular solution to the problem" (p. 46). Apparently no one was concerned about little boys being feminized by remaining in the home with their mothers. Recently, however, "a wave of fear has resurrected old taboos, with hair-raising (accounts) about sexual abuse in child care centers. Once again, men in day care have become suspect. Several child care administrators I know adamantly refuse to hire men" (Robinson, 1988, p. 48). In his study of male child care workers, Robinson discovered that rather than providing a more "masculine" model for children, the men behaved in much the same way as their female counterparts,

thereby providing examples of warm, nurturing, and intimate men. In fact, many of these men consciously tried to downplay gender stereotypes in the classroom by leading girls and boys toward non-traditional play activities. What effect a more even distribution of male and female preschool teachers would have on the gender-typing of children is unknown.

Effect of Child's Age

Another consistent finding in gender research is that older children display even more knowledge of and adherence to gender stereotypes than do younger children. This has face validity no matter which theory is adopted as a framework. For example, gender schema theory explicitly outlines the agewise progression of gender knowledge, and a social learning position would argue that the accumulation of experiences leads to more refined and solidified gender conceptions. When developing a psychometric scale for the assessment of gendered behavior of preschool-age children, Golombok and Rust (1993) found that children's scores on the Pre-School Activities Inventory show more gender-typing with increasing age. Older children had significantly more accurate sequencing than younger children of masculine and feminine gender scripts in Boston and Levy's 1991 study. Lloyd (1989) also found that children's ability to label the gender of people and the gender-type of toys improved with age.

Supporting the view that gender development involves a shift from socially guided control to self-regulatory control of gender-linked behavior are the findings

of Bussey and Bandura (1992). In their research, older children had more negative anticipatory self-reactions to cross-sex behavior, and more positive anticipatory self-reactions to same-sex behavior. These self-sanctions, in turn, predicted their actual behavior.

HYPOTHESES

Gender socialization is clearly an important arena for continuing research. The possible variables and influences are so many that any one study of the topic has the potential to illuminate only some small piece of the larger puzzle. Based on the literature just described, and applied within the daycare context also described earlier, five hypotheses were set forth and examined in the present study. They are as follows:

1) Girls will be less gender-typed than boys.

2) Mothers will have less traditional gender attitudes than fathers.

3) Younger children will be less sex-typed than older children.

4) Children in gender-progressive daycare environments will be less gender-typed than children in gender-traditional daycare environments.

5) Children's degree of gender-typing will be positively associated with their parents' degree of gender-typing.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGY

The study was designed to examine some of the factors associated with gender socialization and gender identity among preschool children. Specifically, the research explored the relationships between the gender-typing of preschool children, attitudes and beliefs of parents about gender-consistent roles for children, and preschool teaching practices. Three preschools in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area served as study sites. The researcher individually interviewed children and teachers in each participating classroom, and questionnaires were distributed to parents of participating children. Overall, 79 children and nine teachers were interviewed, and 101 parents completed self-administered surveys.

SAMPLE

One of the preschools was the Helen Gordon Child Development Center (HG), located on the Portland State University campus. This center provided a robust "treatment" or experimental condition, as it has both an explicit diversity policy and an anti-bias curriculum. One of the most progressive preschools in the Portland area, it serves mostly PSU faculty and student parents, with some general

community enrollment. It also has a male-to-female staff ratio of approximately 1:4. This ratio reflects a much larger than average proportion of male child-care staff, which in and of itself may be effectively providing children, especially boys, with counter-stereotypical examples of appropriate male behavior.

Other potential preschool sites were identified through the general telephone directory. Criteria for selection included an enrollment of at least 30 children between the ages of two and five, location within the Portland area, and no anti-bias curriculum. Recruitment of potential preschools was no small task, as most prospective centers were justifiably hesitant to allow an unknown researcher into the lives of the children in their charge. Verbal consent from the director or other head administrator was obtained before proceeding.

Two other daycares were eventually selected. One of them, Little Persons Learning Center (LP), is one in a large chain of daycare centers. It is located in a downtown office building. Although somewhat progressive in its acknowledgment of diversity, it does little in the way of actively addressing gender issues. The other center, Vermont Hills Family Life Center (VH), is a part of a smaller chain of daycare centers. It operates from, but is not affiliated with, a large church. Although the staff and administration are aware of the concepts of diversity and multiculturalism, they did not address gender issues at all except to single out one child as a challenge because "she thinks she's a boy." This range of approaches to gender issues was, for the purposes of this research, a welcome mixture.

Explanatory letters and consent forms were distributed to the parents of every child enrolled at each of the three centers (see Appendix A for copies of this material), and a secure place in each center was established for parents to return the forms. Upon collection of consent forms, the children's names were put on a list and assigned identification numbers.

Consent forms were distributed to the parents of approximately 40 children at VH and LP, while the parents of more than 80 children were similarly approached at HG. The final sample of children (N=79) included 51 from HG, 10 from LP, and 18 from VH. The large number of children from HG is partly a result of enrollment size, and partly because in a University-operated center, parents are more amenable and accustomed to research requests.

Surveys for the parental data were distributed to the parents of every participating child. Some parents did not return the survey, and thus for some children there are no parental data. Additionally, a few of the children didn't want to participate, although their parents had previously agreed to take part in the research. The data collected in these cases were not discarded, because they still contribute to the overall analysis. A total of 101 parents, step-parents, or guardians completed surveys. Of the 99 parents who indicated their sex, fifty-four percent (n=54) were mothers, and 46% (n=45) were fathers. At HG, 61 parents completed surveys, and of those, there were 35 families where both parent and child data exist. At LP, 12 parents completed surveys, and there were six families where both parent and child

data exist. At VH, 28 parents completed surveys, and there were 13 families where both parent and child data exist. Parents were mostly white, middle-income, married couples.

One teacher in each of the nine participating classrooms (four classrooms at HG, three classrooms at VH, and two classrooms at LP) was interviewed. Only one of these was male, and he taught the youngest group of children at HG.

PROCEDURES

In order to familiarize the children with my presence, I spent at least three hours in each classroom. I came back on another day and invited participating children to "help me learn about kids" by "looking at some pictures". Although not given details about the research at that time, teachers assisted in identifying children on the participant list, and in assessing which children seemed "ready" or "in the mood" to go with me. In some cases, children were hesitant or unwilling, either because they were already engaged in an activity, or because they were nervous. I gave each initially refusing child an additional invitation on another day. Two refusals disqualified per from the study. For each preschool, a quiet place outside of the classrooms was used for interviewing. All interviews were tape-recorded and reviewed for accuracy in interpretation of qualitative responses.

Only when all participating children at one center had been interviewed were appointments set to meet with head teachers there. Before being interviewed, the

teachers read and signed consent forms (see Appendix B for a copy of this form).

Again, each interview was tape-recorded and reviewed.

Lastly, after all participating teachers at a preschool had been interviewed, instructions and questionnaires were distributed to parents. Two self-administered questionnaires were distributed for each participating child, in the hope that each parent or guardian would complete one. Of course, not all children are in the custody or care of two adults, in which case instructions asked the parent to fill out one copy and return the other. The same drop-box or envelope used for consent forms was used for survey collection. A period of two weeks was allowed for parents to complete and return the questionnaires.

INSTRUMENTS

The children's interviews consisted of two open-ended questions and a brief toy preference task, with responses recorded on tape and on paper (see Appendix C for copies of these materials). The first question, "What kinds of things do you like to do?" was intended only to establish rapport with the child. I attempted to elicit two responses from each child, prompting them if necessary. Prompts included questions such as "What else do you like to do?" and "What do you like to do when you're not at preschool?" Once two responses were given, the paired toy preference task was initiated.

Previous research has convincingly established which kinds of toys are

typically associated with femininity, masculinity, and neutrality (Bauer, 1993;

Bussey and Bandura, 1992; Caldera, Huston, and O'Brien, 1989; Carter and Levy,

1988; Golombok and Rust, 1993; Idle, Wood, and Desmarais, 1993; Levy, 1994b;

Lobel and Menashri, 1993). This part of the interview required children to look at a

series of picture pairs, and to point to the toy they preferred from each pair. Pictures

were black-and-white line drawings of stereotypically feminine (F), masculine (M)

and neutral (N) toys (see Appendix D for a copy of the picture pairs). Ten pairs were

presented in the following order for each child - NM, FM, FF, MF, NF, NF, MF,

MM, FM, MN. Feminine toys were a baby doll, jewelry, a dollhouse, and a tea set.

Masculine toys were a tool set, a football, a sword, and a truck. Neutral toys were a

teddy bear, a puzzle, and building blocks. Children's choices were recorded on

paper and coded at a later time.

After the toy pairs were presented, the children were shown another series of

line drawings. These pictures were shown singly rather than in pairs (see Appendix

E for a copy of the unpaired toy pictures), and children rated the desirability of each

toy on a 3-point Likert scale. This was accomplished by giving the children a

"happy face" scale, showing a smiling face, a neutral face, and a sad face (see

Appendix F for a copy of the scale). The children were instructed to point to the sad

face if they didn't like the toy shown at all, the neutral face if they liked the toy a

little bit, and the happy face if they liked the toy a lot. In order to ensure

comprehension of the scale, two test pictures were shown first - a birthday cake with

presents, and an arm getting a shot. Data for the two children who chose the sad face for the birthday picture and the happy face for the shot picture were eliminated from the analysis of this section.

The last item in the child interview was another open-ended question, "What would you do if you woke up tomorrow and you were a *(opposite sex child)*?" Sadker and Sadker (1994) asked grade-schoolers a very similar question, with fascinating results. The girls gave a wide range of responses, but the boys were almost universally appalled and disgusted. Many boys actually indicated they would commit suicide rather than live life as a girl. I was interested in seeing if a similar pattern would be evident in younger children. Responses also provided additional information on the children's gender valuations. Analysis of this qualitative data was accomplished through a combination of content analysis and quantitative ratings. The children's responses were first coded into broad categories, then assigned a rating as being either positive, neutral, or negative in quality.

Due to the more exploratory nature of the examination of preschool influence, the teacher interviews were looser in structure, although the same seven questions were asked of all (see Appendix G for a copy of the interview questions). A general question about the curriculum served as an introduction, followed by three questions specifically asking about diversity and multicultural issues in the classroom. The last three questions were items rating the frequency with which children's behavior prompts teachers to address gender issues, the frequency of

planned activities incorporating explanations of gender, and the number of activities recently used by teachers to address gender in the classroom.

The instrument used to collect information from parents was a three-page survey including questions, derived largely from prior research, meant to tap gender-socializing orientation (see Appendix H for a copy of the questionnaire). Examples are items rating such things as: the importance of dressing girls and boys in gender-consistent clothing; the importance of others correctly identifying the sex of their child; the degree of natural difference between boys and girls; and the importance of their child acting like a child of per own sex. One section asked parents to rate the importance of various stereotypically feminine, masculine and neutral activities to their child's development. Another section was an alphanumeric replication of the paired toy preference task administered to the children. Also included were questions to ascertain the degree of gender-typed division of household labor, although that data was not analyzed in the present study. The remainder of the questionnaire consisted of demographic items about family income, education, employment status, race, religious and political conservatism/liberalism, sibling and parent configuration, as well as the child's age, sex, race, and time in attendance at preschool. This information was used to describe the sample and to provide control variables in the analysis of data.

GENDER TYPING MEASURES

The children's level of gender typing was defined by a score based on

responses to the paired toy preference task. For each toy pair, with the exception of the FF and MM pairs, one point was given for a same-sex choice, two points for a neutral choice, and three points for an other-sex choice. These points were then summed, with a possible range of 10 to 30 points, and then 10 points was subtracted from the total to allow for a possible range from 0 to 20 points. A score of 0 would indicate the child picked the toy stereotyped for per own sex every time one was presented, and a neutral toy when no same-sex toy was presented. A score of 20 would indicate the child picked the toy stereotyped for the other sex every time one was presented, and a neutral toy when no other-sex toy was presented. The highest score of any child in this study was 12. The same scoring method was used to assign a score to the parents' toy preferences for their child, with the scores based on the sex of the child.

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

All data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software. Parent and child demographic profiles were compared by study site. Most of the analysis was performed by using cross-tabulations and means comparisons with ANOVA of key variables. Eta was used as a PRE measure for cross-tabulations using sex of parent or child as an independent variable. The essential dependent variable, children's score on the paired toy preference task, was examined as a function of child's sex, parents' score, preschool, classroom, child's age and other demographic data. Parents' scores on the paired toy preference task were cross-

tabulated by parent's sex, child's sex, preschool site, and political and religious orientation. Additionally, other survey data from the parents were analyzed in relation to parent's and child's sex. The data from the interviews with teachers were used mainly as an aid to understanding the qualitative differences between the three preschools. Each classroom was assigned a score based on how often gender issues are addressed.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The non-representative nature of the sample constrains the generalizability of the findings. The parents were largely white, middle-class and formally educated. Also, the study sites were large, center-based preschools. Many children who attend daycare do so in private homes or in smaller centers.

Another consideration is the validity of the gender typing measure. A forced-choice measure may not be indicative of children's real life toy choices and play behavior. It is also uncertain how demand characteristics (behavior or responses altered by virtue of respondents' desire to "give the right answer") may have come into play for the children, parents and teachers. Admittedly, this study does not provide a comprehensive picture of preschoolers' gender socialization. That would be a daunting task, indeed, given the complexity of gender-related influences and outcomes. Instead, the research is meant to be taken as part of a larger body of work, shedding a bit of light on a very complicated process.

CHAPTER IV:
FINDINGS

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Of the 79 children interviewed, 40 were girls and 39 were boys. The children

ranged in age from 32 to 67 months, with a mean age of approximately 49 months.

Interestingly, information about the children's race was one of the questionnaire

items parents seemed most reluctant to complete. It was provided for only 57 of the

79 participating children. Of the cases for which data are available, nearly eighty

percent of the children were white, with "other" being the next most frequent

response. This may be a result of the problematic nature of race classifications in

general. The only center at which more than one non-white child was reported was

HG. Another difference revealed in the demographic data relates to household

income. The HG households had much greater variation in income, and this center

was the only one reporting *any* households with annual incomes less than $20,000.

Contributing to this difference is the student status of many of the HG parents. More

detailed demographic descriptions of the children are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Children, by Preschool

	HG		LP		VH		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
TOTAL	51	64.6	10	12.7	18	22.8	79	100.0
Girls	26	51.0	6	60.0	8	44.4	40	50.6
Boys	25	49.0	4	40.0	10	55.6	39	49.4
Total	51	100.0	10	100.0	18	100.0	79	100.0
Race/Ethnicity								
White	25	69.4	6	100.0	14	93.3	45	78.9
Other	7	19.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	12.3
Asian	2	5.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.5
Pac. Is.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	6.7	1	1.8
Hispanic	1	2.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.8
Native Am.	1	2.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.8
Total	36	100.0	6	100.0	15	100.0	57	100.0
Household Income								
< 10k	3	8.1	0	0	0	0.0	3	5.2
10k - 20k	5	13.5	0	0	0	0.0	5	8.6
20k - 30k	2	5.4	1	16.7	0	0.0	3	5.2
30k - 40k	5	13.5	0	0.0	2	13.3	6	10.3
40k - 60k	9	24.3	0	0.0	3	20.0	12	20.7
> 60k	13	35.1	5	83.3	10	66.7	29	50.0
Total	37	100.0	6	100.0	15	100.0	58	100.0

Table 2: Children's Age in Months, by Sex and Preschool

	GIRLS		BOYS		TOTAL	
	n	x	n	x	n	x
HG	20	49.3	17	49.6	37	49.4
LP	4	45.8	2	65.0	6	52.2
VH	6	45.0	9	52.0	15	49.2
Total	30	48.0	28	51.5	58	49.7

Demographic data on the parents are shown in Tables 3 and 4. Of the 101 parents who completed questionnaires, 54 were mothers, 45 were fathers and two did not provide information about their sex. At HG, there were 24 cases where both parents of a child completed questionnaires, 13 cases where one parent completed a questionnaire, and 14 cases where neither parent filled out a questionnaire. At LP there were six cases where both parents of a child completed questionnaires, four cases where neither parent completed a questionnaire, and no cases where only one parent completed a questionnaire. At VH, there were 13 cases where both parents of a child completed questionnaires, two cases where only one parent completed a questionnaire, and three cases where neither parent filled out a questionnaire. The mean age of the parents was somewhat surprising – 36.7 years for mothers, and 38.9 for fathers, with little difference between the three centers (see Table 3). It was especially unexpected at HG, where approximately two-thirds of the parents are students. The parents were well-educated, with only one of 100 parents reporting no college experience, and a full 76% reporting at least a Bachelor's degree.

The parents were less reluctant to complete the questionnaire item about their own race than their children's race – 100 out of 101 participating parents responded. Again, the profile is overwhelmingly white, and the only center reporting non-white parents was HG.

The parents' income data is similar in structure to that of the children, but it should be noted that Table 4 shows selected characteristics, including income,

reported by *each individual* parent, while the data in Table 1 shows the household

income reported for each individual child. For the 24 cases where a discrepancy

existed between the reported household incomes of mothers and fathers, it was

necessary to assign the child an income category. If there was a category midway

between those reported separately by each of the parents, that category was assigned

to the child. If the two reported categories were proximate, the higher income was

used for the child data.

Most (83%) of the parents were married. Although HG had the highest

percentage of married parents, it also had the greatest variety in relationship statuses,

and was the only center in which any parents reported their status as "partnered".

This is the most nontraditional status, and may reflect some nontraditionality in

gender role attitudes.

The picture painted by the demographic profile of both the child and adult

participants is not representative of the larger population, especially in regard to race

and education. This should be taken into account when interpreting the results or

making inferences.

Table 3: Parents' Age in Years, by Sex and Preschool

	MOTHERS		FATHERS	
	x	n	x	n
HG	36.1	23	38.6	23
LP	37.0	6	38.2	6
VH	37.6	13	39.8	13
Total	36.7	42	38.9	42

Table 4: Demographic Profile of Parents, by Preschool

	HG		LP		VH		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
TOTAL	61	60.4	12	11.9	28	27.3	101	100
Mothers	34	56.7	6	50.0	14	51.9	54	54.5
Fathers	26	43.3	6	50.0	13	48.1	45	45.5
Total	60	100.0	12	100.0	27	100.0	99	100.0
Race/Ethnicity								
White	52	86.7	12	100.0	28	100.0	92	92.0
Other	1	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Asian	1	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Pac. Is.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Native Am.	1	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Hispanic	4	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	4.0
Black	1	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Total	60	100.0	12	100.0	28	100.0	100	100.0
Household Income								
< 10k	4	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	4.0
10k - 20k	7	11.7	1	8.3	0	0.0	8	8.0
20k - 30k	3	5.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	4	4.0
30k - 40k	4	6.7	0	0.0	2	7.1	6	6.0
40k - 60k	17	28.3	1	8.3	8	28.6	26	26.0
> 60k	25	41.7	9	75.0	18	64.3	52	52.0
Total	60	100.0	12	100.0	28	100.0	100	100.0
Relationship Status								
Married	50	90.0	10	83.3	24	85.7	84	83.2
Separated	2	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.0
Partnered	4	6.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	4.0
Divorced	1	1.6	1	8.3	3	10.7	5	5.0
Single	4	6.6	1	8.3	1	3.6	6	6.0
Total	61	100.0	12	100.0	28	100.0	101	100.0
Education								
HS/GED	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Some college	15	24.6	3	25.0	1	3.7	19	19.0
Bachelor's	18	29.5	6	50.0	11	40.7	35	35.0
Grad school	6	9.8	1	8.3	1	3.7	8	8.0
Grad degree	20	32.8	2	16.7	11	40.7	33	33.0
Other	1	1.6	0	0.0	3	11.1	4	4.0
Total	61	100.0	12	100.0	27	100.0	100	100.0

H1: GIRLS WILL BE LESS GENDER-TYPED THAN BOYS

The most striking finding by far was that the girls and the boys were so very

different, and that, in support of H1, girls were less gender-typed than boys. The

children's degree of gender-typing was defined by their score on the toy preference

task. The possible range of scores is from 0 to 20, with a score of 0 indicating that

the child had picked the toy most closely fitting the gender stereotype for per own

sex every time. A score of 20 would indicate that the child had picked the toy most

closely fitting the gender stereotype for a child of the opposite sex every time. The

highest score obtained by a child in this study was 12.

For the entire sample, the girls' scores ranged from 0 to 12, with a mean

score of 5.84. The boys' scores, however, ranged from 0 to 7, with a mean score of

2.19. The girls were much less rigid in their stated preferences, while the boys

exhibited a comparatively narrow range of choices (see Table 5 and Figure 1).

Table 5: Children's Mean Toy Preference Scores, by Sex of Child

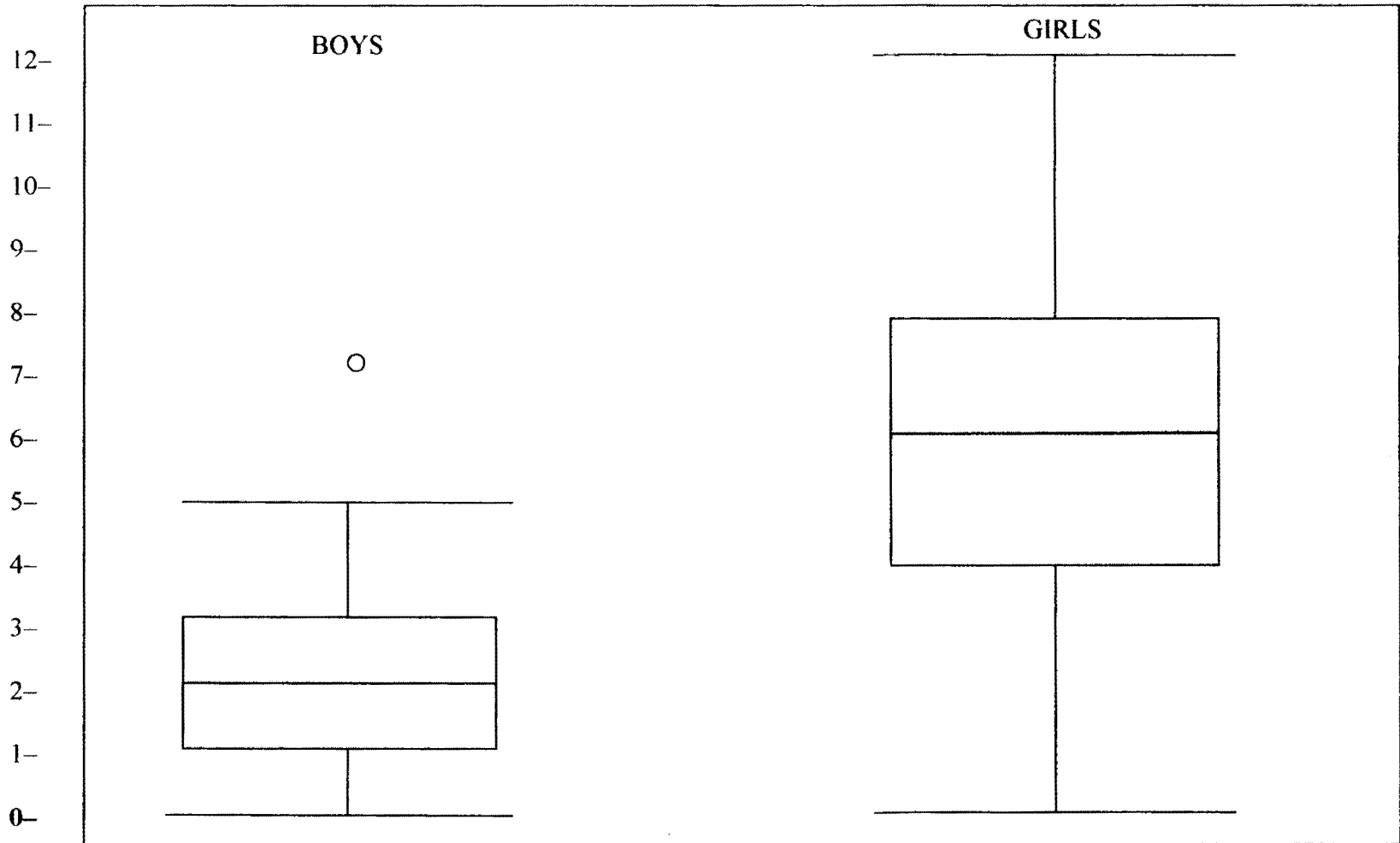|	GIRLS		BOYS		TOTAL	
SCORE	n	%	n	%	n	%
0	1	2.6	7	18.9	8	10.7
1	4	10.5	7	18.9	11	14.7
2	3	7.9	7	18.9	10	13.3
3	0	0	9	24.3	9	12.0
4	3	7.9	4	10.8	7	9.3
5	5	13.2	2	5.4	7	9.3
6	5	13.2	0	0	5	6.7
7	6	15.8	1	2.7	7	9.3
8	5	13.2	0	0	5	6.7
9	2	5.3	0	0	2	2.7
10	1	2.6	0	0	1	1.3
11	1	2.6	0	0	1	1.3
12	2	5.3	0	0	2	2.7
Total	38	100	37	100	75	100

Eta=0.594 p=.000

Figure 1: Boxplot of Boys' and Girls' Toy Preference Scores

Another way to gauge the children's gender perceptions is by examining their responses to the question "What would you do if you woke up tomorrow and you were a (opposite sex child)?" Responses were coded as positive (1 point), neutral (2 points), or negative (3 points).

Positive responses were those in which the child mentioned being happy, feeling good, making others feel happy or good, welcoming the transformation, or identifying other positive consequences. An example of a positive comment is the following statement by a little girl: "My mom and dad would love me." Although it is unclear whether by this she meant they would love her just the same, or even more than they already did, the remark shows a beneficial outcome. Neutral responses were those in which the child mentioned another transformation, such as turning into a butterfly, transformation of others, engaging in behavior perceived to be appropriate for opposite sex children, or continuing with a normal routine. One example is the following response from a little boy: "I'd get dressed and eat cereal, then I'd go to school". Negative responses were those in which the child mentioned feeling sad, angry, or bad, disliking opposite sex children, disliking toys or activities perceived to be for opposite sex children, requesting help from an adult, or negative reactions of others. One example of a negative comment is "I'd stay sick at home."

Although each child was prompted for two responses to this question, some children gave one response or no response. Table 6 shows the mean score of response by sex of child.

Table 6: Mean Score of Responses to "What If..." Question, by Child's Sex

MEAN SCORE	GIRLS		BOYS		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1.0 (one or two positive)	1	3.0	3	8.8	4	6.0
1.5 (one positive, one neutral)	1	3.0	2	5.9	3	4.5
2.0 (one or two neutral, or one positive and one negative))	6	18.2	8	23.5	14	20.9
2.5 (one neutral, one negative)	10	30.3	4	11.8	14	20.9
3.0 (one or two negative)	15	45.4	17	50.0	32	47.8
Total	33	100	34	100	67	100

The analysis of these responses revealed some surprises. Based on similar questions asked of older children, one might have expected more boys than girls to have negative comments, and more girls than boys to have positive comments. Such was not the case with these children. Although negative comments accounted for the largest share of comments for both girls and boys, girls had a higher proportion of negative or negative-neutral responses, and boys had more neutral and positive responses than girls. Especially interesting is the fact that many children with similar scores on the paired toy preference task expressed very different sentiments during the "What if..." portion of the interview. Table 7 lists several verbatim responses of girls and boys to the "What if..." question, along with the same child's score on the paired toy preference task.

The paired toy preference scores indicate little flexibility in toy preference for boys, while the "What if..." scenario suggests that the children are generally very aware of the differing expectations for boys and girls, but that, at this age, some boys can still imagine being female without extreme negative connotations.

Table 7: "What If ..." Responses and Toy Preference Scores, by Child's Sex

SCORE	RESPONSE
	Girls
11	*Be sad. I don't play with boys very much. I play with girls.*
8	*I'd get a big basketball. I'd be happy, 'cause I'd be a boy.*
8	*Play with boy toys, like Power Rangers and space creatures.*
7	*Pee standing up. My mom and dad would turn into boys. My mom and dad would love me.*
2	*I would be a frog, 'cause I'd eat flies.*
0	*Get sad for my mom. I'd stay sick at home, not feeling good. My body hurts. I'd have a stomachache.*
	Boys
7	*I'd feel like I wanted to go to a gir-rl* (said with exaggerated effeminacy) *class, and do easy exercises. I'd feel kinda weird. I'd like to feel my hair, 'cause it's so long. I'd like it this much* (said with hands held six inches apart).
4	*I should stay into a boy. I wouldn't feel good.*
4	*Play with a dollhouse. Be happy.*
1	*Sad. I don't like girls.* (This same child refused to choose between play jewelry and a dollhouse on the toy preference task)
0	*I would be a fairy, and buy a magic wand. I would feel good.*
0	*Try to turn back into a boy, 'cause I don't like girls, 'cause girls just like Barbies and dollhouses, but boys like cool toys.*

0=no opposite-gender toy choices   20=no same-gender toy choices

H2: MOTHERS WILL BE MORE GENDER-PROGRESSIVE THAN FATHERS

An examination of the parents' toy preference scores shows support for H2.

Mothers' toy preferences were significantly less traditional than fathers' (p=.000).

Mothers' scores ranged from 2 to 11, with a mean of 5.49, and fathers' scores ranged

from 0 to 7, with a mean of 3.67. Further broken down by sex of the child, it is plain

to see that both mothers and fathers are less flexible regarding toys for their sons

than for their daughters (see Table 8). The least flexibility is among fathers' toy preferences for their sons.

Table 8: Parents' Mean Toy Preference Scores by Sex, Sex of Child and Preschool

	MOTHERS				FATHERS			
	Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys	
	5.96		4.96		4.83		2.96	
	n	x	n	x	n	x	n	x
HG	17	6.24	13	5.31	11	4.73	14	3.28
LP	4	5.50	2	6.00	4	4.00	2	2.00
VH	6	5.50	9	4.22	3	6.33	9	2.67
TOTAL	27	5.96	24	4.96	18	4.83	25	2.96

A one-way ANOVA shows that fathers' toy preference scores vary significantly for girls and boys (p=.001, Eta=.501), while the variation in mothers' scores is not significant (p=.069, Eta=.257).

In general, mothers of girls were the least gender-stereotyped, followed by mothers of boys, fathers of girls, and fathers of boys. However, mothers and fathers at different preschools had different patterns of scores. Only at LP did mothers of boys have more gender-flexible scores than mothers of girls, and only at VH did fathers of girls have more gender-flexible scores than mothers of either girls or boys.

The parent questionnaire also contained a section asking the parents to rate the importance of three "feminine", three neutral, and three "masculine" activities to the development of their child. Results are presented in Table 9. One important thing to note is the lack of extremes regarding the cross-sex activities. For example,

playing house and baby care were not seen as completely unimportant for boys. What's also interesting here is that mothers of boys rated eight of the items, including all of the "feminine" and "masculine" activities, as more important than did mothers of girls, the exception being a neutral item, playing with board games. Fathers, however, showed almost the exact opposite pattern. Fathers of girls rated seven of the items as more important than did fathers of boys. The exceptions were the "masculine" activity playing at fighting, and the neutral activity of using playground or gym equipment. The biggest gap in mothers' valuations was for playing with balls, with mothers of boys rating it as more important than mothers of girls. For fathers, the biggest gap occurred around playing at baby care. Fathers of girls rated this item as much more important than did fathers of boys.

Table 9: Parents' Mean Scores on Developmental Activity Items, by Sex and Sex of Child

	MOTHERS			FATHERS		
	Girls	Boys		Girls	Boys	
	n=29	n=26		n=21	n=25	
ACTIVITIES			Gap			Gap
Playing house (F)	2.10	1.81	+0.29	2.38	2.62	-0.24
Playing at baby care (F)	2.10	2.04	+0.06	2.33	2.96	-0.63
Dress-up (F)	2.27	2.11	+0.06	2.47	2.92	-0.45
Playing with animals (N)	2.10	1.88	+0.22	2.10	2.32	-0.22
Board games (N)	2.24	2.38	-0.14	2.33	2.60	-0.27
Playground/gym equip. (N)	1.66	1.65	+0.01	1.81	1.80	+0.01
Playing with balls (M)	2.28	1.96	+0.32	2.33	2.36	-0.03
Organized sports (M)	2.79	2.57	+0.22	2.57	2.76	-0.19
Playing at fighting(M)	4.20	4.07	+0.13	3.95	3.72	+0.23

1=extremely important   2=very important   3=somewhat important
4=not very important   5=not at all important

Another interesting result is that mothers of both girls and boys rated five of the nine items (playing house, playing with balls, playing at baby care, playground/gym equipment use, and playing with board games) as more important than did fathers of either girls or boys. While playing at fighting was seen as the least important activity by both mothers and fathers, it was the only item which fathers of both boys and girls rated more important than mothers of either boys or girls.

Also included in the parent questionnaire were several items meant to tap deeper attitudes about children's gender. Table 10 shows the mean scores for these items by sex of parent and sex of child. For the first five items, higher scores indicate a more gender-traditional emphasis. For the last two items, higher scores indicate a greater likelihood of the parent purchasing either a stereotypically feminine or stereotypically masculine shirt for per child. Thus, for the item "buy a feminine shirt", higher scores for parents of girls reflect gender traditionality, while higher scores for parents of boys indicate a more gender-flexible orientation. For the item "buy a masculine shirt", the opposite is true. Higher scores for parents of girls represent more gender-flexibility, while higher scores for parents of boys denote gender traditionality.

When asked to characterize the degree of difference (aside from physical differences) between boys and girls , parents of girls perceived a greater difference than did parents of boys, with fathers of girls perceiving the most difference.

Table 10: Parents' Mean Scores on Gender Consistency Items, by Sex and Sex of Child

	MOTHERS				FATHERS			
	Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys	
	n	x	n	x	n	x	n	x
Natural difference[a]	29	1.86	26	2.04	21	1.62	25	2.04
Child act like own sex[b]	27	3.07	25	2.72	21	2.67	24	2.46
Others identify child's sex[b]	29	2.59	26	2.81	20	2.70	25	2.44
Dress a girl like a girl[b]	29	2.79	26	3.23	21	2.71	25	2.80
Dress a boy like a boy[b]	29	2.34	26	2.85	21	2.43	25	2.28
Buy a feminine shirt[c]	28	1.75	26	2.23	21	2.00	25	2.40
Buy a masculine shirt[c]	28	1.86	26	2.15	21	2.00	25	2.04

a) 1=very different   2= somewhat different   3=not very different   4=not at all different
b) 1=very important   2= somewhat important   3=not very important   4=not at all important
c) 1=definitely   2=probably   3=probably not   4=definitely not

Parents also rated how important it is to them for their child to act in a gender-consistent fashion. The mean scores for this item are exactly what would be predicted by Hypothesis 2. Mothers of both girls and boys rated it as less important than did fathers of girls or boys. Both mothers and fathers placed more importance on gender-consistent behavior for sons than for daughters.

Another pattern emerged for an item about the importance of other people correctly recognizing the sex of their child. Fathers of boys saw this as more important than did fathers of girls, while mothers of girls thought it was more important than did mothers of boys.

There were four items related to the importance of gender and clothing. Two questions asked the parents to rate the general importance of dressing children in

gender-consistent clothing. Two questions asked the parents to rate the likelihood of purchasing particular items of clothing for their child: a grey shirt with the emblem of a professional football team, and a light purple shirt with a picture of *The Little Mermaid*. Across the board, dressing a boy like a boy was seen as more important than dressing a girl like a girl. Mothers of girls were more likely to buy the feminine shirt and the masculine shirt than were mothers of boys. Fathers of girls were equally inclined to buy the feminine and masculine shirts, but fathers of boys were more likely to buy the masculine shirt.

Because religious and political institutions are powerful conveyors and reflections of gender norms, mothers' and fathers' ratings of their own religious and political orientations were compared with their paired toy preference scores. This examination was intended to test for a link between either liberalism or conservatism and gender beliefs. Neither mothers' nor fathers' paired toy preference scores had correlations with their religious or political belief scores that were significant at or below the .05 level. However, for both mothers and fathers there were highly significant correlations between religious and political belief scores (p= .000 for both mothers and fathers). Mothers held more liberal religious and political beliefs than did fathers, although taken together, both mothers and fathers expressed mostly liberal beliefs (see Table 11).

Table 11: Parents' Religious and Political Belief Scores, by Preschool and Sex

	RELIGIOUS BELIEFS				POLITICAL BELIEFS			
	Mothers		Fathers		Mothers		Fathers	
	n	x	n	x	n	x	n	x
HG	23	4.35	18	3.83	23	4.39	22	3.82
LP	6	4.50	6	4.50	6	4.50	6	4.17
VH	13	3.69	12	3.50	13	3.62	13	2.92
TOTAL	42	4.17	36	3.83	42	4.17	41	3.59

Range is 1-5, where 1=very conservative and 5=very liberal

In summary, mothers had less traditional scores than fathers on the paired toy preference task, and differentiated less between girls and boys than did fathers. While not extreme, there were differences in the way mothers and fathers of boys and girls rated the importance of various activities to their children's development. In general, mothers of boys saw most of the activities as more important than did mothers of girls, while fathers of boys saw most of the activities as less important than did fathers of girls.

Compared to mothers, fathers perceived more natural difference between girls and boys, and placed more importance on their child acting in a gender-consistent manner. Fathers saw dressing girls in gender-consistent clothing as more important than did mothers, and fathers of boys placed more importance on dressing boys in gender-consistent clothing than did mothers of boys. Overall, fathers had less liberal political and religious beliefs than did mothers.

H3: YOUNGER CHILDREN WILL BE LESS GENDER-TRADITIONAL THAN OLDER CHILDREN

The findings did not support Hypothesis 3. In a linear regression analysis, age was eliminated as a factor of paired toy preference score. Pearson's r correlations between score and age were not significant, but did go in the expected direction. For girls, r=-0.181 (p=.357); for boys, r = -0.063, (p=.755). Table 12 shows mean toy preference scores by sex and age group.

Table 12: Children's Paired Toy Preference Scores, by Sex and Age in Months

	Girls		Boys	
	n	x	n	x
AGE				
31-42	7	5.71	6	2.17
43-54	15	6.00	8	2.13
> 54	6	4.17	13	2.08
Total	28	5.54	27	2.11

H4: CHILDREN IN GENDER-PROGRESSIVE DAYCARE ENVIRONMENTS WILL BE LESS GENDER-TYPED THAN CHILDREN IN GENDER-TRADITIONAL DAYCARE ENVIRONMENTS

The small number of participating children at LP and VH hinders the attempt to determine the true extent of differences between children in different classroom settings. The findings regarding these differences should be considered in that context.

The interviews with teachers included three questions specifically relating to gender socialization. The first of these questions asked "How often do you introduce, use, or modify activities or materials to address gender issues?" The second question asked "How often does a child do or say something that prompts

you to address gender issues?" Both of these questions had the following response

options: never, once a month or less, two or three times a month, one or two times a

week, three or four times a week, or daily. The third question asked the teachers to

list as many activities or materials they had used in the last month to address gender

issues as they could. Table 13 summarizes the teachers' responses.

Table 13: Mean Teacher Responses to Gender Socialization Questions, by School

	Q1[a]	Q2[a]	Q3[b]	TOTAL[c]
HG	5.00	4.50	5.00	14.50
LP	2.50	3.00	2.50	8.00
VH	1.33	2.00	1.00	4.33
TOTAL	3.22	3.33	3.22	9.67

a) 0=never   1=once a month or less   2=2-3 times a month   3=1-2 times a week
4=3-4 times a week   5=daily
b) # of activities/materials used in last month to address gender issues
c) sum of Q1, Q2, Q3

Clearly, the teachers at HG were making a greater effort to address gender

issues within the classroom. But how much influence does it have on the children's

degree of gender typing? It may have more of an effect on boys than on girls. As

indicated in Table 14 and plotted in Figure 2, the boys at HG had the most gender-

flexible average toy preference score, and the boys at VH had the most gender-typed

average score. The boys at HG also had the broadest range of scores. For girls,

however, there was no such pattern between teacher response and average toy

preference score. In fact, the girls at VH had the most gender-flexible average score.

However, the differences between preschools did not reach statistical significance at the .05 level for either girls or boys.

Table 14: Children's Paired Toy Preference Scores, by Sex and Preschool

	GIRLS		BOYS		TOTAL	
	p=.063 Eta=.383		p=.275 Eta=.270			
	n	x	n	x	n	x
HG	26	5.46	23	2.52	49	4.08
LP	6	4.83	4	2.00	10	3.70
VH	6	8.50	10	1.50	16	4.13
TOTAL	38	5.84	37	2.19	75	4.04

Another measure of gender typing is the scores on the unpaired toy preference task. Interestingly, as shown in Table 15, the boys at each preschool indicated more desire than the girls to play with the toy vacuum cleaner. The girls at each preschool showed more desire to play with the baby doll, and less desire to play with the toy sword, than the boys. The girls at VH were the only ones to express more desire to play with the balls than their male counterparts.

Table 15: Children's Mean Unpaired Toy Preference Scores, by Preschool and Sex

	HG		LP		VH	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
	n=20	n=18	n=5	n=3	n=5	n=10
TOY						
Vacuum	2.20	2.50	2.60	2.67	1.60	2.30
Baby	2.20	1.83	1.80	1.67	2.00	1.50
Balls	2.60	2.72	2.60	2.67	3.00	2.50
Game	2.50	2.56	2.60	3.00	2.40	2.60
Sword	1.80	2.56	1.60	3.00	1.80	2.60
Baseball	1.80	2.56	2.60	3.00	2.80	2.80

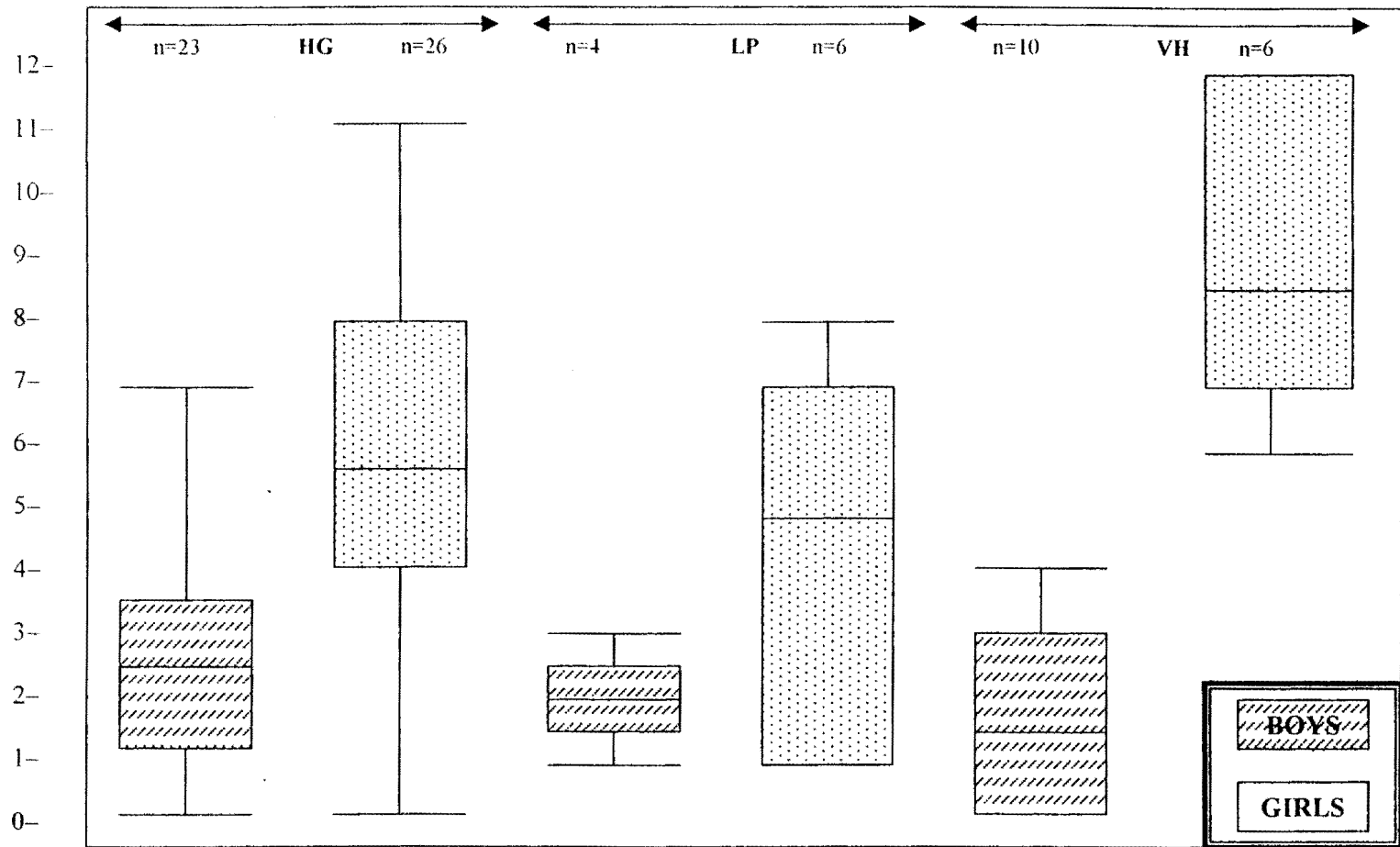1=sad face   2=neutral face   3=happy face

Figure 2: Boxplot of Boys' and Girls' Paired Toy Preference Scores, by Daycare Center

It appears that the children's toy preferences were not strongly influenced by preschool gender issue consciousness, at least as it was measured in this study. This was especially true for girls. Whereas the boys at the most gender-flexible preschool had the highest paired toy-preference scores, and were least "sad" about the prospect of playing with a baby doll, the girls at the least gender-flexible school had the highest paired toy preference scores and were the most interested in playing baseball.

H5: CHILDREN'S DEGREE OF GENDER-TYPING WILL BE POSITIVELY ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR PARENTS' DEGREE OF GENDER-TYPING

The data on the paired toy preference scores of children and parents show a stronger relationship between mothers' and fathers' scores than between parents and their children. In the case of daughters, parents had significantly correlated scores, and both mothers' and fathers' scores were moderately but insignificantly correlated with their children's scores (see Table 16).

Table 16: Correlations between Girls' and their Parents' Paired Toy Preference Scores

		GIRLS	FATHERS	MOTHERS
Pearson Correlation	GIRLS	1.000	.302	.242
	FATHERS	.302	1.000	.577*
	MOTHERS	.242	.577*	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	GIRLS	.	.119	.122
	FATHERS	.119	.	.012
	MOTHERS	.122	.012	.
N	GIRLS	38	17	25
	FATHERS	17	18	15
	MOTHERS	25	15	27

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

For sons, however, the pattern was different. There was less agreement between mothers and fathers on the toy preference task, and mothers' scores were actually *negatively* correlated with the scores of their sons (see Table 17). However, none of the correlations reached significance.

Table 17: Correlations between Boys' and their Parents' Paired Toy Preference Scores

		BOYS	FATHERS	MOTHERS
Pearson Correlation	BOYS	1.000	.204	-.151
	FATHERS	.204	1.000	.207
	MOTHERS	-.151	.207	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	BOYS	.	.170	.246
	FATHERS	.170	.	.177
	MOTHERS	.246	.177	.
N	BOYS	37	24	23
	FATHERS	24	25	22
	MOTHERS	23	22	24

No significant correlations

When the scores of all children are analyzed together, yet a different picture emerges. Mothers' and fathers' scores are significantly correlated, as are the scores of fathers and their children. There is a relatively weak correlation between mothers' and their children's scores, but does it does not reach statistical significance at the .05 level (see Table 18).

Table 18: Correlations between Children's and their Parents' Paired Toy Preference Scores

		CHILDREN	FATHERS	MOTHERS
Pearson Correlation	CHILDREN	1.000	.450**	.203
	FATHERS	.450**	1.000	.413**
	MOTHERS	.203	.413**	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	CHILDREN	.	.002	.083
	FATHERS	.002	.	.006
	MOTHERS	.083	.006	.
N	CHILDREN	75	41	48
	FATHERS	41	43	37
	MOTHERS	48	37	51

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The analysis of toy preferences, then, showed more agreement between mothers and fathers when it came to toy selection for daughters than for sons. The mothers in this study had toy preferences that were very different from those of their sons, but ones that were relatively similar to those of their daughters. The fathers' scores correlated moderately with the scores of both daughters and sons separately, and when the scores of daughters and sons were analyzed together, the correlation with their fathers' scores was highly significant.

CHAPTER V:
CONCLUSIONS

Of the five hypotheses tested, two were supported (H1 and H2), two had mixed findings (H4 and H5), and one was not supported (H3).

HYPOTHESIS 1: GIRLS WILL BE LESS GENDER-TYPED THAN BOYS

The paired toy preference scores clearly demonstrate support for this hypothesis. Boys exhibited significantly less flexibility than girls in toy preferences. It may be that, for girls, gender expectations are broad enough that they pose few serious or rigid sanctions for violation. The "What if…" scenario also suggests that the children are aware of the differing expectations for boys and girls. Although the boys were generally reluctant to choose feminine toys during the paired toy preference task, their responses to the "What if…" question suggest that, at this age, some children have not have fully internalized the valuations attached to gender roles. Fewer than half of either the girls or the boys reported exclusively negative consequences were they to wake up as a child of the opposite sex. Moreover, toy preferences were not necessarily consistent with the responses to the "What if…" question.

In *The Female World* Jessie Bernard asserts that it is not until after kindergarten that children come to learn of "the exclusivity and misogyny of the boys' world" (1981, p. 135). For preschool children, the "What if..." question may elicit not a value judgment about femininity versus masculinity, but a more basic imagining of what they would feel *personally and individually* if their sex were to suddenly change. For some children, especially those still coming to a fuller understanding of the social rules about gender, this might be a very upsetting scenario. Other children may feel a freedom to imagine what kinds of things they would like to do that would ordinarily be unexpected or even discouraged. Boys are typically more discouraged from engaging in opposite-gender behavior than are girls, and this could explain why the boys had slightly more positive reactions than girls to the "What if..." scenario. For the girls, the scenario may not have provided as much in the way of "forbidden fruit".

HYPOTHESIS 2: MOTHERS WILL BE MORE GENDER-PROGRESSIVE THAN FATHERS

The findings show support for this hypothesis. Mothers had less traditional scores than fathers on the paired toy preference task, and differentiated less between girls and boys than did fathers. Women, as members of a historically oppressed group, are perhaps in a better position to see the advantages of gender egalitarianism than are men. For men, it may be easier to see the advantages of the status quo, especially when it comes to their sons. It is important to note, though, that by no means did all of the fathers adhere strictly to gender norms when choosing between

toy options for their sons. In fact, one of the fathers went so far as to submit a written letter along with his completed questionnaire, explaining that when he chose a masculine toy over a feminine toy for his son, it was because he knew it was what his son would rather play with, not what he would prefer his son to play with. This father had given considerable consideration to the gender messages his son receives, and was struggling with those issues on a conscious level. In general, however, the fathers in this study saw little value in gender norm violation for their sons.

While not extreme, there were differences in the way mothers and fathers of boys and girls rated the importance of various activities to their children's development. In general, mothers of boys saw most of the activities as more important than did mothers of girls, while fathers of boys saw most of the activities as less important than did fathers of girls. This finding is somewhat perplexing. It may be that parents of both sexes identify more strongly with children of their same sex, and have more concern about the development of various skills in children of the opposite sex. For example, mothers, not knowing what it's like to be a little boy, may sense that boys need more experience with different types of activities in order to assure a fully developed range of skills. With girls, mothers may feel that a wide range of skills will develop with relatively less encouragement.

When asked to characterize the degree of non-physical difference between boys and girls, parents of girls perceived a greater difference than did parents of boys, with fathers of girls perceiving the most difference. This may be a

manifestation of the female as "other", with girls' behavior seen as a deviation from the standard of boys' behavior. In order to justify and maintain higher status for males, it is first necessary to establish that females and males are inherently different.

In addition to perceiving more natural difference between girls and boys, fathers placed more importance than did mothers on their child acting in a gender-consistent manner. Fathers saw dressing girls in gender-consistent clothing as more important than did mothers, and fathers of boys placed more importance on dressing boys in gender-consistent clothing than did mothers of boys. Again, this suggests greater acceptance of traditional gender roles by fathers than by mothers.

Fathers had more conservative political and religious beliefs than did mothers, although both mothers and fathers expressed fairly liberal beliefs. There was no significant relation ship between religious or political beliefs and parents' toy preference scores. At face value, it would seem that religious and political conservatism would be associated with gender traditionality, but the findings from this study show no such association.

HYPOTHESIS 3: YOUNGER CHILDREN WILL BE MORE GENDER-PROGRESSIVE THAN OLDER CHILDREN

The findings did not support Hypothesis 3. Although Pearson's r correlations between score and age were not significant, they did go in the expected direction for both girls and boys. It is likely that by the time children reach the age of 30 months or so, they have a fairly thorough knowledge of which toys are deemed appropriate

for which sex. The paired toy preference instrument used in this study may not have been sensitive enough to pick up on the slight gap in this knowledge between the early and late preschool years. Future research should take into account the fact that gender socialization prior to preschool is extensive and effective. More creative instruments may be able to tap finer distinctions.

HYPOTHESIS 4: CHILDREN IN GENDER-PROGRESSIVE DAYCARE ENVIRONMENTS WILL BE LESS GENDER-TYPED THAN CHILDREN IN GENDER-TRADITIONAL DAYCARE ENVIRONMENTS

This hypothesis was difficult to test due to the small number of participating children at LP and VH. These small numbers also precluded classroom-by-classroom analysis. Because there was variation in the emphasis on gender issues not only by preschool but also by classroom, teasing out the effect of preschool orientation was impossible. Future research should be designed to obtain large enough preschool and classroom samples so that this type of analysis will be more fruitful.

It appears that the children's toy preferences were not strongly influenced by preschool gender issue consciousness. This was especially true for girls. Whereas the boys at the most gender-flexible preschool were the least traditional in toy preferences, and were least "sad" about the prospect of playing with a baby doll, the girls at the least gender-flexible school were the least traditional in their toy preferences and were the most interested in playing baseball.

Given that boys exhibit less gender-flexibility than do girls, it stands to reason that they have the most potential for change. The relatively large number of male teachers combined with the strong anti-bias curriculum may be contributing factors to the greater toy preference flexibility of the boys at HG. However, there is a need for future research to examine the characteristics, behavior, and impact of male teachers.

HYPOTHESIS 5: CHILDREN'S DEGREE OF GENDER-TYPING WILL BE POSITIVELY ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR PARENTS' DEGREE OF GENDER-TYPING

Based on the literature, it is not surprising that there was more agreement between mothers and fathers when it came to toy selection for daughters than for sons. It is probably easier for fathers to be egalitarian when it comes to daughters, as there is little stigma attached to "tomboyish" behavior. For sons, though, it seems that the mothers in this study may be trying to provide a more gender-progressive approach than the fathers are providing or the sons themselves are adopting. This would explain why the correlation for fathers and all children is so high. There are more cases for analysis, and the fathers prefer a mix of feminine, neutral and masculine toys for their daughters, but almost exclusively prefer neutral and masculine toys for their sons. Thus, the fathers' preferences mesh well with the preferences indicated by the children themselves.

In order to examine the relationship between parental gender socialization and children's gender attitudes and behavior more closely, longitudinal studies using

matched samples of gender-progressive and gender-traditional parents would be useful. Particularly helpful would be such a study in which families had widely different gender beliefs but were matched for socioeconomic status, education, race, and household composition.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The primary constraint on this research is the small sample size from two of the three preschools. The instruments used to measure gender socialization of the children and gender beliefs of the parents are another area of concern. Although there were some findings that strongly supported past research, gender is so pervasive and complex a construct that survey instruments alone may not be able to sufficiently address many aspects of gender socialization. The teacher interviews could be enhanced through the use of questions similar to those asked of parents, intended in this case to tap teachers' own gender socialization attitudes. Observational components would be valuable to future research. Observations within the classroom setting would be especially useful in a further examination of the effect of preschool environment.

While the "happy face" Likert scale was easily understood by the children, it was difficult to assess their responses to the "What if..." question. As discussed in the AAUW report (Sadker and Sadker, 1994), older children had very clear opinions about the meaning of such a transformation. Although this question worked well with older children, many of the preschoolers in this study did not seem to fully

grasp its meaning, or were unable to articulate meaningful responses. It may have required a cognitive task above the developmental level of the preschoolers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

Gender roles and stereotypes, although changing, are still firmly entrenched. Traditional gender attributes are still naturalized and treated as inevitable and desirable in many contexts. Children still grow up surrounded by gendered messages, both explicit and implicit.

Sandra Bem, in an article written for the 1984 Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, speaks to this state of affairs in terms of gender schematicity:

> Just as a fish is unaware that its environment is wet (after all,
> what else could it be?), so too are most people unaware that
> their perceptions are (but not need be) organized on the basis of
> gender. The child learns to utilize certain dimensions rather
> than others as cognitive organizing principles but does not
> typically become aware that there were alternative dimensions
> that might have been used instead. The dimensions chosen as
> cognitive organizing principles thus function as a kind of
> nonconscious ideology, and underlying or deep cognitive
> structure influencing one's perceptions without conscious
> awareness. (p. 189)

This schematicity, then, can only be hindered when parents, schools, and other socializing agents minimize the expansive network of gender norms, rules, and differentiations.

Dramatic changes in dominant paradigms do not occur rapidly. Nonetheless, there are things that schools and parents can do to facilitate a less gender-driven socialization of children. Curricula that address gender and other stereotypes can be adopted, as at HG. Teachers and others who contradict gender stereotypes can be available in a classroom setting. More male preschool and primary grade teachers may be particularly well-suited to influence changes in children's gender-stereotypic behavior and thinking. Because boys are consistently more gender-traditional than girls, the existence of more males modeling gender-atypical behavior should be conducive to a change in boys' attitudes.

While teachers and schools probably play part in the gender socialization process, it is parents who are the most consistent presence in a child's life. Not only do parents spend more time with their children, they are present from the very beginning. This is not to say that it is easy, or even possible, to raise children to be completely unaware of gender stereotypes. In fact, it is especially difficult given the prevalence and intensity of gender messages and cues, and the technology to disseminate them widely and effectively.

Feminist parents are thus in a difficult situation. They cannot
simply ignore gender in their child rearing as they might prefer
to do, because the society will then have free rein to teach their
children the lessons about gender that it teaches all other
children. Rather, they must manage somehow to inoculate their
children... (Bem, 1985, pp. 213-214)

Previous research indicates that parents who model gender egalitarianism
have children who are less stereotyped (Connors, 1992; Newsweek, 1990). Bem
recommends two strategies for parents who wish to minimize the inculcation of
gender-schematicity. The first is to advance the child's knowledge of sex-linked
biological characteristics, defining sex only in terms of anatomy and reproduction,
while simultaneously impeding per knowledge of gender-linked associations. This
can be achieved through a number of means, including parental modeling of gender-
atypical behavior, selection of both masculine and feminine clothing and toys for
children of both sexes, and careful selection, monitoring, and censoring of television
programs, books, and other media to which children are exposed. The second is to
provide alternative schemata for children to use for understanding gender-related
information.

Bem lists three schemata for consideration. The first, the individual
differences schema, emphasizes the wide variation within groups and the relatively
small variation between groups. The second, the cultural relativism schema,
provides the notion that different people have different beliefs, and that it is normal

for this to be so. The third, the sexism schema, offers a value judgment that sexism is wrong, and supplies children with evidence of the undesirable consequences of sexism and an understanding of why there are so many apparent differences between the sexes in society (1985, pp. 217-219).

As this research demonstrates, sex is a salient and distinguishing characteristic to preschoolers. Boys, especially, adhere closely to gender stereotypes. Parents of preschoolers, especially fathers, have different criteria for appropriate play, clothing, and behavior of sons and daughters.

As gender stereotypes continue to be challenged in society, small changes occur on both the macro and micro level. Like ripples in a pond, these changes in turn effect other changes. Little girls seem to be on the way to a more balanced repertoire of interests, skills, and attitudes. The pond for little boys, however, is relatively stagnant. For significant abatement of gender stereotypes to occur, substantial changes must be made in the gender beliefs and attitudes of males. The logical place to start is with the boys.

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APPENDIX A:
EXPLANATORY LETTER AND CONSENT FORM DISTRIBUTED TO
PARENTS

Dear Parent:

My name is Alice Passannante and I am a graduate student at P.S.U.. I am also the parent of two young children. As one of the requirements for getting my Master's Degree, I am conducting a research project involving preschoolers. My interest is in the ways different parenting styles and strategies interact with daycare environment in influencing children's attitudes and perceptions.

I would like to invite you and your child to participate in this study. I will be distributing questionnaires for you to fill out in a few weeks, and in the meantime I will be meeting individually with each child for about 5-10 minutes. During the sessions with the children I will ask them a few short questions about their interests and ask them to rate several pictures designed to be of interest to children. It should be fun for them, and for me, too!

This project has been approved by the Portland State Human Subjects Research Review Committee, which maintains strict ethical codes for any research involving children. If you are willing to donate a few minutes of your and your child's time for this research, please read and sign the consent form attached to this letter, and put it in the large envelope I have provided near your child's sign-in book by February 1st. A copy of the consent form for you to keep is on the back of this sheet.

If you have any questions about this project or your participation in it, please contact me at school (725-3926) or at home (775-6229). You may also contact Dr. Kathryn Farr, Sociology, at 725-3617.

Your participation in this study is very valuable to me, and greatly appreciated!

Thank you,

Alice Passannante

CONSENT FORM (parents)

I, _____ hereby agree to serve as a subject in the reseach project on daycare and parenting styles conducted by Alice Passannante under the supervision of Dr. Kathryn Farr.

I specifically give permission for my child, _____ to participate as a subject in the research. I understand that the researcher will ask for verbal consent from my child before collecting any data from him/her.

I understand that my participation will consist of completing a questionnaire, and that my child's participation will consist of looking at and rating pictures of familiar objects and answering some brief questions posed by the researcher. The time needed with each child will be 5-10 minutes. Each child's interview will be tape recorded for the exclusive use of the researchers, and will not be listened to by, or distributed to, anyone else. After the data have been analyzed, the tapes will be destroyed.

I understand that there are no specific physical or psychological risks associated with participation in this research, but that it will require approximately 10 minutes of time from both my child and myself.

I understand that all names and other identifying information will be strictly confidential, and that names will be replaced by a respondent number for analysis of the data.

It has been explained to me that the purpose of this investigation is to examine the interaction of parenting styles and preschool environment on children's perceptions.

I may not receive any direct benefit from participation in this study, but my participation may help to increase knowledge which may benefit others in the future.

I understand that I am free to withdraw myself and my child from participation in this study at any time without jeopardizing my relationship with Portland State University or my relationship with my child-care center.

Alice Passannante has offered to answer any questions I may have about the study and what is required of me and my child.

I have read and understand the foregoing information and agree to participate and to allow my child to participate in this research.

Date:_____   Signature:_____

If you should experience any problems as a result of participation in this study, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research & Sponsored Projects, 105 Neuberger Hall, Portland State University, (503)725-3417.

APPENDIX B:
TEACHER CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM (staff)

I, _____ hereby agree to serve as a subject in the reseach project on daycare and parenting styles conducted by Alice Passannante under the supervision of Dr. Kathryn Farr.

I understand that my participation will consist of being anonymously interviewed by the researcher. The interview will pertain to the child-care philosophy and curricula at my place of employment.

I understand that this interview will be tape recorded for the exclusive use of the researchers, and will not be listened to by, or distributed to, anyone else. After the data have been analyzed, the tapes will be destroyed.

I understand that there are no specific physical or psychological risks associated with participation in this research, but that it will require approximately 10-15 minutes of my time.

I understand that all names and other identifying information will be strictly confidential, and that names will be replaced by a respondent number for analysis of the data.

It has been explained to me that the purpose of this investigation is to examine the interaction of parenting styles and preschool environment on children's perceptions.

I may not receive any direct benefit from participation in this study, but my participation may help to increase knowledge which may benefit others in the future.

I understand that I am free to withdraw myself from participation in this study at any time without jeopardizing my relationship with Portland State University or my relationship with my employer.

Alice Passannante has offered to answer any questions I may have about the study.

I have read and understand the foregoing information and agree to participate in this research.

Date:_____ Signature:_____

If you should experience any problems as a result of participation in this study, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research & Sponsored Projects, 105 Neuberger Hall, Portland State University, (503)725-3417.

APPENDIX C:
CHILDREN'S INTERVIEW FORM

ID: _____   SCHOOL: 1   2   3   UNIT: 1   2   3   4

FEMALE

2 bear	tools	3		2 blocks	tea set	1
1 doll	football	3		3 truck	jewelry	1
1 jewelry	dollhouse	1		3 sword	football	3
3 sword	tea set	1		1 dollhouse	tools	3
2 puzzle	doll	1		3 truck	puzzle	2

MALE

2 bear	tools	1		2 blocks	tea set	3
3 doll	football	1		1 truck	jewelry	3
3 jewelry	dollhouse	3		1 sword	football	1
1 sword	tea set	3		3 dollhouse	tools	1
2 puzzle	doll	3		1 truck	puzzle	2

FEMALE

Birthday	☹	☺	☺
Shot	☹	☺	☺
Vacuum	☹	☺	☺
Ball	☹	☺	☺
Sword	☹	☺	☺
Baby	☹	☺	☺
Game	☹	☺	☺
Baseball	☹	☺	☺

MALE

Birthday	☹	☺	☺
Shot	☹	☺	☺
Vacuum	☹	☺	☺
Ball	☹	☺	☺
Sword	☹	☺	☺
Baby	☹	☺	☺
Game	☹	☺	☺
Baseball	☹	☺	☺

What do you like to do...?

What if...?

APPENDIX D:
CHILDREN'S PICTURE PAIRS
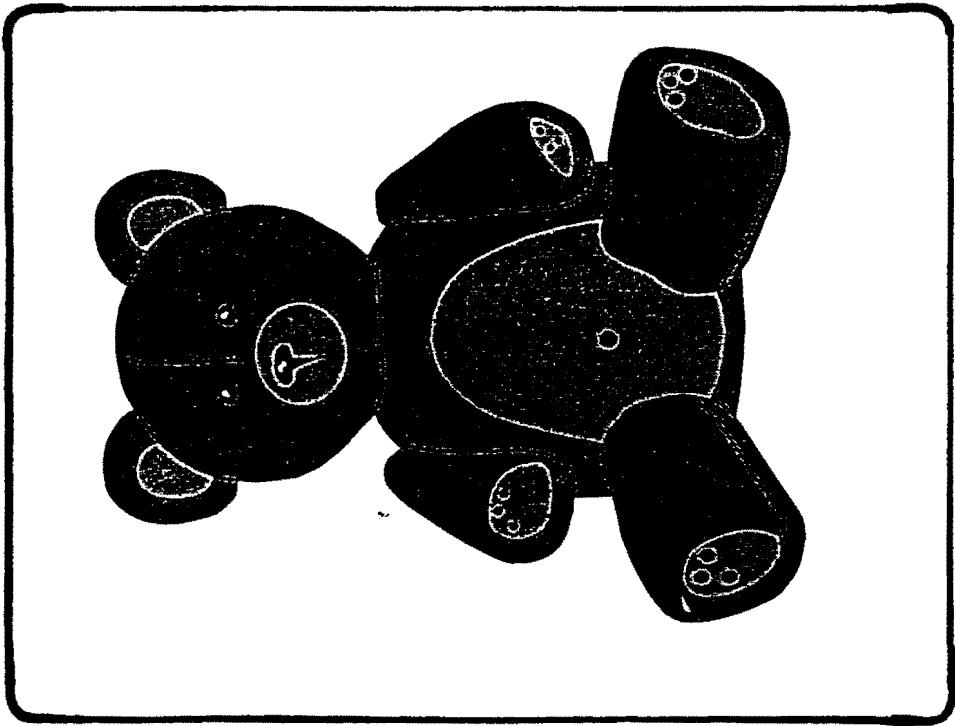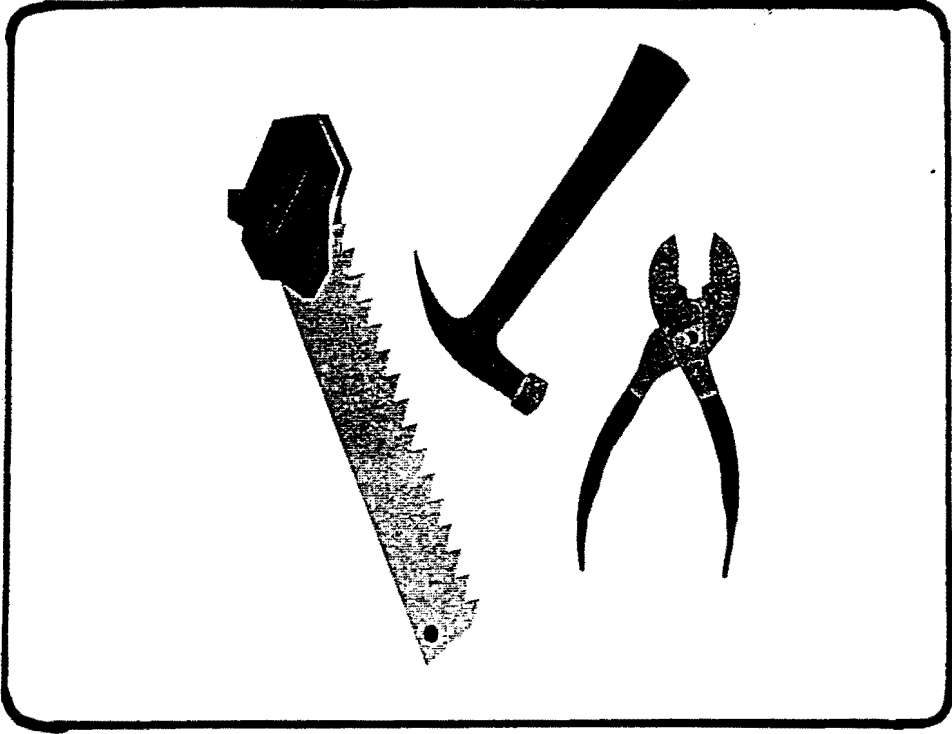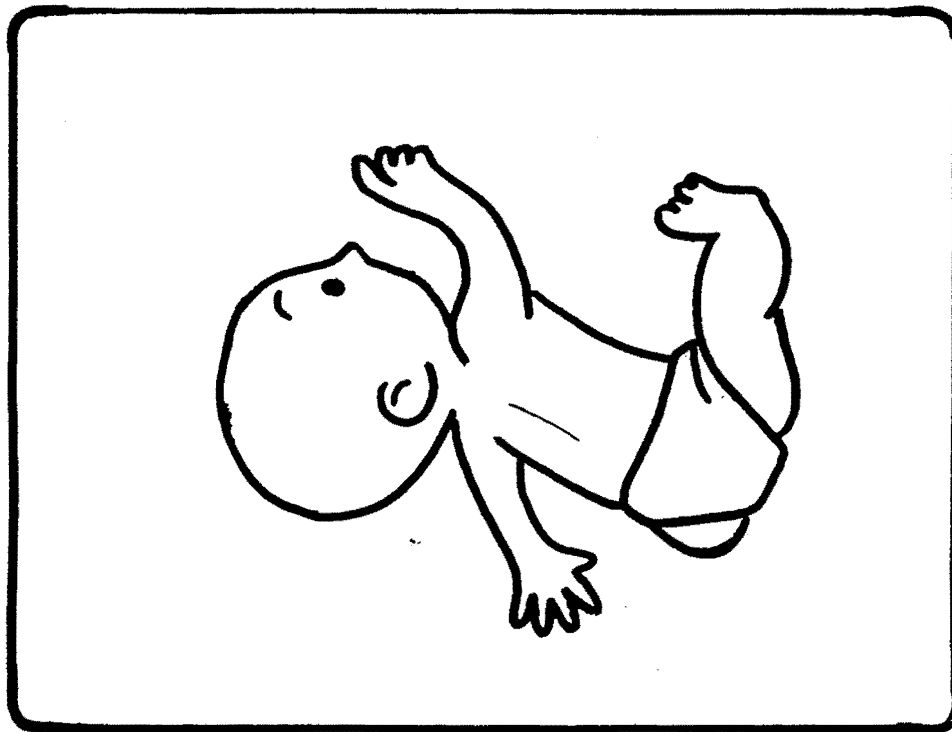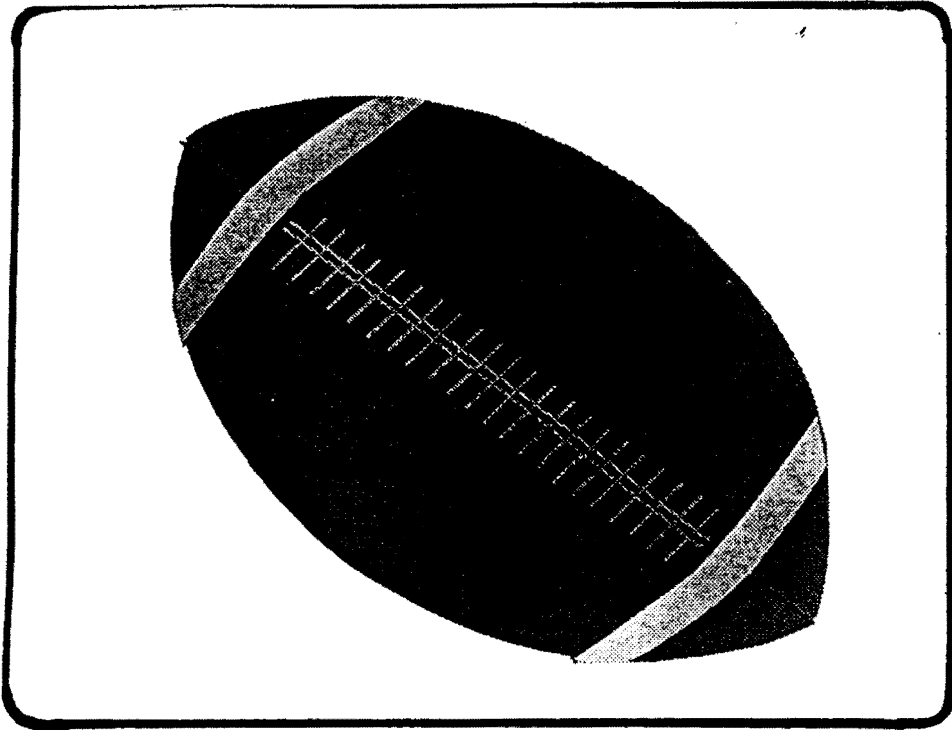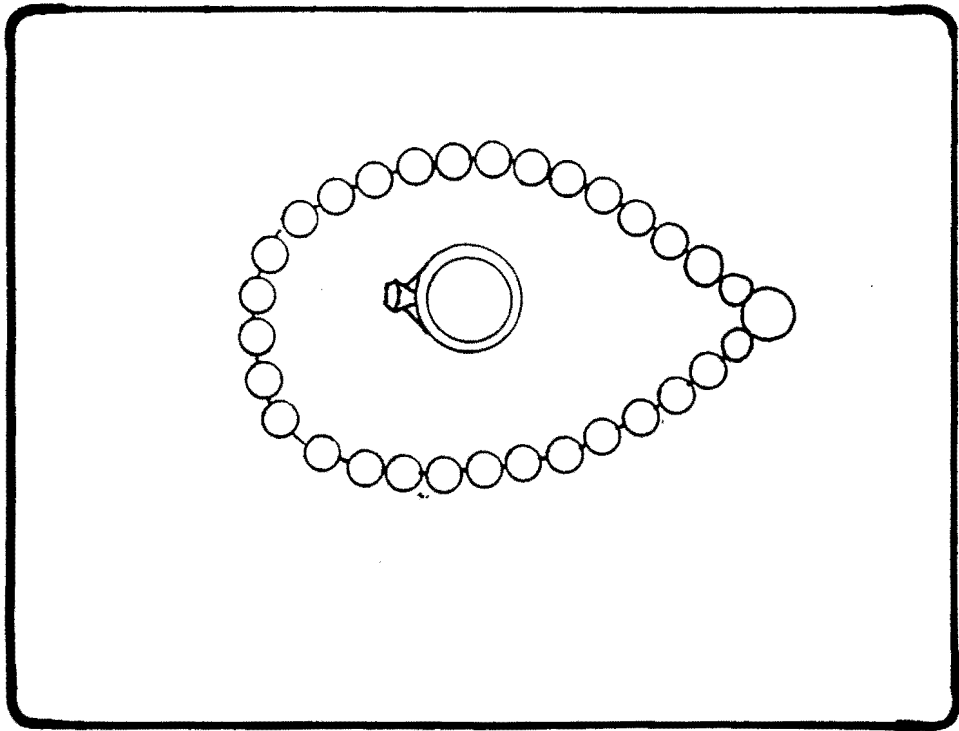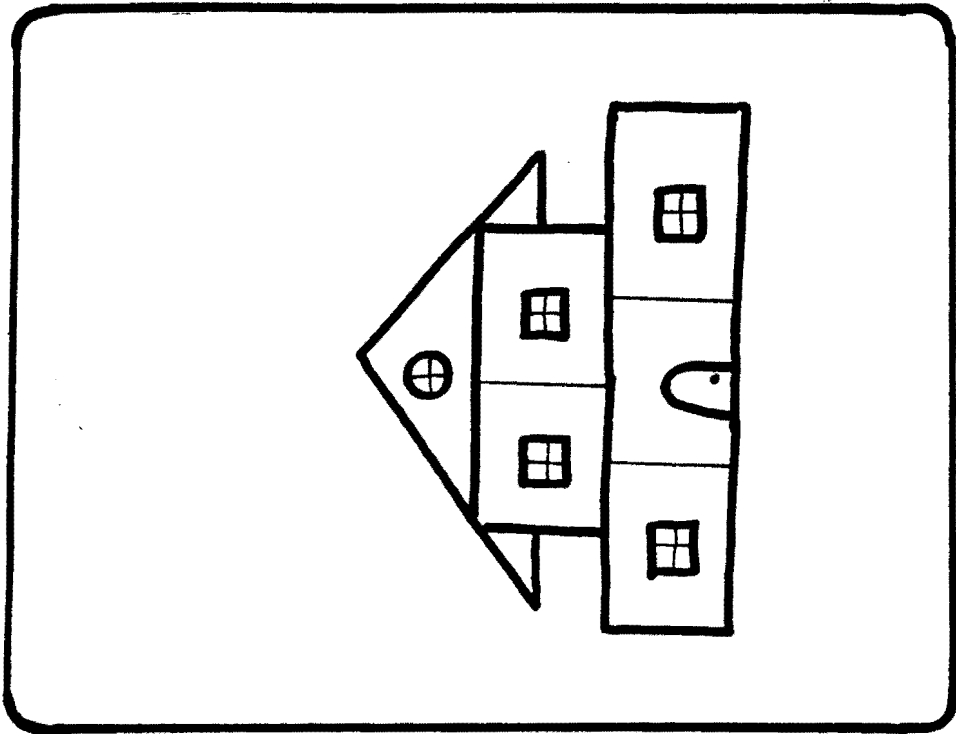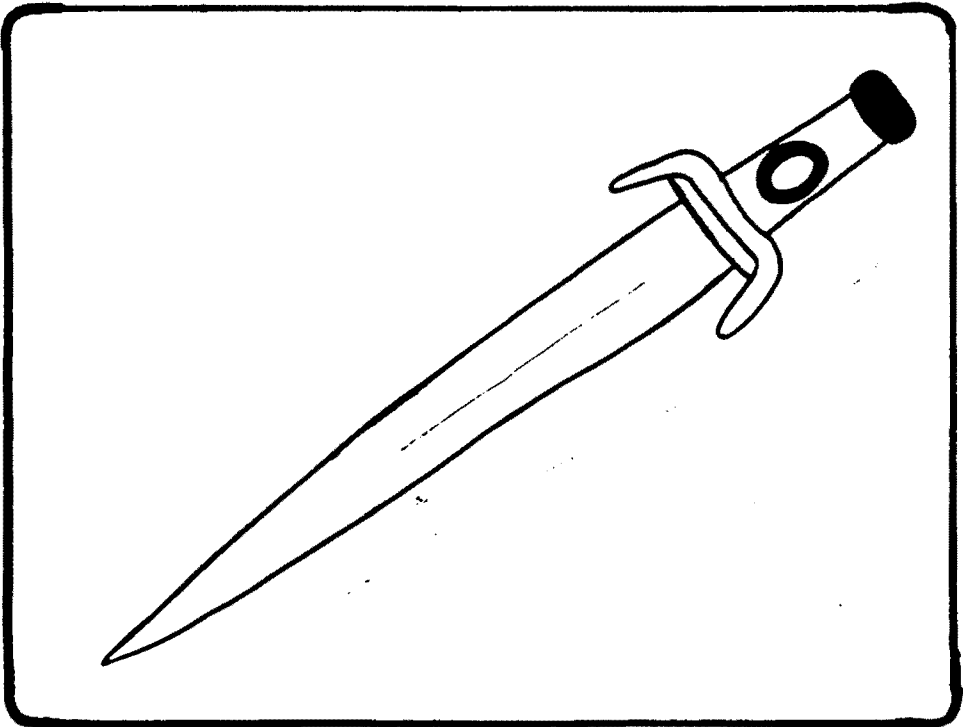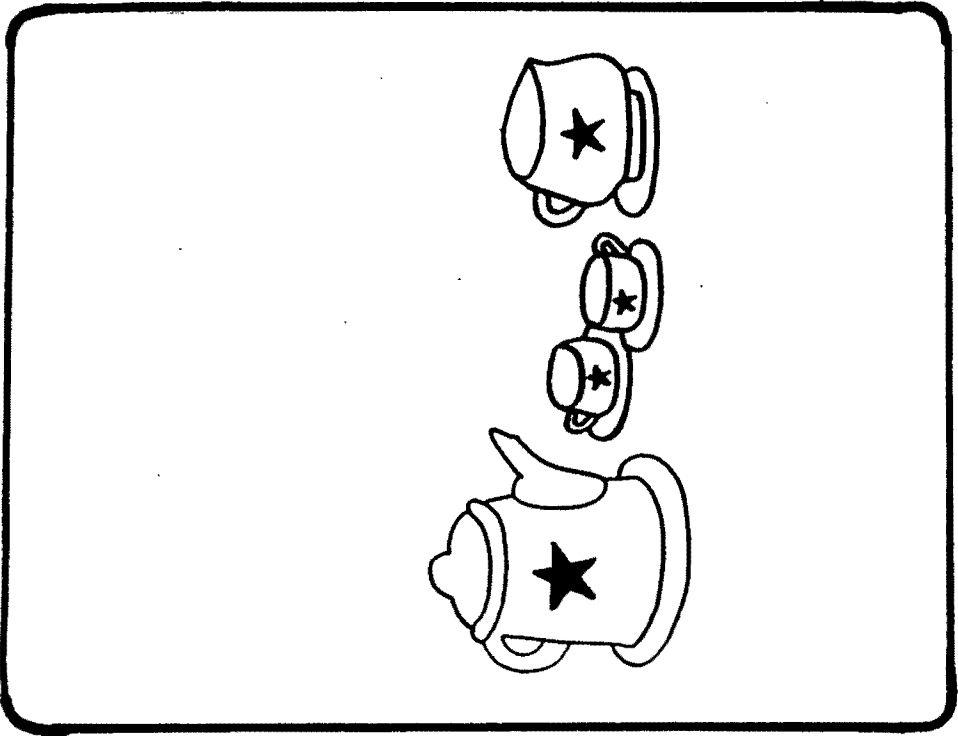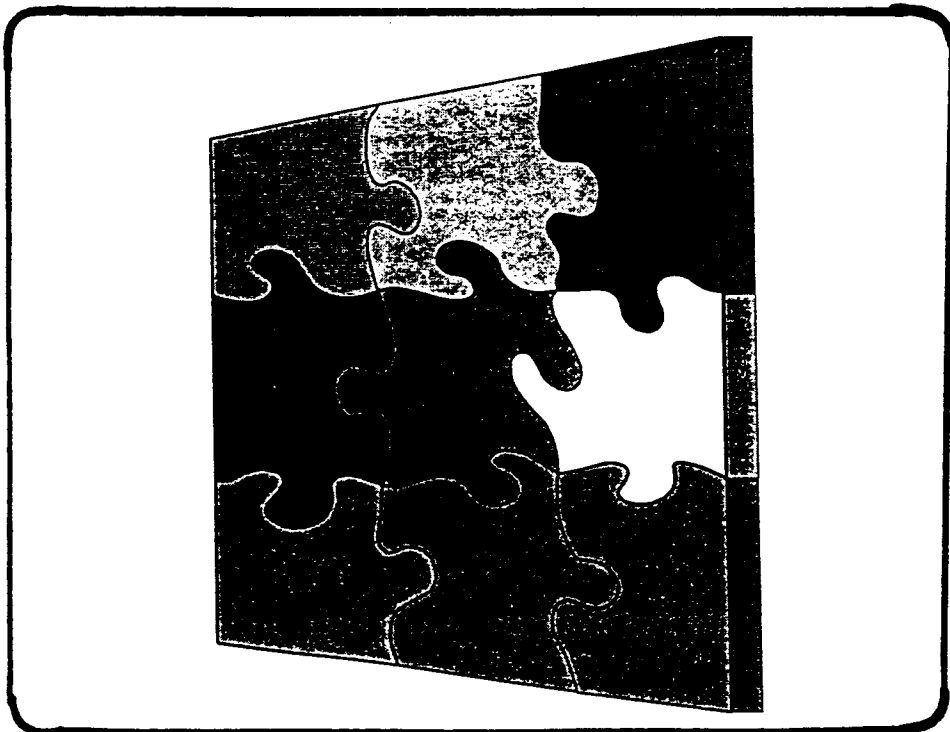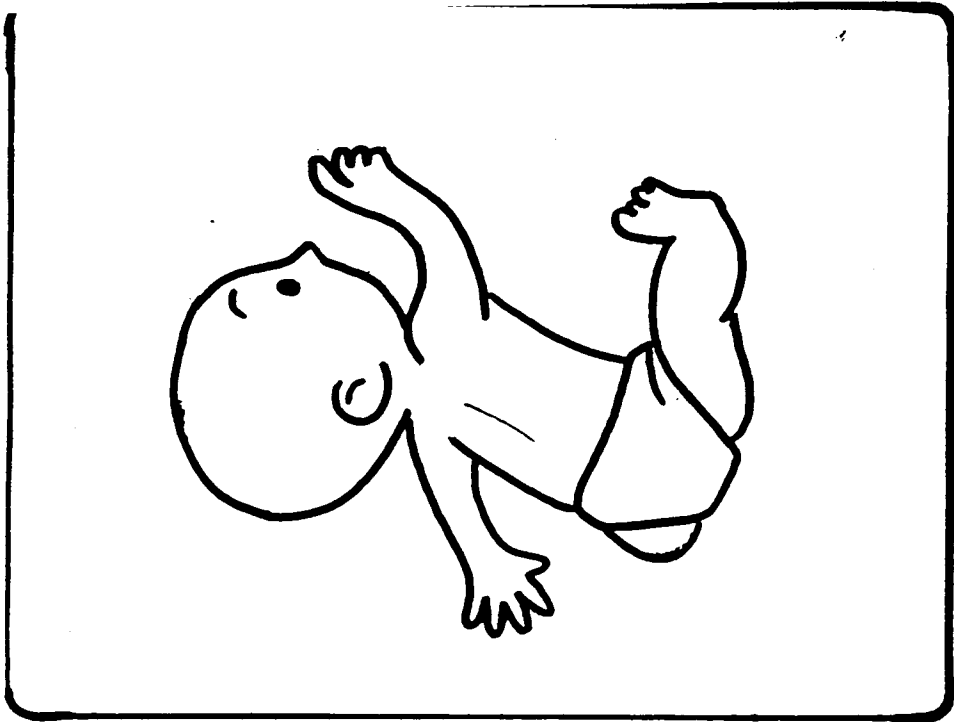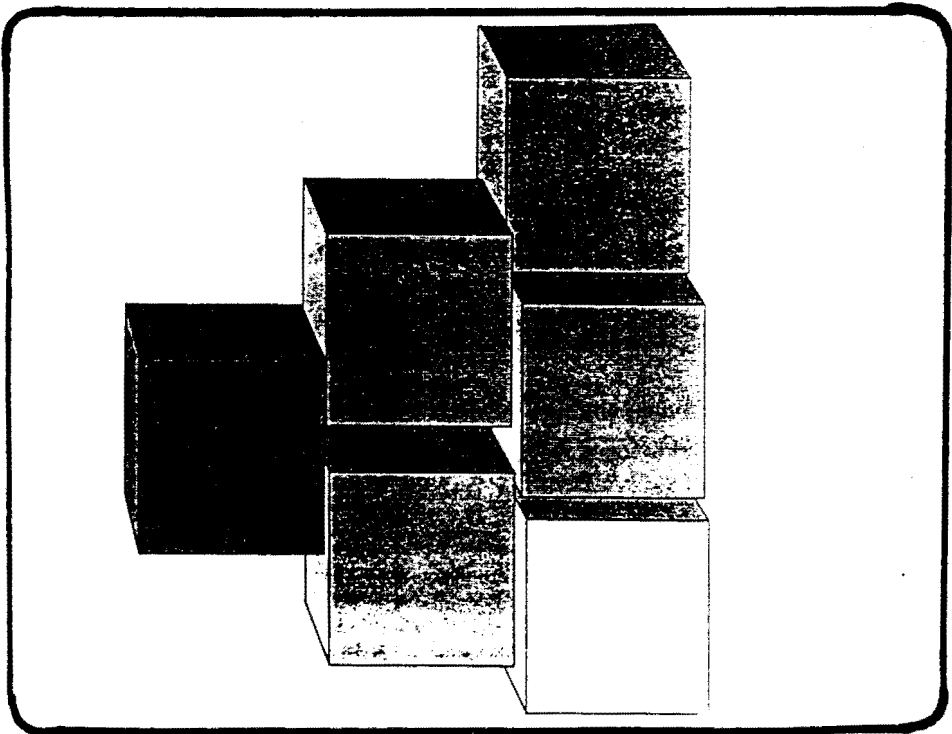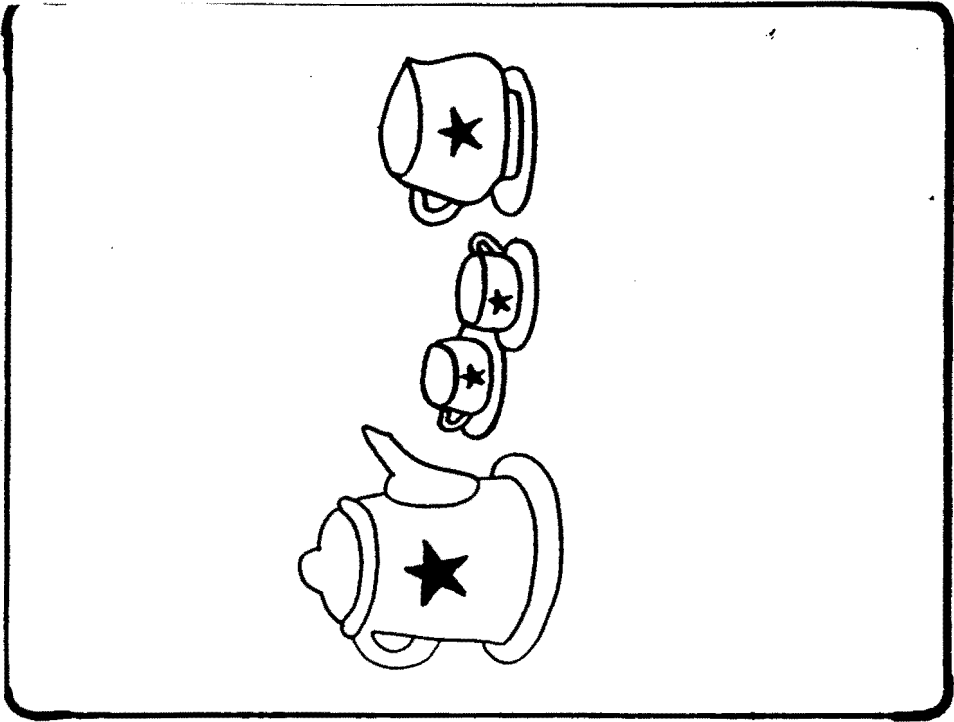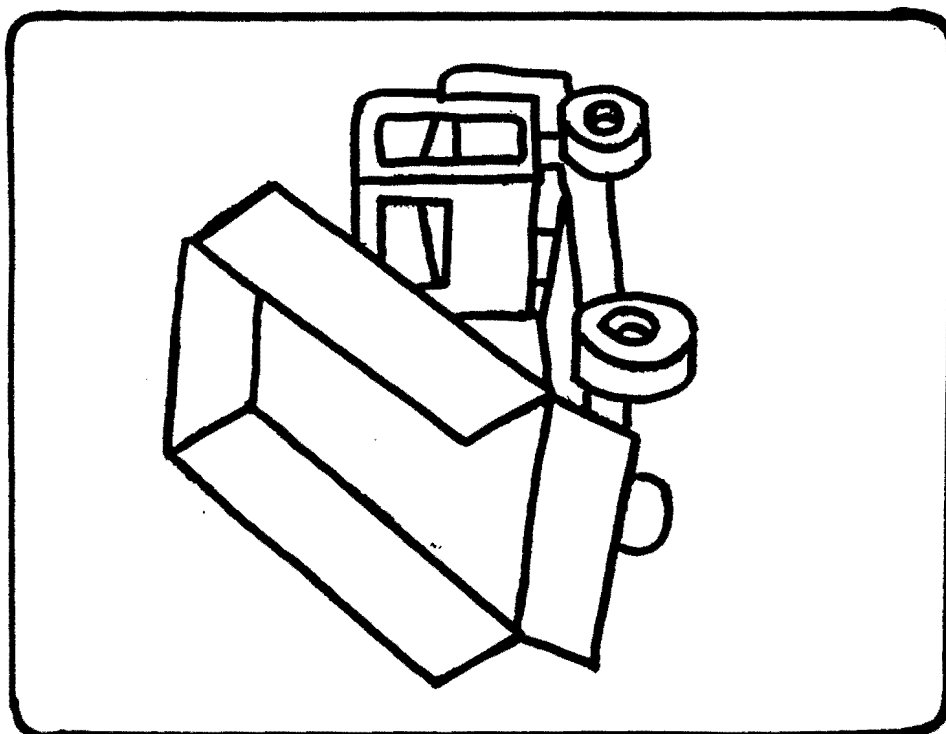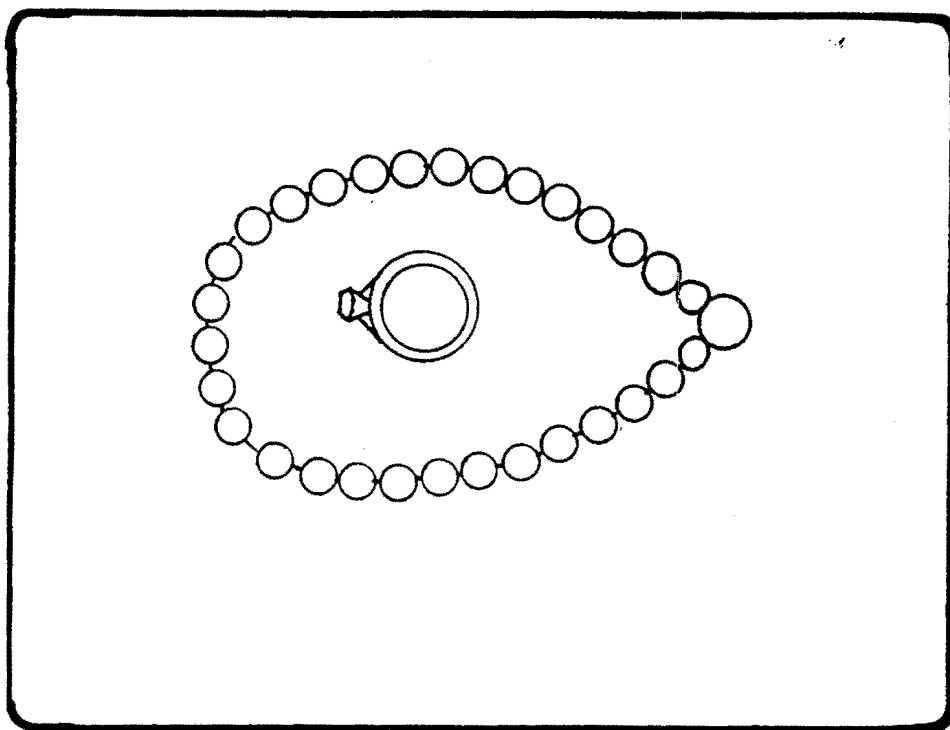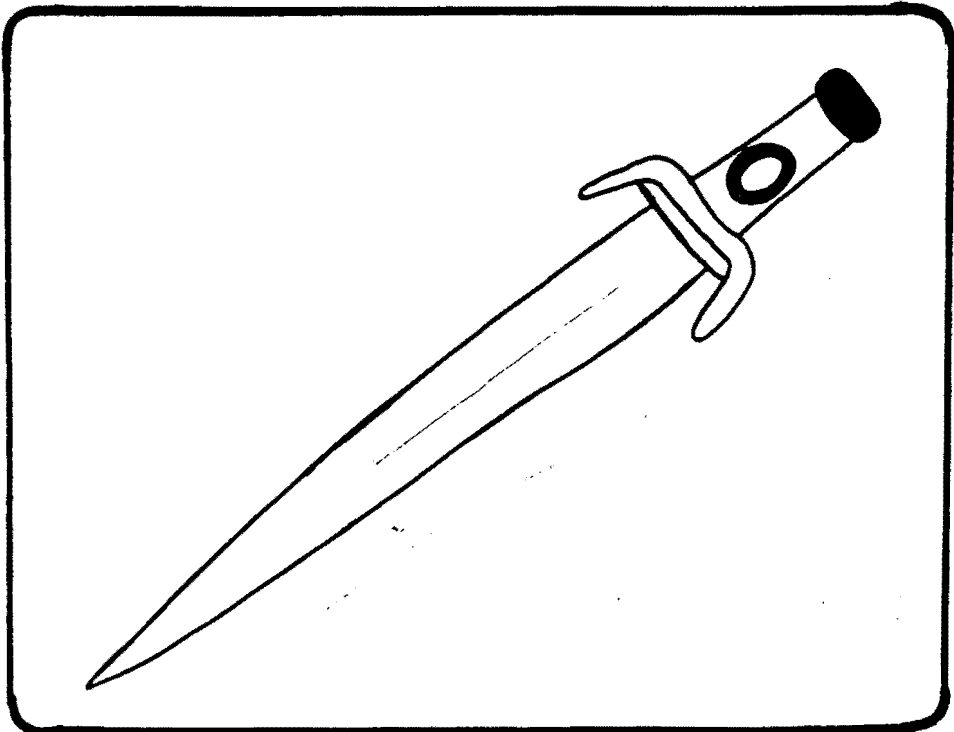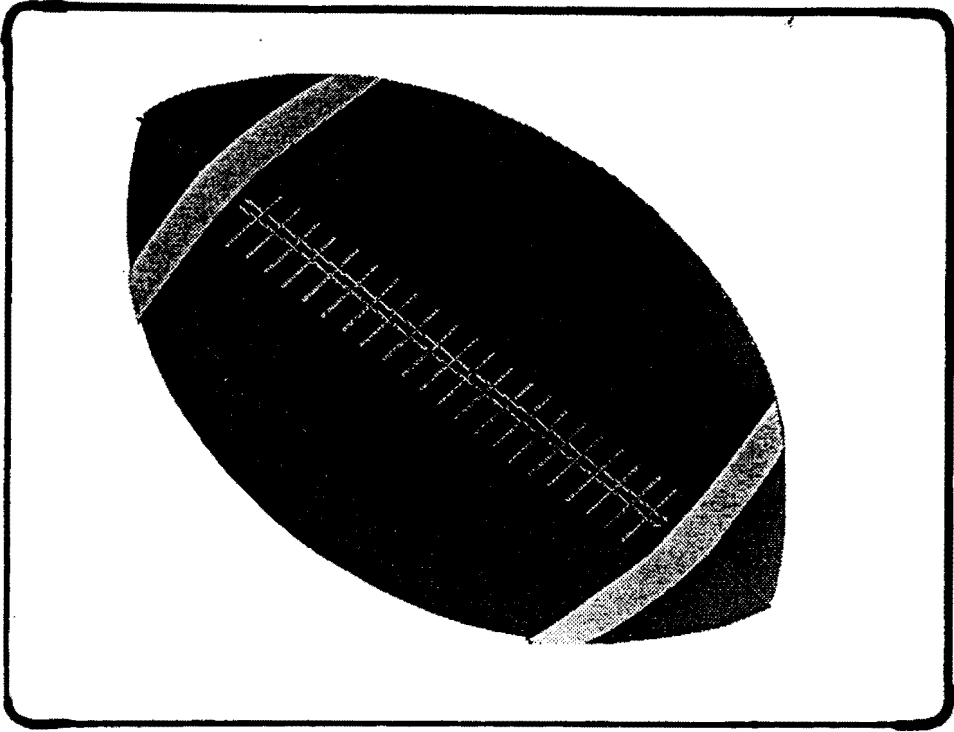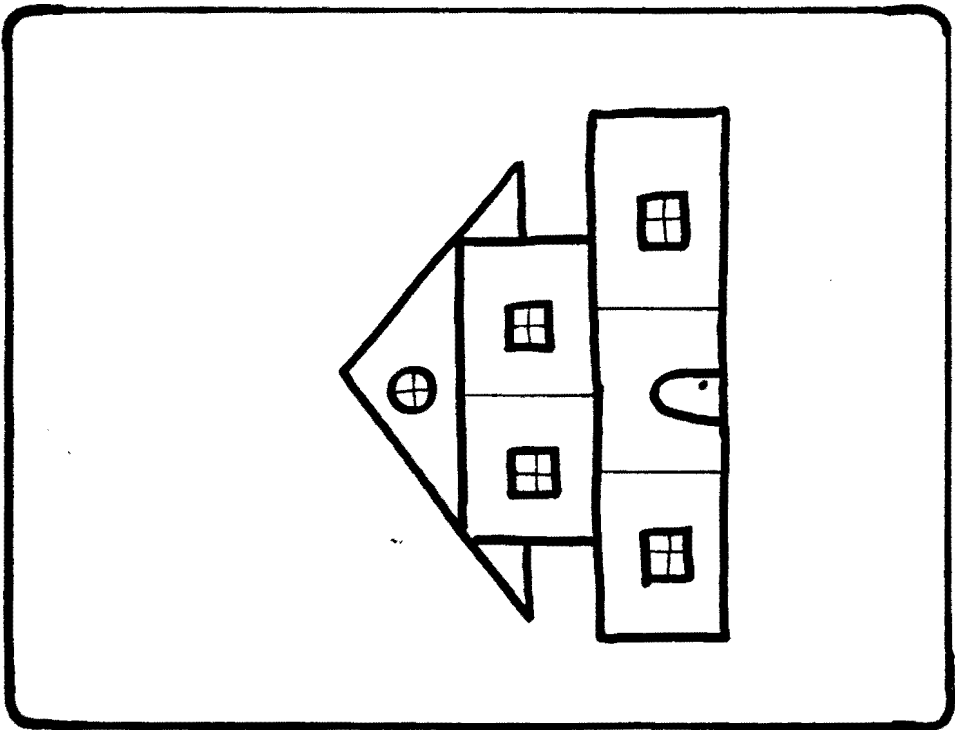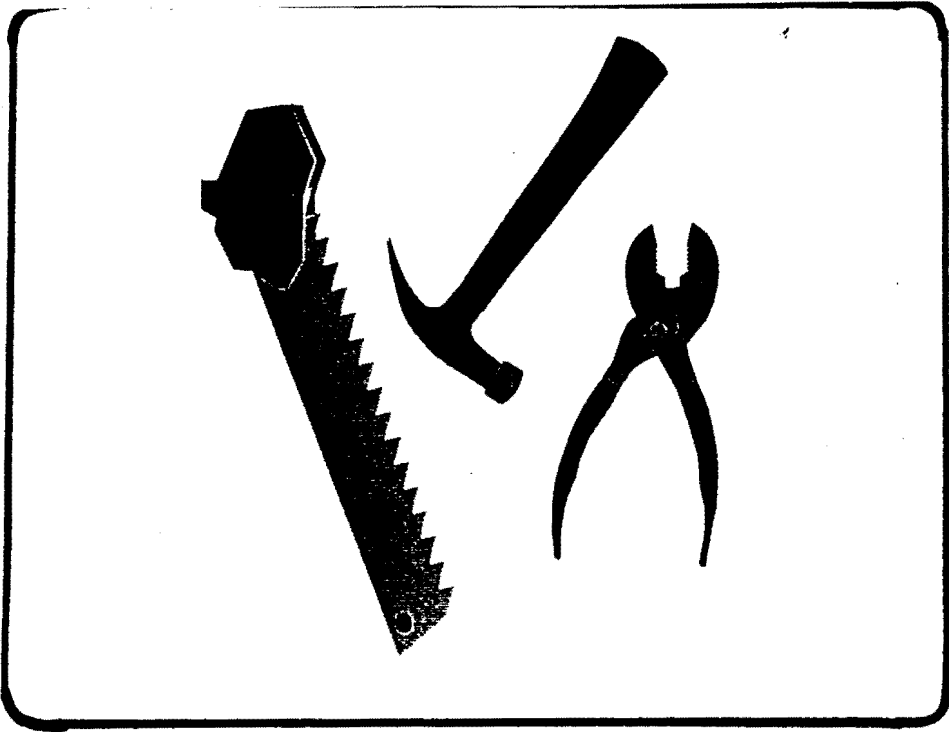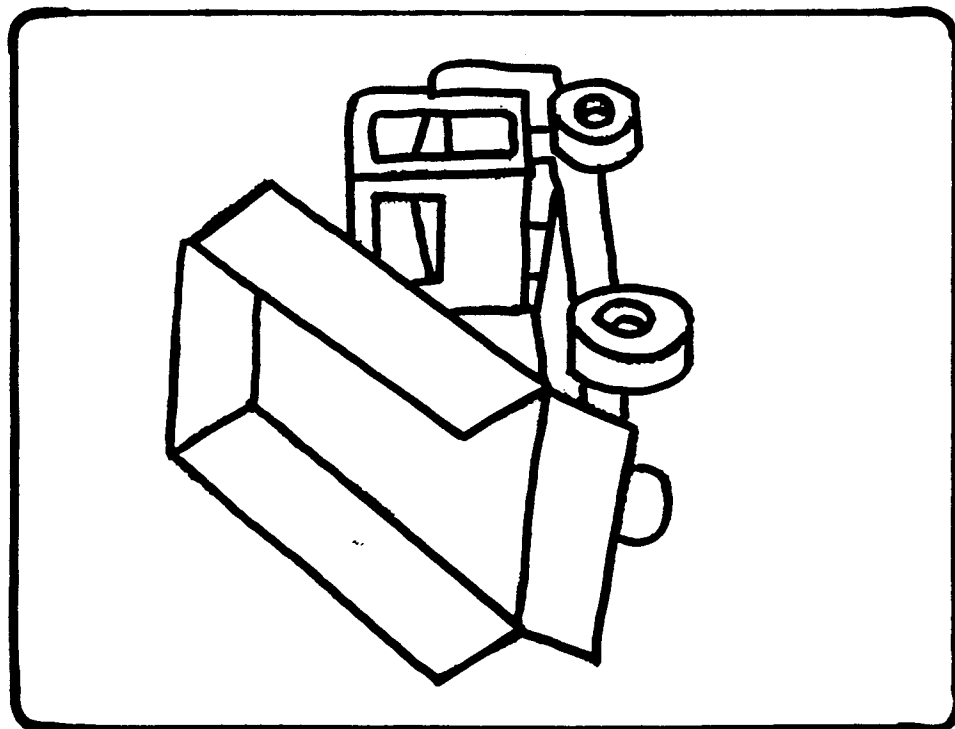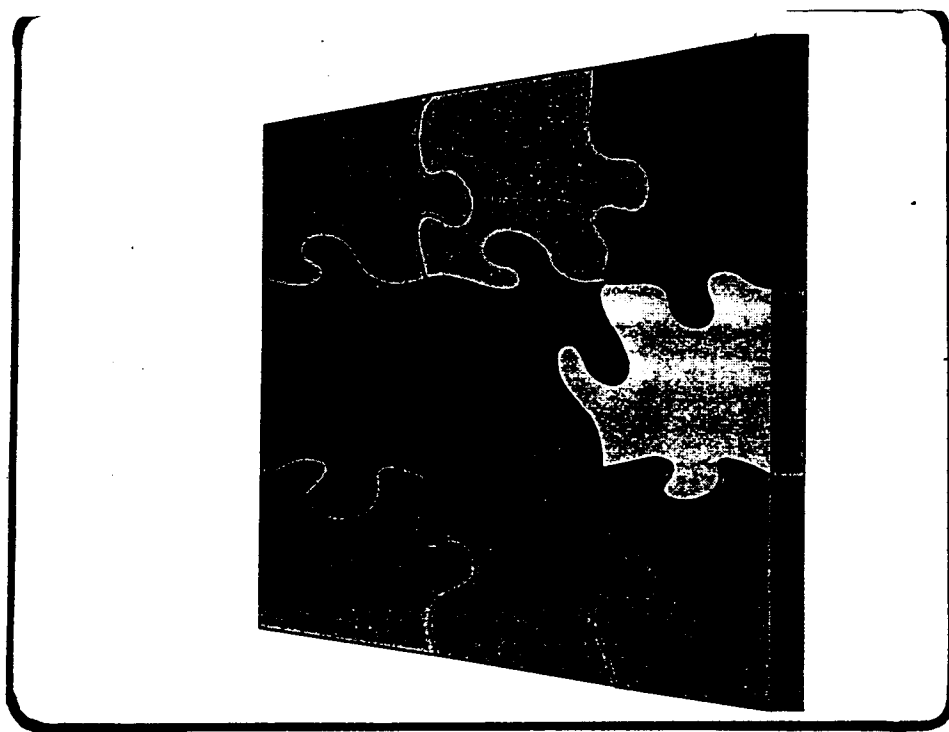
APPENDIX E:
CHILDREN'S UNPAIRED PICTURES
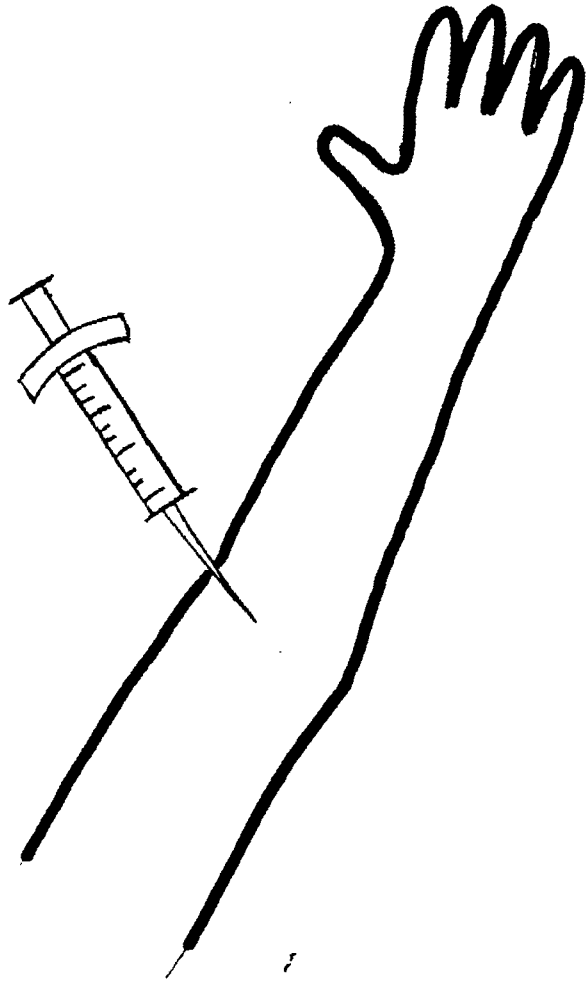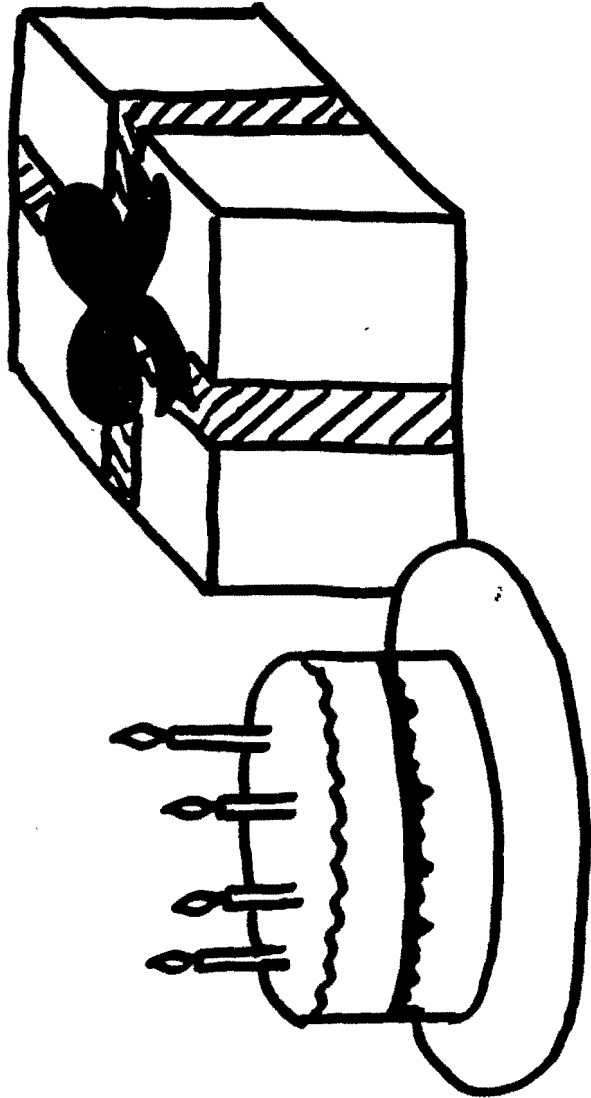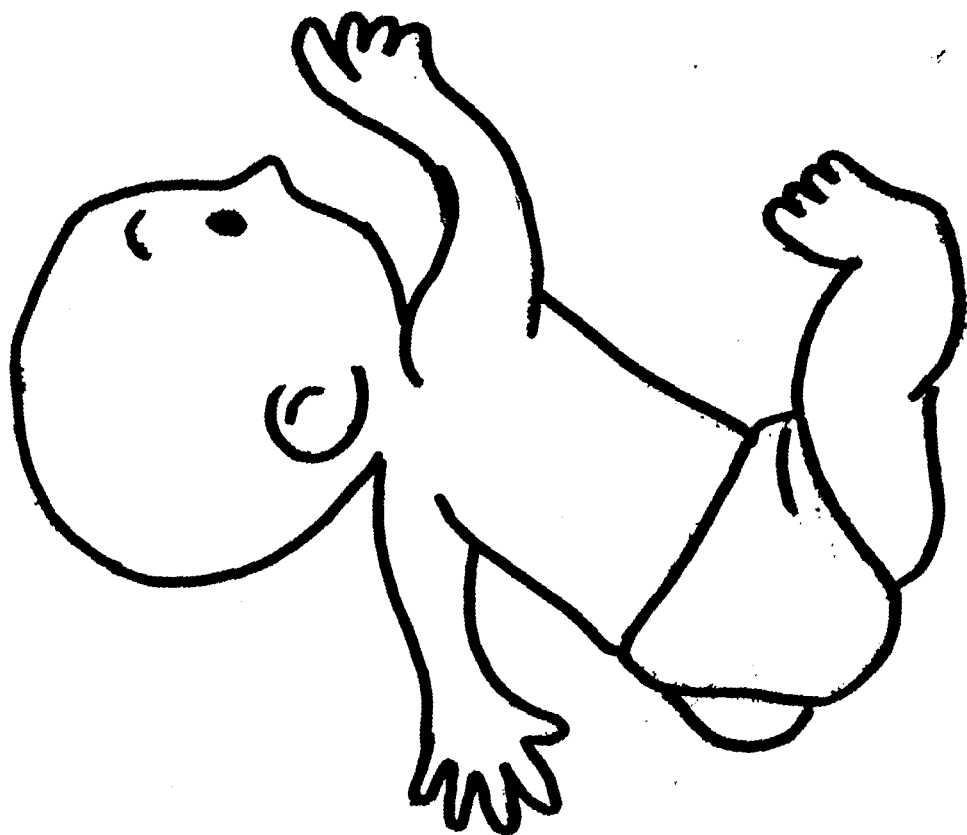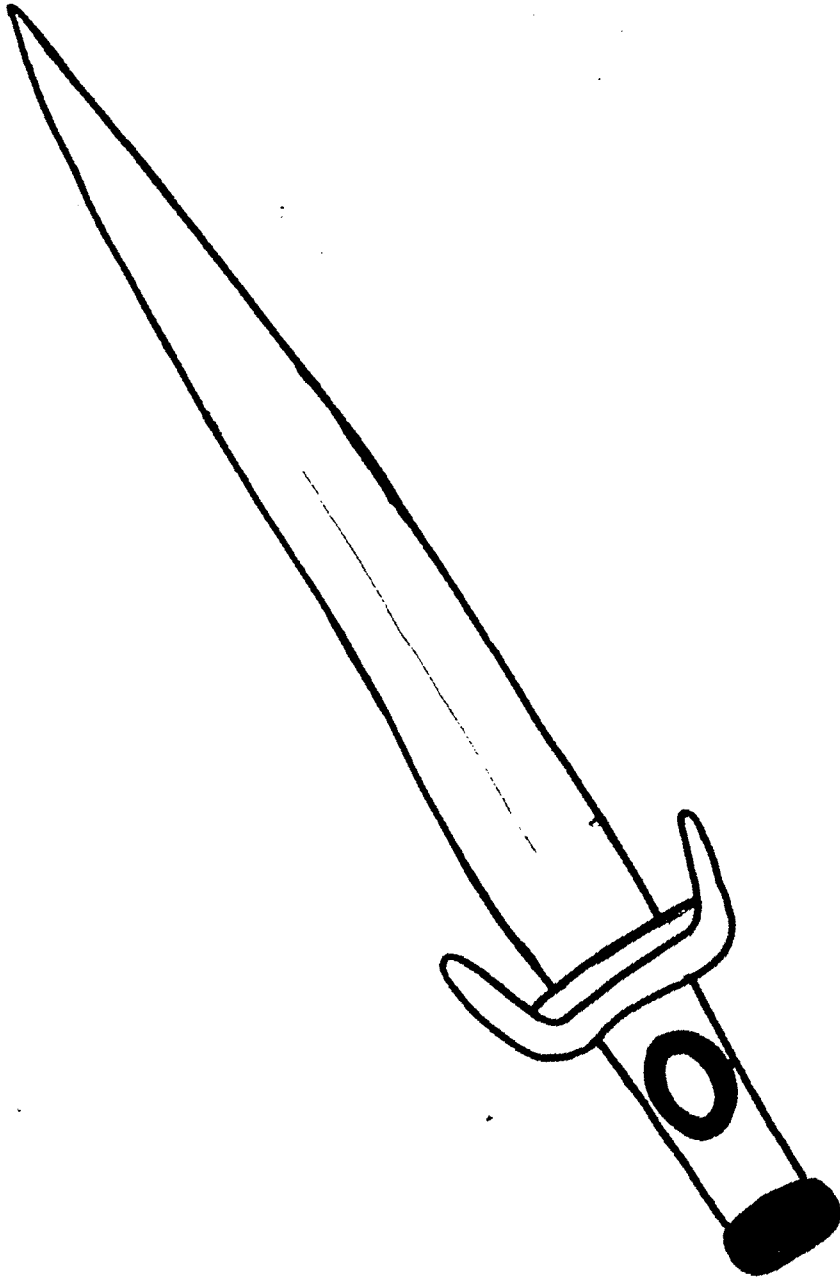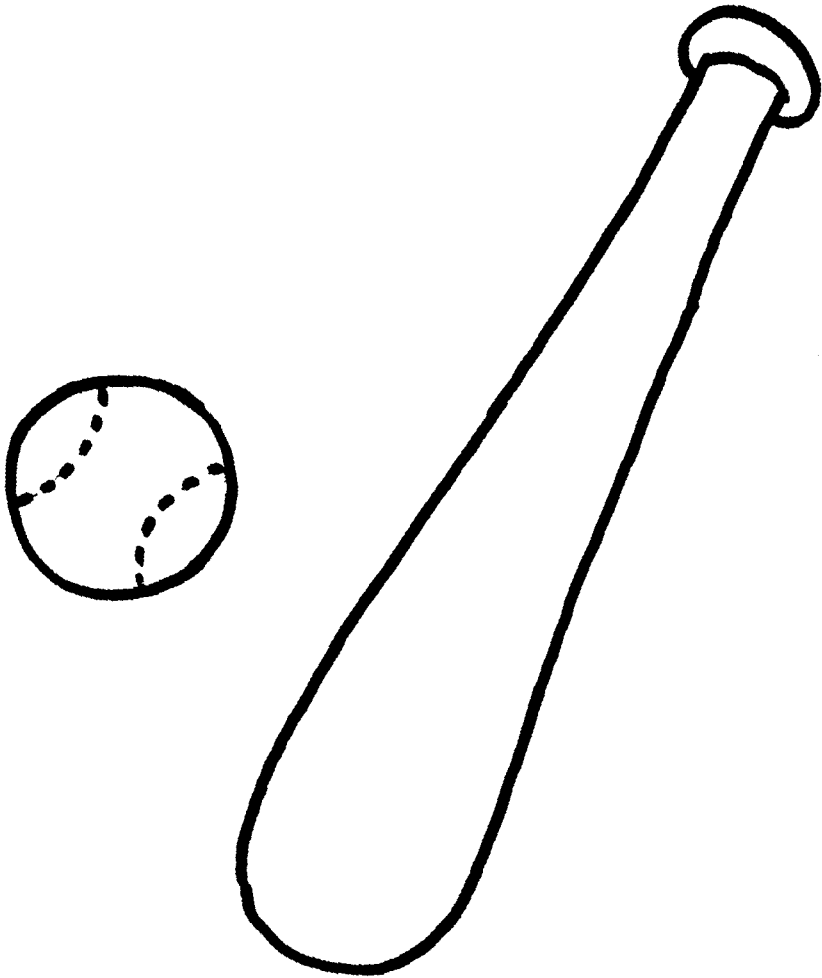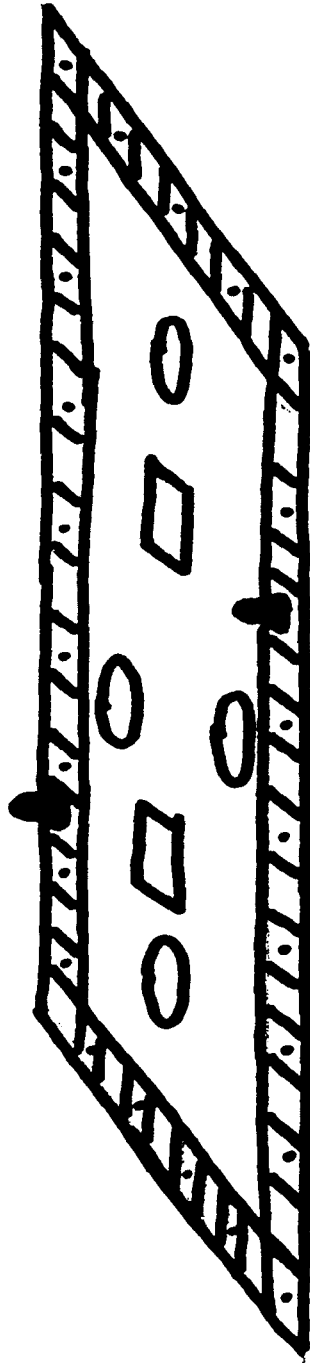
APPENDIX F:
CHILDREN'S LIKERT SCALE
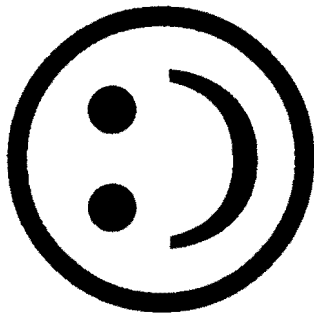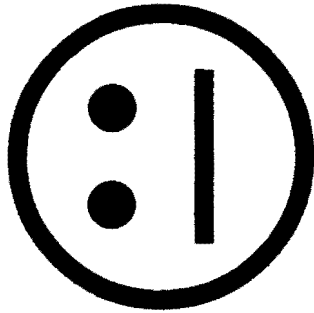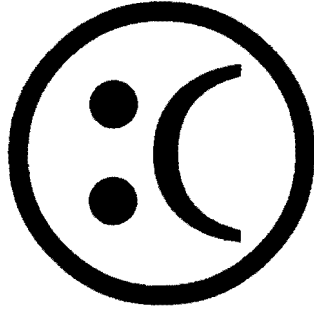
APPENDIX G:
TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SCHOOL_____ CLASSROOM_____

1) TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CURRICULUM.

2) MORE (WHAT) ABOUT DIVERSITY, MULTICULTURALISM, ANTI-BIAS?

3) HOW OFTEN DO YOU INTRODUCE, USE, OR MODIFY ACTIVITIES OR MATERIALS TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF DIVERSITY, ETC.?

NEVER   ONCE A MONTH   2-3 TIMES   1-2 TIMES   3-4 TIMES   DAILY
             OR LESS   A MONTH   A MONTH   A MONTH

4) HOW OFTEN DOES A CHILD DO OR SAY SOMETHING THAT PROMPTS YOU TO ADDRESS DIVERSITY ISSUES?

NEVER   ONCE A MONTH   2-3 TIMES   1-2 TIMES   3-4 TIMES   DAILY
             OR LESS   A MONTH   A MONTH   A MONTH

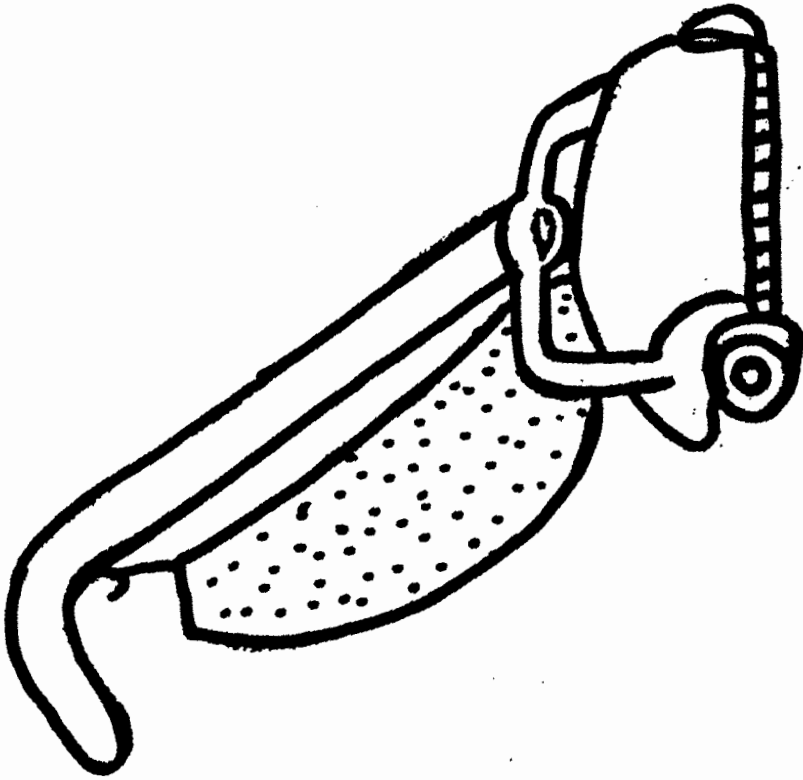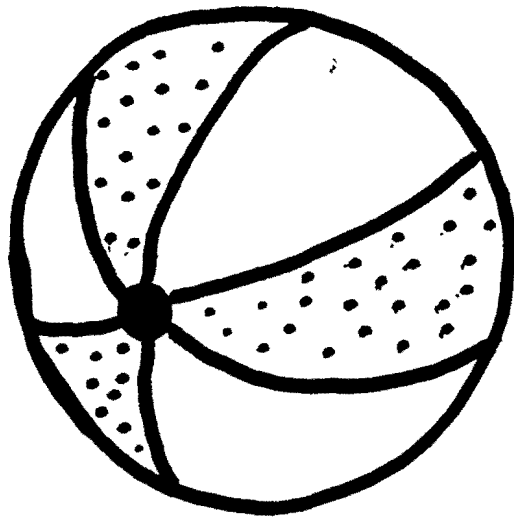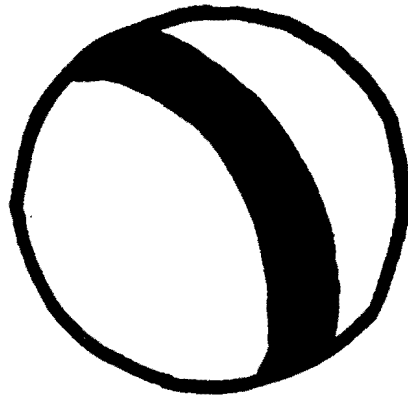5) HOW OFTEN DO YOU INTRODUCE, USE, OR MODIFY ACTIVITIES OR MATERIALS TO ADDRESS GENDER ISSUES?

NEVER   ONCE A MONTH   2-3 TIMES   1-2 TIMES   3-4 TIMES   DAILY
             OR LESS   A MONTH   A MONTH   A MONTH

6) HOW OFTEN DOES A CHILD DO OR SAY SOMETHING THAT PROMPTS YOU TO ADDRESS GENDER ISSUES?

NEVER   ONCE A MONTH   2-3 TIMES   1-2 TIMES   3-4 TIMES   DAILY
             OR LESS   A MONTH   A MONTH   A MONTH

7) LIST AS MANY ACTIVITIES OR MATERIALS AS YOU CAN THAT YOU HAVE USED IN THE LAST MONTH TO ADDRESS GENDER ISSUES.

APPENDIX H:
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE AND
COVER LETTER

Dear Parent:

As you know, a couple of months ago I handed out research consent forms. I have completed the child-participation phase of my research, and now it's your turn!

Included here are 2 copies of my parent survey. One is for you to complete, and the other is for you to give to your child's other parent (or step-parent, or guardian, etc.). If there is not another adult who shares the responsibility of raising your child, please just fill out one copy of the survey and return it with the blank copy. I have provided a box in the entryway for completed surveys.

ABOUT THE SURVEY:

I know that people get tired of filling out surveys, but please remember that I have already collected the children's information. If I don't get the survey back from you, *I will not be able to use your child's data.* This survey is 3 pages long, and it should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

There is one other consideration for the validity of this research. If someone else does fill out the other copy of the survey, it is very important that they be completed independently. In other words, you should not discuss the questions as you are responding to them, nor should you fill them out as a team. By all means, however, feel free to talk about the survey after both copies have been filled out. I think you will find some interesting material for discussion

I know how busy parents are, and I would like to thank all of you who agreed to participate in this study. Your input is invaluable to me! If you have any questions, please call me at school (725-3926) or at home (775-6229)

Thanks again,

Alice Passannante

PLEASE RETURN SURVEY BY APRIL 17TH!!

How important would you say each of the following activities are to your child's development? Please indicate your response by circling a number for each activity.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important
Playing house (cooking, cleaning, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Playing with balls	1	2	3	4	5
Organized sports	1	2	3	4	5
Playing with animals	1	2	3	4	5
Playing at taking care of babies	1	2	3	4	5
Playing at fighting (karate, soldier, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
Playing board games	1	2	3	4	5
Climbing on playground/gym equipment	1	2	3	4	5
Playing dress-up	1	2	3	4	5

This section lists 10 pairs of toys. For each pair, please circle the toy you would prefer for your child.

teddy bear...............tool set   building blocks..........tea set

baby doll...................nerf football   toy truck....................jewelry set

jewelry set................dollhouse   plastic sword............nerf football

plastic sword.............tea set   dollhouse...................tool set

puzzle.......................baby doll   toy truck....................puzzle

---

For this next section, please answer the questions according to how you feel they apply to *young children in general.*

1) How important is it to dress a girl in gender-consistent clothing?
   ☐ very important   ☐ somewhat important   ☐ not very important   ☐ not at all important

2) How important is it to dress a boy in gender-consistent clothing?
   ☐ very important   ☐ somewhat important   ☐ not very important   ☐ not at all important

3) Aside from the obvious physical differences, how different do you think boys and girls naturally are?
   ☐ Very different   ☐ somewhat different   ☐ not very different   ☐ not at all different

This section asks questions about *your child specifically.*

1) Who is most often responsible for disciplining your child at home? (Check one)
□me　　□other parent　　□other relative　　□other _____

2) What kind of discipline is appropriate for you to use with your child? (Check all that apply)
□talking to child　□time out　□spanking　□losing toys or privileges　□other _____

3) How important is it to you that your child act like a child of his or her own sex?
□Very important　　□somewhat important　　□not very important　　□not at all important

4) How important is it to you that other people correctly identify your child's sex?
□Very important　　□somewhat important　　□not very important　　□not at all important

5) How many hours of television/videos does your child typically watch in one day?
□None　　□less than 1 hour　　□1-2 hours　　□2-3 hours　　□3-4 hours　　□more than 4 hours

6) About how often do you read to your child?
□daily　　□3-6 times a week　　□1-2 times a week　　□less than once a week　　□never

7) Imagine you're shopping for shirts with your child. Your child very much wants a grey shirt with the name and emblem of a professional football team. If it cost about as much as you would normally spend, would you buy it for your child?
□Definitely　　□Probably　　□Probably not　　□Definitely not

9) Imagine you're shopping for shirts with your child. Your child very much wants a light purple shirt with the Little Mermaid on it. If it cost about as much as you would normally spend, would you buy it for your child?
□Definitely　　□Probably　　□Probably not　　□Definitely not

Please indicate by checking a box who most often does each of the following household chores.

	Me	My spouse or partner	Spouse/partner and I share equally	Other (please specify)
COOKING	□	□	□	□ _____
VACCUUMING	□	□	□	□ _____
TAKING OUT THE GARBAGE	□	□	□	□ _____
WASHING DISHES	□	□	□	□ _____
MAKING SMALL REPAIRS	□	□	□	□ _____
DOING LAUNDRY	□	□	□	□ _____

ABOUT YOUR CHILD

Child's date of birth: __/__/__   Child's sex: ❑ Male ❑ Female

Child's race/ethnicity: ❑Asian   ❑Black   ❑Hispanic   ❑Middle Eastern   ❑Native American
                        ❑Pacific Islander   ❑White   ❑Other_____

When did your child begin attending this preschool?   __/____
                                                      month year

How many hours per week does your child attend preschool? _____

Does your child have another established home (other than with you)?
    ❑ no   ❑yes————> If yes, with whom? ❑Another parent   ❑Another relative ❑Other_____

ABOUT YOU

Your date of birth: __/__/__   Your sex: ❑Male ❑Female

Are you currently: ❑Married   ❑Widowed   Your relationship to child:
    (check one)   ❑Separated   ❑Living with a partner   ❑parent   ❑step-parent
                   ❑Divorced   ❑Single (never married) ❑partner of child's parent
                   ❑Other_____   ❑other_____

What is your highest level of education?
 ❑Less than high school   ❑Some college   ❑enrollment in a graduate program
 ❑High school/GED   ❑Bachelor's degree   ❑Master's or Doctoral degree   ❑Other_____

Your race/ethnicity: ❑Asian   ❑Black   ❑Hispanic   ❑Middle Eastern   ❑Native American
                     ❑Pacific Islander   ❑White   ❑Other_____

How long have you lived in the United States?
❑since birth   ❑more than 10 years   ❑5-10 years   ❑less than 5 years

Yearly *household* income:❑less than $10,000   ❑$20,000-$29,999   ❑$40,000-$60,000
                          ❑$10,000-$19,999   ❑$30,000-$39,999   ❑more than $60,000

Do you work for wages: ❑outside the home   ❑inside the home   ❑both inside and outside the home
                       ❑neither inside nor outside the home   ❑other_____

Do your religious beliefs tend to be:
❑Very Conservative   ❑Somewhat Conservative   ❑Moderate   ❑Somewhat Liberal   ❑Very Liberal

Do your political beliefs tend to be:
❑Very Conservative   ❑Somewhat Conservative   ❑Moderate   ❑Somewhat Liberal   ❑Very Liberal

ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD

relationship to above child (no names please)	date of birth	sex	
example: brother	05/16/90	❑ Male	❑ Female
_____	__/__/__	❑ Male	❑ Female
_____	__/__/__	❑ Male	❑ Female
_____	__/__/__	❑ Male	❑ Female
_____	__/__/__	❑ Male	❑ Female
_____	__/__/__	❑ Male	❑ Female
_____	__/__/__	❑ Male	❑ Female
_____	__/__/__	❑ Male	❑ Female