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CHILDHOOD FEARS AND THE IMPACT  
OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
University of North Texas in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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May, 1989

Pickard, David C. Childhood Fears and the Impact of Divorce and Remarriage. Doctor of Philosophy (Counseling Psychology), May, 1989, 123 pp., 11 tables, references, 59 titles. <sup>BAY</sup>

Different family structures and levels of parental and financial stress were investigated in relation to children's overtly expressed fears, and secondarily, covertly measured fears and concerns. The family structures consisted of divorced and remarried families divided into those divorced less than two years and those divorced greater than two years. Intact families were used as the control group. One-hundred-twenty-one children from six to eleven years of age and their biological mothers from a semirural, southwestern town comprised the sample. The children were administered five instruments assessing overt fears, covert fears/concerns, and positiveness in family relationships. Mothers were given eight self-report measures which included a questionnaire, a report of their child's overt fears, and an indication of the positiveness in family relationships.

Results indicated that the children of divorced, single mothers tended to report greater overt fears than remarried and intact families. Indications of covert fears of death and separation were also suggested. This was especially true for those single mothers divorced less than two years. Children of intact families did not generally differ from

remarried groups although there were implications that remarriage too soon after divorce may impact covert fears as well as positive feelings toward the stepfather.

Children of mothers reporting high levels of stress reported greater levels of overt fears than children of low stress mothers. Financial stress for mothers appeared to have greater implications for children's overt and covert fears than did parental stress. In contrast to the children of mothers reporting high levels of stress, mothers who reported low levels of stress tended to have children who reported fewer overt fears but greater covert fears and concerns. Recommendations for future research including adding parental measures to assess the coping styles as well as the effectiveness of such coping with divorce and remarriage, using different measures of overt and covert fears, and extending the study to include data from the biological fathers as well as families in which the father has custodial rights.

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CHAPTER I  
CHILDHOOD FEARS AND THE IMPACT  
OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Childhood fears are a commonplace phenomenon to parents and those who work in various ways with children. While commonplace, however, when these fears become too intense or pervasive for a child, spontaneity, involvement in normal activities, and the ability to perform optimally may be affected.

Fears may be influenced in kind or degree by major changes in a child's life here defined as divorce or remarriage. The exploration of the association of these factors may have important implications for intervention with children who are exhibiting reactions to such changes. If increases in fears are indeed a frequent outcome, knowledge about their occurrence and antecedents could assist in better determining what differentiates normal and pathological reactions of the child in relationship to fears that are expressed. With this understanding, the need for varying types of intervention may be more easily assessed. If the presence of certain antecedent variables are associated with an increase in fearfulness, this knowledge may aid the professional helper in developing hypotheses to

explore, provide understanding for the parent and approaches to interventions. Such information could also play a preventative role by providing parents who are considering divorce or remarriage with appropriate expectations for possible reactions they may observe from their children. It may enable parents to better optimize the situation and perhaps minimize the degree of impact and maximize readjustment.

#### Childhood and Fears: Introduction

What is the present state of our understanding of children's fears? In a review of the literature, Graziano, Degiovanni, and Garcia (1979) state that after nearly 60 years of investigation, the results of the research is meager, difficult to interpret, and more suggestive than definitive. They report that since the pioneering work of Jersild and Holmes (1935), little has been added that has developed our understanding of this area. Limitation in the scope of investigation into the development and process of these fears was attributed the greatest fault. Graziano et al. (1979) state that the vast majority of the studies that have been published have concentrated primarily on the kinds and simple numbers of childhood fears and have related these to certain demographic variables such as sex, socioeconomic status, and age. However, childhood fears appear to be much more complex than studies of these kinds suggest.

### Developmental Considerations

With some exceptions (Bowlby, 1973; Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Hyson, 1979; Kissel, 1972; Miller, Barrett, & Hamp, 1974), developmental considerations, i.e. age, cognitive level of development, emotional development, etc., have received only minimal attention. The literature that does address this area suggests that the developmental level and cognitive sophistication of the child may differentially potentiate or decrease the occurrence of concrete or realistic fears, imaginary or anticipatory fears, as well as the ability to accurately assess the probability of fear events actually happening (Bowlby, 1973; Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Hyson, 1975).

Jersild and Holmes (1935) report that in infancy fears seem to arise in response to occurrences in the immediate environment such as loud noises or sudden loss of support. Hyson (1979) adds that at age six or seven months, as the infant's discriminatory abilities and acquisition of mental representations develop, stranger anxiety often occurs as a result of the novel stimulus of an unfamiliar face. Later, at around eighteen months while mental representations are more highly developed, object permanence has not yet been acquired, and a relatively small transformation (such as different hairstyle, etc.) may be quite frightening. The child is unable to assimilate these changes and still



perceive the object as the same (Hyson, 1979). Further, a two-year-old may tend to attribute his own feelings and motives to everything around him. Egocentric and animistic interpretations may be given to an object's function, i.e. a vacuum cleaner may appear as a "roaring monster."

At around four years of age, children begin to be capable of symbolizing or mentally representing things they have never seen. This intellectual development can enormously extend their potential for learning; however, when this cognitive ability begins to emerge, the dividing line between symbol and referent, fantasy and reality, is thin (Hyson, 1979). Thus, ghosts, monsters, giants, and witches may play a predominant part in the child's fears.

As the child approaches eight years of age, natural disasters may become more influential. Fires, worry about injury, and illness concern the school-age child who has begun to differentiate more clearly between what is pretend and what is real. While these are more realistic fears, the child does not yet think in terms of the probability of an event. If an event can occur somewhere else, it can occur also to him. Developing cognitive abilities will gradually help the child make a less egocentric and more accurate assessment of potential dangers (Bowlby, 1973; Hyson, 1979).

### Sex Differences

In spite of the methodological problems, there have been several findings that are fairly consistent across studies (Graziano et al., 1979). Girls tend to report higher numbers of fears than do boys. This is one of the most consistent findings regardless of how fears are measured. The interpretation of such data, however, is not clear. It is impossible to tell from the data if girls' higher fear scores are due to an increased fear reactivity or to such variables as sex-role expectations. Girls may be more willing to admit to fears that they experience. This would be consistent with a traditional role model of feminine behavior. In a similar manner, parent reports may be a reflection of sex-role factors with the incorrect but reliable attribution of greater fears to girls in comparison to boys. Bamber (1974) and Scherer and Nakamura (1968) suggest that sex-role stereotyping may indeed account for the differential data on children's fears as to their sex.

### Age Considerations

Graziano et al. (1979) report that a general normative finding for age appears to be a decrease from early childhood to late adolescence in the percentage of children who report one or more specific fears, as well as the simple number of fears expressed. However, the decrease in the reports of specific fears as children grow older may not

reflect an actual decrease in the fear experience.

While overt or expressed fears have been to some extent investigated, the presence of covert fears has not received the same attention. Jersild, Telford, and Sawrey (1975) report that as a child gets older, overt signs of fear decrease. They caution, however, that this does not mean that there is a corresponding decline in the role fear plays in a child's life. The decline in overt expression is considered to be linked with the child's general tendency to display emotion less openly as he grows older. Jersild et al. (1975) suggest that the premium our society places on apparent fearlessness may motivate a child to develop a fear of displaying fear. They state that it may also be partly associated with changes in the character of the dangers a child fears. Imaginary dangers or apprehension concerning misfortunes that might occur are seldom expressed in overt signs of crying or fleeing. Instead, they can be disguised in innumerable ways (Jersild et al., 1975; Wolman, 1978) from obvious fear display to an appearance of complete confidence and from obedient conduct to stubbornness and resistance that may resemble anger more than fear. The association between overt and covert fears is not clear at this time, although their relationship seems important in understanding childhood fear phenomenon.

It seems to be a rather common experience that children differ to a considerable degree on how they express overt fear, what actions they take to avoid or cope with fear stimuli, and their level of distress when in fear-producing situations. Research, however, has seldom attempted to explore the area of intensity in relation to fears of children (Graziano et al., 1979). However, several authors have suggested that intensity is an important variable. Bowlby (1973) suggests that fears are common in childhood. He purports in his ethnological theory that the most crucial determinant in assessing whether fear has become problematic is not their mere presence, but the degree to which they are present. He asserts that the intensity of the experienced fear is what provokes the organism to flee or avoid and causes emotional distress. Graziano et al. (1979) found little evidence that the kind or simple number of children's fears are related to any specific pathological behaviors such as tantrums or enuresis. They propose that it may be varying levels of intensity that account for such behaviors that are problematic.

#### Socioeconomic Considerations

The most reliable finding in the research pertaining to socioeconomic class and children's fears is the variation in content. Lower socioeconomic children report more fears of specific events such as violence, whippings, drunks, rats,

and cockroaches (Nalvan, 1970). Higher socioeconomic children report fears of heights, car accidents, train wrecks, and large categories such as poisonous snakes or dangerous animals (Nalvan, 1970). These differences may result from the children's daily environmental experiences and to some degree support the notion of a socially determined basis of specific objects feared. Graziano et al. (1979) report that no studies reviewed reported any data on socioeconomic differences and their relationship to differing fear intensity levels.

#### Role of Mediating Variables

In addition to a lack of developmental consideration, the role of mediating factors that may influence the child's perception or reaction toward a potential fear stimulus has largely been ignored. Bowlby (1973) suggests that a critical factor for a child's response to a specific fear situation involves the child's perception of the availability of an attachment figure. He goes on to add that the mere presence of the attachment figure may not be enough. More importantly, "availability" includes the child's perception of the figure as being one who is responsive in an appropriate manner in a given situation. Bowlby also purports that combinations of factors of fear stimuli such as being alone, darkness, speed of approach of an object, and strangeness may act in a multiplicative

manner to bring about more intense fear reactions to potential threat.

These various deficiencies in the research may be the result of several plausible reasons according to Graziano et al. (1979). They state that children's fears are generally minimized in importance by adults. There is a tendency to view these fears as transitory and therefore not a serious aspect of normal development. In addition, in spite of Piaget's (1929, 1951) studies on the difference between child and adult cognitive operations, there remains a tendency to hold the assumption that knowledge of adult fears is sufficient for understanding children's fears.

Ethical restraints on research strategies with children require the use of less intrusive means of measuring fear behavior. Parent reports, retrospective accounts, or self-report with their limitations of reliability and validity (Bowlby, 1973; Lapouse & Monk, 1959) have primarily been used. Reliance on these types of measures may account in part for the lack of hard data that is available.

There also seems to be a tendency to study the child out of the context of the relationships with his family members and the nature of the child's alliances within the family. It is often the case that the child becomes characterized as "fearful" as a result of a single event or situation without addressing important influences from other sources within the child's environment.

### Fears and Divorce

While studies of children's fears in general have been limited in their scope and subsequently in their explanation of many aspects of children's fears, the impact of such potentially traumatic events as divorce and remarriage on fear development have been explored even less.

The literature on divorce is replete with allusions to increased fears of children as a result of divorce. Anthony (1974) reports that children of divorce can feel intensely vulnerable, small, and weak. Other authors (Goode, 1956; Hetherington, 1979; Papalia & Olds, 1979; Pecot, 1970; Toomin, 1974; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976) report a lowered sense of security, fears of abandonment, fear of the future, and uncertainty. However, these studies have not been designed to study fears directly in a quantifiable way, but have seemingly been based more on clinical observation and deductions from theoretical orientations and hypotheses about what fears would seem most likely to occur given the loss of a parent. In addition, varying intensities of these reported fears have not been considered in any direct manner. Instead, fears are reported in a nondifferentiated way, often without respect to mediating variables with an implicit suggestion that certain kinds of fears are common and similar in all children of divorce. Increases in specific fears that are not so easily related to the loss of

a parent have not been reported. Fears of natural events such as tornados or earthquakes, fears of being alone, fear of the dark, and social fears could conceivably be related to parental loss indicative of a generally higher level of anxiety or the result of the child's perceptions of parental stress and worry.

As in the case of the general studies of fears of children, the role of mediating variables has received only limited investigation. Such mediating variables could conceivably influence, in either direction, the level of stress or the extent of the impact of divorce upon children and their parents. Hetherington (1979) and others (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979, Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Roberts & Roberts, 1974) have attempted to explore some of these variables in relation to the intensity of stress experienced by family members. They emphasize the importance of conceptualizing divorce, not as a single event, but as a sequence of experiences to which adjustments may be continually needed. For children, some of the most crucial variables may involve reactions to the parents' increased anxiety, depression, anger, and feelings of rejection and incompetence due the psychological losses incurred. In addition, the home life becomes more disorganized and unstable, which again causes higher levels of stress for the parents (Hetherington & Parke, 1981).



Added to these stressors are pressures and practical concerns regarding household maintenance, economic and occupational needs, and increased responsibility of child care and management without support or significant relief by a partner. These tensions may result in task overload and increased social and emotional isolation (Hetherington & Parke, 1981).

Another potentially impactful variable may include physical-environmental changes such as the necessity of moving into more affordable housing as a result of decreased financial resources from supporting two separate households. This may create an uprooting of familiar social supports for the parent and child alike through subsequent changes in schools, friends, and neighbors (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979; Roberts & Roberts, 1974). While research on these types of variables has shown that they can potentiate stress for the divorced parent, they have been studied only in relationship to stress and not as antecedents to increases or decreases in children's fears that may occur as a result.

Another possible mediating variable reported by Jacobson (1978) pertains to the parent-child relationship. He states that children who received more attention, were encouraged to discuss the divorce, and brought up problems to their parents after the separation had less difficulty in adjusting to the divorce situation. Also, Papalia and Olds

(1979) report that perhaps the most important variable concerning the child's adjustment is how well the child's parents deal with their child's sensitivities, fears, and anxieties. This is of interest given that several researchers (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1975; Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1976) have suggested that divorced parents communicate less well with their children in general and due to their own ambivalence and/or emotions tend not to talk about the divorce itself with their children.

Other predictors of more positive adjustment in children are agreement in child-rearing between the two divorced parents, positive attitudes between the parent figures, low degree of conflict between parents, and when the father was stable, frequent visitations between he and the children (Hetherington & Parke, 1981). Poorer adjustment in children was reported by Papalia and Olds (1979) when custody fights were drawn out, parents communicated their bitterness through their children or transferred their anger in the same manner, or where parents suddenly imposed adult responsibilities on the child.

All of the above mediating variables and predictors of adjustment in children would seem to have similar implications for changes in the hypothesized fears of children of divorce. Understanding of some of these

relationships may provide a clearer image of how divorce differentially affects children and their fears. Other factors related to findings in the divorce literature may have similar implications.

#### Aftermath of Divorce

The first year after the divorce has been reported as highly disruptive and stressful (Chiriboga & Thurner, 1980; Goode, 1956; Heatherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979; Homes & Raye, 1967; Papalia & Olds, 1979). During this first year, the disorganization and change in lifestyle and structure of the home may impact the child significantly (Roberts & Roberts, 1974). Mothers typically need to begin employment if they have not had to work previously or work longer hours to meet financial needs. In fact, Buehler (1985) found that the major focus for custodial mothers was economic functioning. It was suggested that the mother's employment status, educational level, income during marriage, and number of children are important variables in the mother's sense of economic well being. If this area is a struggle for the mother resulting in additional hours at work or the taking up of another part-time job, this can potentially create a "double loss" for the child in first losing one parent through the separation and secondly through less availability of the custodial parent, usually the mother, due to her employment and enlarged responsibilities that may

take time away from the relationship. If the custodial parent feels tired or drained from these factors, emotional availability may be lacking even if the parent is physically present (Stolberg & Anker, 1983). This facet of the parent-child relationship takes on increased importance with Bowlby's (1973) proposition that the child's perception of the availability of the parent is a major determinant in the development of fears and coping abilities with fear-producing stimuli.

Issues of loss for both the mother and the child appear to be frequent experiences (Williams, Wright, & Rosenthal, 1983). These authors and Patten-Seward (1984) reported the divorced children as evidencing developmental difficulties and experiencing significant losses that resulted in grief, anger, and loneliness. They suggested that concerns and bonds regarding loyalty issues to both parents coupled with a fear of losing the remaining parent can place a child in a precarious position of feeling unable to "win." Bonkowski (1985) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) also found the high incidence of anger, particularly in boys but also in girls. Girls tended to demonstrate more compliant behavior but also increased anxiety and more "mixed feelings" (Bonkowski, 1985). An expression of longing for the non-custodial parent as well as a need for information and cognitive facts were frequently found by Wallerstein and Kelly (1980).

Patten-Seward (1984) found some interesting age/developmental differences in children's reactions to divorce. Preschoolers were found to feel fear, show regressive behaviors, and indicate self-blame for the divorce. Children six to eight years of age tended to react with grief, fear, yearning, and a conflict of loyalties. Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1979) also found that young children tended to show a decrease in their freedom in play and were more immature and more negative than their age-mates from intact homes. According to Patten-Seward (1984) 9 to 12-year-olds felt a desire to be active, showed an increase in anger, appeared to have a shaken sense of identity, and tended to attempt to align with only one parent. Hetherington (1988) and Wallerstein (1987) both have indicated in the respective longitudinal studies that pre-latency and latency aged children tend to have a more difficult time coping with the divorce of their parents than do children who are younger.

Toomin (1974) found that divorced mothers tend to be less consistent with their children and are often perceived as more rejecting. They also communicate less well with their children and either make greater demands for mature behavior or require less compliance than they did previously (Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976).

The impact of these changes in parental behavior and environmental structure is often underestimated (Hingst, 1981); however, Stolberg and Anker (1983) suggest that for some children, these kinds of changes may be the major determinant in the development of emotional problems. However, the association of these changes in family composition and fears of children has not been empirically explored.

Although the first year can often be a traumatic period, in the second year a dramatic improvement is often reported in the adjustment of the family and its gradual reorganization (Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Kolevzon & Gottlieb, 1983). Mothers' feelings of competency increase both in the control they feel over their children's behavior as well as control over their own new roles. Mother-child relationships are reported as improved. These findings suggest that the amount of time since the divorce may be an important variable to consider when addressing child or parental reactions and adjustments. However, there have been several recent findings that suggest that the impact of divorce may have a longer duration than the previous authors may intimate after the two-year postdivorce period.

Bonkowski (1985) found that three groups of children, each group being in either the first, second, or third postdivorce year, showed no differentiation in their

feelings about the divorce, expressions of strong mixed feelings, and feelings of anger. However, Wallerstein (1987) and Hetherington (1988) have reported that there appear to be significant postdivorce sequela that exist and have some degree of impact for at least 10 years.

While there is evidence that divorce may carry negative consequences, there are other authors that suggest that marriage dissolution can be a relief after a stressful marriage and can provide opportunities for growth and personal development (Brown, 1974; Cuber & Haroff, 1965; Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Kraus, 1979). In fact, Morrison (1974) found no clear relationship between the marital status of the parent and symptomatology in children, and Rutter (1971, cited in Papalia and Olds, 1979) states that children have been found to be better adjusted when they have a good relationship with one parent than when two parents are present with discord and discontent. Landis (1960) reports that living in an unhappy intact home can be just as traumatic for children as the experiences of living in a divorced home. Hetherington et al. (1978) suggest that in the long run children in single parent homes show better adjustment than children in conflict ridden, intact homes. However, in the short run, during the first stressful year, children in the single parent group are more disturbed.

### Fears and Remarriage

Another dramatic change in family structure may come as a result of the remarriage of the single parent and the introduction of a new adult member into a preexisting family arrangement. Investigation into the ramifications of this event is a newer subject of research than is divorce. The results have been informative but again suffer from similar problems of methodology. While possessing these shortcomings, the stepfamily literature contains data that may be important when considering the potential impact upon the involved children's development of fears.

Visher and Visher (1979) have undertaken one of the most extensive investigations of stepfamilies. They state that remarriage may carry problems and adjustments for the child that involve more than the introduction of a new member. Remarriage may represent a significant loss for the child of a close parent-child relationship that may have developed as a result of the previous divorce. This may represent a security bond. With the remarriage, the custodial parent's time and attention must be shared with another person. If the child has felt abandoned by the loss of the noncustodial parent due to the divorce, more intense abandonment fears may arise regarding the remaining parent who may now be the primary sense of stabilization. If the remarriage occurs in close proximity to the earlier divorce,



the intensity of the child's feelings may be exacerbated. The child may have not yet had time to deal with the divorce aftermath before being placed into a situation where new adjustments are needed. Subsequently, the child may not be prepared to accept a new adult into his/her life.

Difficulties with trust and fear of instability may complicate and tax the child's abilities to adjust to this change (Toomin, 1974; Visher & Visher, 1979).

The child's perception of the "replacement" of the absent parent may bring up loyalty issues that can cause acute resentment or grief, particularly in the negotiation of the expression of affection and enjoyment of the stepparent. Conflictual feelings between the custodial parent and the child may result, further increasing the child's fear of abandonment. The custodial parent (mother) has found a partner with whom to share intimacy, financial burdens, child care, and friendship. While the remarriage may be a hopeful time for her, the child may sense jeopardy. Any resulting conflict between the child and stepparent may conceivably raise anxiety or resentment toward the child by the natural parent.

The aforementioned issues regarding the stepfamily may have implications for children's fears. Visher and Visher (1979) primarily suggest potential fears of abandonment but report no direct empirical support. If such fears do exist,

it is unclear as to how these fears might be expressed. They might be seen directly through expressed or observed fears of loss or separation, perhaps seen less directly through an increase in intensity of more general fears or a combination of the two.

In summary, fears are considered a common phenomenon in childhood. Research investigating this area suggests that certain numbers and types of expressed or overt fears are more prominent in particular groups than in others. Younger children typically express more fears than older ones, females report more fears than males, and lower socioeconomic groups of children report more specific environmentally based fears than higher socioeconomic groups. Varying kinds and numbers of overt fears by themselves have not consistently been shown to be strongly associated with maladaptive or problematic behavior in children (Graziano et al., 1979).

Divorce and remarriage are major changes in a child's life and carry with them the potential for considerable stress and disruption in a variety of areas for both child and parent. In addition to experiencing the loss of the consistent presence of one of his parents, the child may also be impacted by the effects of stress on the custodial parent, particularly if it affects the emotional and physical availability and accessibility of that parent.

Many allusions to the child's increased insecurity, fears of abandonment and loss, and feelings of helplessness and powerlessness as a result have been reported.

#### Statement of the Problem

Our understanding of childhood fears has progressed little over the last 60 years of research in this area (Graziano et al., 1979). Studies have primarily focused on attempts to assess the kinds and numbers of fears and have not sufficiently addressed differing intensities, mediating variables that could effect such expression, or the relationship of fears to parental concerns or stress. Research on the effects of divorce and remarriage on children's fears has not yet been adequately explored in an empirical manner to verify whether fears actually do increase as a consequence of such experiences. As a result, the roles of such factors as well as accompanying parental stress on this phenomenon have not been addressed.

Knowledge of the impact of these factors may add considerably to our present understanding and thus enhance the efficacy of interventions that may be undertaken. If it is the intensity of fear that is related to maladaptive reactions or difficulties with adjustment and not the mere presence this would have ramifications for determining if a sufficient problem exists for the child and whether intervention is needed. Many parents seem to seek

assistance from agencies and professionals based on the presence of expressed fears of their children. In addition, it is not uncommon when evaluating a child to obtain the suggestion of the presence of certain fears. Are these fears problematic or the process of a normal and adaptive adjustment given the developmental stage of the child and the situation which the child has experienced? Is therapy or counseling needed? In addition to possibly aiding in answering these questions, if behavioral correlates are found to be associated with varying intensities of fears, it may add to a more definitive understanding of such problems as bed wetting and tantrums that, thus far, have received only equivocal support in the literature.

A better understanding of mediating variables could conceivably provide preventative information for parents and professionals that would minimize the development of problematic fears for the child. Since parents of children who are in the process of divorce are reported as often feeling incompetent in a variety of areas, knowledge about what they can do to assist their child may provide them with some sense of direction and less sense of guilt.

Understanding the roles of parental stress and children's fears may affect intervention by creating an awareness of the necessity of providing more assistance and support for the parent. The focus may shift to a greater

emphasis on the parent's need rather than the child's, whose behavior may be a reaction rather than the problem.

The lack of empirical information on children's covert fears is understandable given the research difficulties and limitations already addressed in assessing and understanding their overt fears. However, since children may learn as they get older not to express as many fears (Jersild et al., 1975), the role of covertly expressed fears in indicating problematic areas might be of increased importance.

The major purpose of this paper was to empirically investigate the incidence and nature of childhood fears in relationship to the experience of divorce and remarriage. Thus far, there have been suggestions of increases in fears that seem to follow primarily from clinical judgments and hypotheses based on theoretical orientations rather than empirical data. In addition to attempting to verify these types of reactions in children, the exploration of various aspects of these expressed fears was a major focus. While different kinds or numbers of fears may be important variables, an emphasis in this research was to add the element of intensity level of the fears reported, a facet which has been lacking in the literature on children's fears in general. It was felt that it was plausible, given the common incidence of children's fears, that this area of focus could be beneficial in differentiating between degrees

of adjustment problems. Both overt and covert fears were explored, not only in their relationship to each other, but also in their differential occurrence in relationship to changes in family structure.

Another consideration of this study was the role played by mediating variables such as parental stress and the nature of the alliances or attachments between the child and other family members in increasing or decreasing the incidence of fear reactions. These variables could have important explanatory implications in the development of fears, as well as for differences in fear intensity.

All of the above considerations were explored within the context of differing time spans subsequent to the change in family structure and are represented as follows:

1. Children from families where divorce had occurred within two years;
2. Children of families where divorce had occurred greater than two years ago;
3. Children of families where mothers had divorced but remarried in less than two years after the divorce;
4. Children of families when remarriage took place greater than two years after the divorce.

Intact families where divorce had occurred was defined as the control group. The importance of looking at these different time span groups is supported by the literature

suggesting that the first two years are a period of stress and attempts at readjustment and reorganization for the family members. Subsequently, length of time since the event may have implications in the expression and incidence of childhood fears.

#### Hypotheses

The first major hypothesis was that a main effect for family structure would be found. It was expected that children of divorced single parents would express different types of overt fears with greater intensity than children of intact two-parent families. Where divorce had occurred in less than two years, the difference between these two groups was hypothesized as being a maximum since they seemed to reflect the greatest possible polarity in terms of the amount of change in familiar family structure and, thus, potential for disorganization and stress. Children of intact families were expected to show the lowest fear intensity levels in comparison to all other family structures. The other family groupings were expected to fall between these two.

A second major hypothesis was that a main effect would also occur for the level of overall stress reported. Higher levels of stress were expected to potentiate greater overt fears in children. Parents undergoing considerable levels of stress could be more preoccupied with their worries and

be more emotionally drained, depressed, or angry. When parental emotional resources are low, their children's needs may be experienced as excessive demands. Subsequently, they may be less emotionally available to meet their children's needs (Stolberg & Anker, 1983).

Thirdly, it was hypothesized that an interaction would occur between the type of family structure and the level of stress experienced by the mothers. It was expected that children of mothers who reported high levels of stress, had experienced divorce in less than two years, and had not remarried would report the greatest fears while children of mothers of intact families who reported low levels of stress would show the least fears.

In this study, expressed or overt fears are the primary focus. These were based on mother and child report. There is a significant lack of literature on the relationship of covert fears/concerns and mediating variables as they interact with levels of fears in children. No attempt, to this author's knowledge, has been made to empirically investigate these relationships in the context of different family structures. Due to this, no specific hypotheses were made concerning covert fears, although they were explored and analyzed to some degree.



## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Subjects

Subjects consisted of 121 six to eleven-year-old (mean age = 8.0, SD = 1.3) children and their biological mothers. Boys represented 50.4% of the children and girls 49.6%. The breakdown of racial percentages was 94.2% Caucasian, 3.3% African-American, and 2.5% Mexican-American. Ninety-one percent of the families described themselves as Protestant, 5.3% reported being Catholic, with 3.3% claiming no religious preference. More than three-fourths of the mothers (78%) described themselves as being at least "somewhat active" in their religious involvement with 50.4% reporting either moderate or devout in their beliefs and participation. The children were obtained with authorized permission from an elementary public school setting (grades one through four) in a small semi-rural town in the southwestern part of the United States. The town, while rural, is near to a major city and much of the population of the town commutes to this city for work and entertainment.

The involvement and utilization of the children's biological mothers versus the biological fathers for information and data in this study was decided upon due to

the current overwhelming tendency for the mother to receive custodial rights in divorce cases (Hetherington & Parke, 1981). Also, due to the frequent occurrence of decreased contact with the noncustodial father over the first two year period (Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Visher & Visher, 1979), it was felt that obtaining data from the natural fathers could be difficult and prohibitive.

Due to the complexity of the study in obtaining adequate numbers of subjects, no attempt was made to match the individuals on the basis of age, sex, or social-economic factors. A Chi-square analysis exploring the distribution of child subjects by sex and family structure was performed with no significant statistical difference found between any of the five groups. A Chi-square for sex by overall stress indicated that mothers who reported high levels of stress tended to have sons rather than daughters ( $X^2_1 = 23.21, p < .01$ ) and low stress mothers tended to have daughters rather than sons ( $X^2_1 = 21.49, p < .01$ ).

Comparability of age was explored through an analysis of variance by family structure and overall stress. It was found that no significant age differences occurred between the family structures; however, regarding overall stress, mothers who reported higher levels of such stress tended to have younger children ( $F_1 = 6.30, p < .05$ ). The data regarding the influence of age and sex would suggest that

the interpretations and implications regarding the stress dimension should be cautious and judicious.

#### Procedure

After obtaining permission from the appropriate school officials, children in the first through fourth grades were given a letter and two brief forms to take home to their mothers. The letter described the nature of the study, what would be involved in regard to the participation by the child and the mother, an assurance of anonymity, and the right of the child or mother to discontinue participation at any time. One form consisted of a brief screening questionnaire inquiring as to the child's name, grade, home classroom teacher, mailing address, marital status of the parents, child's average school grade, and number of siblings in the home. The other form consisted of the parental consent form to be read and signed by the parent. This form gave permission to the examiner to meet with and administer the research measures to their child for the purpose of this study. At the bottom of this form was a place for the parent's signature and the date. See Table 1 for normative data on the population.

The mothers were asked to indicate their voluntary agreement for their and their child's participation in the study by returning the letter containing the brief screening questionnaire to the child's home room teacher with their

signature of approval. The initial questionnaires were then picked up by the researcher. The information on the questionnaires were scrutinized as to the appropriateness of the family's involvement in this study. Not being the primary focus of this study, families who were made up of mothers who were single as a result of the death of their spouse and single mothers who had never been married were not used in the sampling population.

A more comprehensive questionnaire and the measures for the mothers to complete as their part of the study were mailed via the U.S. Postal System. A stamped, self-addressed manila envelope was also enclosed for the mother's convenience in returning the materials to the examiner when completed. The time needed to complete the materials given to the mothers was approximately 45 minutes.

The children were seen in the school setting. The examiner worked with the home room teacher in scheduling a time with each child in order to minimize the disruption for the classroom, the teacher, or the child. The total testing time for the child was approximately 30 minutes and was accomplished in one session.

When the materials were obtained from both the mother and the child, one of the researcher's associates coded the data by number to provide anonymity for the subjects and kept the coded reference sheet in a place unknown to the

examiner. This particular associate was never involved in the scoring of any of the data from the mothers or the children. Covert and projective measures were scored and analyzed separately from the other self-report data of the child or the mother to avoid possible contamination and bias.

After all of the mother's and child's data was scored, their material was appropriately placed into one of the following five family structure types by way of the coding reference sheet kept by the researcher's associate: (a) single mothers where divorce occurred less than two years ago, (b) single mothers where divorce occurred greater than two years ago, (c) divorced mothers who had remarried in less than two years of their divorce, (d) divorced mothers who had remarried greater than two years after their divorce, and (e) mothers of intact families (those who had never experienced divorce).

#### Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of the following (administered in fixed order): demographic variables of the child's birth date, race, religion, degree of religious activity, child's grade placement in school, length of attending the current school, child's average grade, family constellation, current marital status, length of time initially separated, length of time divorced, family income,

number of moves in past two years, parents' occupations, degree of educational achievement, ratings of the child's relationships with other family members, frequency of contact with parent figures, mother's frequency of social activities, financial stress, living and sleeping arrangements, use of day care, extent of responsibility for household and child management, degree of support for household and child management, whether or not the number of hours worked per week by parent figures has changed in the last two years, and how easily the mother perceives her child and she talking about various topics of school problems, death, anger, divorce, fears, sadness, peers, and sexuality. In addition, the mother completed the following scales and measures: Structure of Coping Scale (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978), Dyadic Satisfaction Scale (Spanier, 1976), Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), Fear Survey Schedule (Wolpe & Lang, 1964), Inventory of Family Feelings (Lowman, 1980), and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory Lie Scale (Lie Scale). The children were given the following measures: Fear Survey Schedule (Wolpe & Lang, 1964); Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank (Rotter & Rafferty, 1954), Hand Test (Wagner, 1965), Child Anxiety Scale (Gillis, 1979), and Inventory of Family Feelings (Lowman, 1980).

### Structure of Coping Scale

Role strain and role. Role strain is defined as current social strains in terms of conditions of daily social roles which are generally considered to be problematic or undesirable (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). The reported experiences of emotional upset arising within the multiple roles that women encounter (marital, parental, occupational, and financial) were considered as sources of role strain. Role stress is seen as an emotional response to the role strain.

This self-report measure consists of a total of 31 items which ask the subject to indicate on a 4-point Likert scale how bothered, tense, or frustrated subjects feel in situations involving parenting, occupation, household finances, and marriage. This measure was used as an independent variable to assess the degree of strain and stress experienced by the mothers in relationship to duties, demands, and expectations regarding the care of the children and household finances. The scores were dicotomized by means of a median split into "high stress" and "low stress." In addition to using the scale by combining all of the items together for an overall stress variable, it was decided during the data analyses to divide the measure by means of items related to (a) parental/household maintenance, and (b) those related to financial strain and stress to assess

potential differences in impact between the two. Since the Structure of Coping Scale is experimental, no validity or reliability data were available at the time of the study (Pearlin, 1978).

#### Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale

This self-report instrument measures the quality of the marital relationship in the perception of the responder. The 10 items on this subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) contain a six-category Likert scale scored such that higher scores indicated higher levels of marital satisfaction. On 8 of the 10 items, subjects' responses range from "all the time" to "never." Of the remaining two items, one is a 7-point Likert term which asks subjects to rate their overall degree of satisfaction in the relationship from "perfect" to "extremely unhappy." The remaining item is a 6-point Likert item that asks respondents to indicate their degree of commitment to making their relationship successful. Spanier (1976) reports validity and reliability coefficients for the Dyadic Adjustment Scale of .87 and .96 respectively. In addition, the author also reports a reliability coefficient of .94 for the Dyadic Satisfaction Scale (DSS).

Out of necessity, this measure was slightly modified for the divorced/single parent groups to pertain to the marriage in which they were previously involved in order to



have some measure of satisfaction and quality of the most recent long-term relationship.

#### Bem Sex Role Inventory

This measure assesses sex-role attitudes along a continuum of traditional female, androgenous, and traditional male roles. It consists of 60 adjectives to which the person responds on a 7-point Likert scale as to how true each personal characteristic is of them. The scale ranges from "never or almost never true" to "always or almost always true." This variable served as a dependent variable on which to perform ex post facto analysis in exploring the relationship of sex-role attitudes, family structure, and parental stress as they relate to the incidence of childhood fears. Myers (1976) found that mothers who were self-oriented and showed attitudes with less traditional feminine roles had the least difficulty with adjustment to divorce. Those who were heavily family oriented and invested in their roles as wife and mother demonstrated poorer adjustment.

#### Fear Survey Schedule

This measure is a list of 72 of the most frequent anxiety stimuli found by Wolpe and Lang (1964). They report that this measure provides a clinical means of surveying a wide range of reasonably common sources of fear reactions. Six categories of fears were developed consisting of

animals, illness/death, classical phobias (being alone, crossing streets, thunder, dentists, high places, etc.), social fears (being teased, speaking in front of people, fear of strangers, being criticized, etc.), fears of loud or sudden noises, and miscellaneous fears, a general classification consisting of a wide variety of stimuli (strange places, falling, imaginary creatures, making mistakes, etc.). The subject responds on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "not at all" to "very much." This particular measure was given to the mothers of the children with the instructions that they complete it on their own children instead of on themselves.

#### Inventory of Family Feelings (IFF)

The IFF is a 38-item scale requiring approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete in which each member of a family answers "agree," "disagree," or "neutral" to each item in terms of his or her feelings at that moment toward every other family member. The items consist of statements that are affectively weighted in either a positive or negative manner to which the respondent chooses one of the three responses above as to how they feel about that person or their perceptions of how that person feels about them. A sample item is "I feel close to this family member" to which the subject states whether he or she agrees, disagrees, or feels neutral about the statement in relation to a specific

family member.

Several kinds of affect scores are produced when the IFF is administered to every member of the family: Individual Scores reflect one member's affective rating of a given other member; Dyad Scores are an average of two members' individual scores toward each other; Response Scores represent an average of individual scores a member produces toward the members of his or her family as a group; Reception Scores refer to the average individual scores given to one member by the others of a group; and Family Unit Scores are the average individual scores produced by an entire family (Lowman, 1980). The Individual, Dyad, and Family Unit scores were used in this study. The author of the test reports reliability and validity coefficients of .94 and .49 respectively.

The mothers (and children in this study) completed this measure for each member in their family. As was the case with the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, divorced single mothers were asked to respond to the statements in relationship to their child as well as their ex-spouse. This measure was utilized as a dependent variable factor in ex post facto analysis.

The following are the series of measures given to the children.

### Fear Survey Schedule

This measure was previously described and explained in the mothers' instruments section. Refer to it for specific details. This measure was given to each child in a face to face situation. To avoid potential reading difficulties, each of the items were read to each child to which they responded verbally. They were given a blank sheet with the items and scale on it to follow along if they wished.

### Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank

This measure consisted of 25 items to which the child responding by finishing the sentence usually by writing it on the blank next to the sentence but in cases in which the child requested it, written by the examiner. This measure was used to assess the presence of fears of covert concerns. Two different scoring procedures were used, one by Hayslip, Pinder, and Lumsden (1981) used to assess concerns about death and loss and one by Lanyon and Lanyon (1972), for assessing hostility and anxiety.

Pinder and Hayslip (1981) and Hayslip, Pinder, and Lumsden (1981) presented data, using a scoring system developed by Hayslip, which substantiated the utility of a sentence completion technique in measuring subconsciously (covert) expressed death concerns along a number of dimensions. These studies describe a scoring system for use with the sentence completion method that could be reliably

scored and could differentiate groups of individuals in a manner suggesting it to be a valid way in which to measure death fears at a subconscious level of awareness, distinct from direct self-report measures of this construct. Each completed sentence stem is scored on the basis of the presence or absence of four categories: (a) overt death/dying (any direct mention of death and/or dying with respect to self and/or others; (b) separation/isolation (sense of closeness or fear of losing others, or significant others - a feeling of love and/or affection for people); (c) loss of goals/achievement (references to specific plans, goals/accomplishments particularly, but not limited to, those not yet made or carried out); and (d) injury/pain/suffering (concern for, expression of injury and/or disease to oneself or significant others, expression of pain, physical or mental pain, concern for the dignity - in reference to pain/suffering - of self and/or others). Interrater reliability was assessed prior to the scoring of the sentence completions and was found to be .85.

Lanyon and Lanyon (1972) developed their own scoring method for hostility, anxiety, and dependency of which only the first two were used for this study. They suggest scoring the responses on either a 2, 1, or 0 weighting according to whether the response definitely indicated the personality variable in question, suggested it did, or

suggested it did not indicate it respectively. Interscorer reliability was reported to range from .86 to 1.00 with a median of .97.

### The Hand Test

The Hand Test is a diagnostic technique for individuals age six through adulthood that consists of ten cards approximately three by five inches in size which utilizes hands as a projective medium primarily measuring aggressive/hostile tendencies but also assessing characteristics related to withdrawal, dependency, and passivity. On each card except the last a different picture of a hand is portrayed. The tenth card is blank. The cards are presented one at a time and the subject must "project" by telling what the hands are doing. For the last (tenth) card the subject must imagine a hand and tell what it is doing. Responses are recorded verbatim along with initial response times per card and other significant behavior and then scored and interpreted according to prescribed procedures. The average administration time is approximately ten minutes.

This test utilizes relatively structured stimuli in relatively unstructured poses, permitting individual variations in responses yet restricting these responses to definable and classifiable categories, namely descriptions of hand actions and attitudes. It is assumed in way of

rationale that "prototypal action tendencies" (tendencies toward behaving in a particular manner) will be projected on to pictures of hands since the hand, both ontogenetically and functionally, is crucial for interacting with and relating to the external world.

The resulting responses are scored on 15 possible basic dimensions. A few examples of these are affection, dependence, communication, exhibition, aggression, tension, fear, and bizarre. Seven summary scores are possible consisting of groupings and ratios of the basic scoring dimensions. The summary scores used for this study are those involving the Interpersonal, Environmental, Maladjustment, Withdrawal, Pathological, and Acting-Out-Ratio (AOR). Interscorer reliability was reported as falling between .86 to .96.

#### Child Anxiety Scale (CAS)

The CAS is a series of 20 items that present the child with a force-choice situation in deciding which of two behavioral or personal characteristics are most similar to him or her. An example of one of the items is "Do you think that you do things better than most other children or do you think that most other children do things better than you?" The child, depending on the direction of the response and the item, either marks a red dot or a blue dot on the answer sheet. The cumulative score gives an estimate of the level

of anxiety experienced by the child reflected through items suggesting doubts about abilities, social insecurities, etc. This dependent measure was added to assess the general anxiety level of the children to compare with the fears that they report overtly as well as the concerns or fears that they demonstrate covertly. The author of the test reports the validity coefficient of the measure as .72 and the reliability coefficient as .87.

#### Inventory of Family Feelings (IFF)

This self-report measure assesses the patterns of positive or negative affective alliances between family members (see above). The child completed this questionnaire on his biological mother and father, stepfather if applicable, and his or her siblings.



## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

Two 2 (High and Low Overall Stress as defined by a median split) x 5 (Family Structure) factorial multivariate analyses of variance were first performed, one on the children's data of expressed overt fears and one on the mothers' data of their perceptions of their children's overt fears. Overt fears were categorized into six types: fears of animals, social or interpersonal fears, fears related to tissue damage, illness and death, fears of noises, classical fears (e.g. being alone, crossing streets, thunder, high places, deep water, elevators, lightning, enclosed places, large open spaces), and miscellaneous fears (e.g. strange places, falling, failure, imaginary creatures, strange shapes, feeling angry, dull weather, and making mistakes). Subsequently, Overall Stress was further broken down and reanalyzed via (a) stress related to parental duties and responsibilities, and (b) stress related to financial concerns. In general, if the multivariate results justified it, univariate analyses of variance with appropriate post hoc tests (e.g. Scheffe, Student-Neuman Keuls) were carried out on these same data. Refer to Table 1 for an explanation of each of the dependent variables used in the analysis.

Table 1

Description of Measures Used in Present StudyChildren's Measures

Fear Survey Schedule	Children's Self-Reported Overt Fears
Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank	Children's Covert Fears/Concerns
Hand Test	Children's Covert Fears and Behavioral Tendencies
Child Anxiety Scale	Children's Overall Level of Anxiety
Inventory of Family Feelings	Children's Perceptions of Positiveness in Familial Relationships

Mother's Measures

Fear Survey Schedule	Mothers' Perceptions of Children's Overt Fears
Structure of Coping Scale	Mothers' Level of overall, parental, and financial stress
Dyadic Satisfaction Scale	Mothers' Perceptions of relationship with current or former spouse
Bem Sex Role Inventory	Extent of Traditional Feminine, Masculine, and Androgenous characteristics
Fear Survey Schedule	Mother's Perceptions of positiveness in familial relationships
Lie Scale	Assesses mothers' tendencies to report themselves in an overly positive manner

Children's Overt Fears: Impact of Family Structure and  
Overall, Parental, and Financial Stress

Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate main effects (see Tables 2, 3, 4) for the set of overt children's fears were significant for Overall Stress ( $F_{6,106} = 6.16, p < .01$ ), Parental Stress ( $F_{6,106} = 3.98, p < .01$ ), Financial Stress ( $F_{6,106} = 2.90, p < .05$ ), and for Family Structure ( $F_{24,418} = 4.69, p < .01$ ). However, no interactions between level and type of stress and family structure were found at either the multivariate or univariate levels.

Family Structure Univariate Main Effects

Univariate analyses (see Table 5) indicated main effects for Family Structure for all children's overt fears ( $p < .001$ ). Post hoc analyses ( $p < .01$ ) indicated that children of unremarried parents divorced less than two years reported higher levels of classical fears and fears of noises, social/interpersonal, and miscellaneous fears than did all other groups. In addition, these children also reported higher fears of animals than did children whose mothers were divorced for more than two years before remarriage and children of intact families ( $p < .01$ ). They also expressed greater fears of illness/death than did children whose mothers had been divorced for more than two years and had not remarried, children whose mothers had

Table 2

Multivariate Analyses of Variance for Dependent Variables x  
Family Structure and Overall Stress

Dependent Variables	Family Structure <sup>††</sup> Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Overall Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Family Structure x Overall Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value
<u>Overt Fears</u>			
Children's	$F_{(24,418)} = 4.69^{**}$	$F_{(6,106)} = 6.16^{**}$	NS
Mother's Reports of Children's	$F_{(24,418)} = 3.57^{**}$	$F_{(6,106)} = 2.21^*$	$F_{(24,418)} = 1.48^{\dagger}$
<u>Covert Fears</u>			
Hand Test	$F_{(24,418)} = 8.19^{**}$	$F_{(6,106)} = 6.06^{**}$	$F_{(24,418)} = 1.51^{\dagger}$
Sentence Completion	$F_{(28,414)} = 8.59^*$	$F_{(7,105)} = 3.56^{**}$	$F_{(28,418)} = 1.95^{**}$
<u>Familial Perceptions</u>			
Inventory of Family Feelings (Biological)	$F_{(16,426)} = 3.62^{**}$	$F_{(4,108)} = 3.16^{**}$	NS
Inventory of Family Feelings (Stepparent)	$F_{(2,37)} = 3.40^*$	NS	NS

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     †  $p = .07$

†† Family structure values are the same for Tables 2-4

NS = Not significant

remarried after two years of divorce, and children from intact families ( $p < .01$ ). Children of mothers who had been divorced for more than two years and had not remarried reported more fears of noise than did children of mothers who were divorced and remarried and children of intact families ( $p < .05$ ) and higher social/interpersonal fears than children of intact families ( $p < .05$ ). Children of

Table 3

Multivariate Analyses of Variance for Dependent Variables by Parental Stress and Family Structure/Parent Stress Interaction

Dependent Variable	Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ F Value	Family Structure X Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ F Value
<u>Overt Fears</u> Children's	$F_{(6,106)} = 3.98^{**}$	NS
Mothers' Report of Children's	NS	NS
<u>Covert Fears/Concerns</u> Hand Test	$F_{(5,105)} = 5.98^{**}$	$F_{(20,414)} = 1.72^*$
Sentence Completion	$F_{(7,105)} = 3.59^{**}$	$F_{(28,414)} = 1.94^{**}$
<u>Familial Perceptions</u> Inventory of Family Feelings (Biological)	$F_{(4,108)} = 3.10^*$	NS
Inventory of Family Feelings (Stepparents)	$F_{(2,37)} = 3.25^{\dagger}$	NS

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  †  $p = .05$   
NS = Not significant

mothers who were divorced and had remarried in less than two years of the divorce reported higher levels of fears related to illness/death than did children of mothers who were divorced for greater than two years and had not remarried, children of mothers who were divorced for two years before remarriage, and children of intact families ( $p = .05$ ).

Table 4

Multivariate Analyses of Variance for Dependent Variables  
by Financial Stress and Family Structure/Financial Stress  
Interactions

Dependent Variable	Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ F Value	Family Structure X Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ F Value
<u>Overt Fears</u> Children's	$F_{(6,106)} = 2.90^{**}$	NS
Mothers' Report of Children's	$F_{(6,106)} = 2.36^*$	NS
<u>Covert Fears</u> Hand Test	$F_{(5,105)} = 2.06^{\dagger}$	NS
Sentence Completion	$F_{(7,105)} = 4.38^{**}$	NS
<u>Familial Perceptions</u> Inventory of Family Feelings (Biological)	NS	NS
Inventory of Family Feelings (Stepparents)	NS	NS

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     †  $p = .05$   
 NS = Not significant

Overall Stress Univariate Main Effects

Main effects for Overall Stress (see Table 6) indicated that higher fears of animals and illness/death ( $p < .001$ ),

classical fears ( $p < .005$ ), and miscellaneous fears ( $p < .05$ ) were reported by children of mothers who reported higher levels of overall stress. However, greater fears of noise were reported by children of mothers who reported lower levels of overall stress ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Parental Stress Univariate Main Effects

Main effects for Parental Stress (see Table 6) indicated that higher fears of animals ( $p < .05$ ) were reported by children of mothers who reported experiencing high levels of such stress. Greater numbers of classical fears expressed by children whose mothers reported high stress approached significance ( $p = .055$ ). As was the case with overall stress, children's reports of fears of noise rose as their mothers reported lower levels of stress ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Financial Stress Univariate Main Effects

Main effects for Financial Stress (see Table 6) were somewhat different in that fears related to illness/death ( $p < .01$ ), social/interpersonal ( $p < .01$ ), as well as animals ( $p < .05$ ) increased in children when their mothers reported higher levels of financial stress.

Mothers' Reports of Children's Overt Fears: Impact of Family Structure and Overall, Parental, and Financial Stress

Table 5Univariate Analyses of Variance for Dependent Variables by Family Structure and Overall Stress

Dependent Variables	Family Structure Degrees of Freedom/F Value	Overall Stress Degrees of Freedom/F Value	Family Structure x Overall Stress Degrees of Freedom/F Value
<u>Children's Expressed Overt Fears</u>			
Noise	$F_{(4,111)} = 7.78^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 5.06^*$	NS
Animals	$F_{(4,111)} = 6.38^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 15.54^{**}$	NS
Classical	$F_{(4,111)} = 13.61^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 9.75^{**}$	NS
Social	$F_{(4,111)} = 16.85^{**}$	NS	NS
Illness/Death	$F_{(4,111)} = 13.69^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 15.12^{**}$	NS
Miscellaneous	$F_{(4,111)} = 9.44^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 4.98^*$	NS
<u>Mother's Reports of Children's Overt Fears</u>			
Noise	$F_{(4,111)} = 4.32^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 3.98^*$	NS
Animals	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.64^*$	$F_{(1,111)} = 8.83^{**}$	NS
Classical	$F_{(4,111)} = 5.78^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 14.21^{**}$	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.83^*$
Social	$F_{(4,111)} = 9.19^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 3.84^{\dagger}$	NS
Illness/Death	$F_{(4,111)} = 3.87^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 8.83^{**}$	NS
Miscellaneous	$F_{(4,111)} = 7.98^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 11.08^*$	$F_{(4,111)} = 3.32^*$
<u>Hand Test</u>			
Interpersonal	$F_{(4,111)} = 7.13^{**}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 28.13$	NS
Environmental	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 5.07^*$	NS
Withdrawal	$F_{(4,111)} = 7.83^{**}$	NS	$F_{(4,111)} = 4.77^*$
Maladjustment	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 7.19^{**}$	NS
Pathological	$F_{(4,111)} = 3.92^{**}$	NS	NS
Acting Out			
Ratio	$F_{(4,111)} = 18.52^{**}$	NS	NS

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     †  $p = .06$   
 NS = Not significant



Table 5 (Continued)

Univariate Analyses of Variance for Dependent Variables by  
Family Structure and Overall Stress

Dependent Variables	Family Structure Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Overall Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Family Structure x Overall Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value
<u>Sentence Completion</u>			
Death Fears	$F_{(4,111)} = 4.45^{**}$	NS	NS
Separation Fear	$F_{(4,111)} = 34.56^{**}$	NS	NS
Control/Dependency	$F_{(4,111)} = 31.51^{**}$	NS	NS
Goals	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.84^*$	NS	NS
Injury/Disease	NS	NS	NS
Hostility	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.43^{\dagger}$	$F_{(1,111)} = 20.63$	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.83^*$
Anxiety	$F_{(4,111)} = 13.18^{**}$	NS	NS
<u>Inventory of Family Feelings</u>			
Mothers' Report of:			
Natural Mother/Child	$F_{(4,111)} = 3.44^*$	$F_{(1,111)} = 14.13^{**}$	
Natural Father/Child	$F_{(4,111)} = 11.04^{**}$	NS	
Stepfather/Child	NS	NS	NS
Children's Report of:			
Natural Mother/Child	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 7.32^{**}$	NS
Natural Father/Child	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.72^{**}$	NS	NS
Stepfather/Child	$F_{(4,111)} = 6.64$	NS	NS

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     †  $p = .06$   
NS = Not significant

Table 6

Univariate Analyses of Variance for Dependent Variables by  
Parental Stress and Financial Stress and Family Structure x  
Parental Stress Interactions

Dependent Variables	Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Financial Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Family Structure x Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value
<u>Children's Expressed Overt Fears</u>			
Noise	$F_{(1,111)} = 5.11^*$	NS	NS
Animals	$F_{(1,111)} = 5.41^*$	$F_{(1,111)} = 5.07^{**}$	NS
Classical	$F_{(1,111)} = 3.76^{\dagger}$	NS	NS
Social	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 9.31^{**}$	NS
Illness/Death	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 11.88^{**}$	NS
Miscellaneous	NS	NS	NS
<u>Mother's Reports of Children's Overt Fears</u>			
Noise	N/A	$F_{(1,111)} = 14.41^{**}$	NS
Animals	N/A	NS	NS
Classical	N/A	$F_{(1,111)} = 5.61^*$	NS
Social	N/A	$F_{(1,111)} = 3.60^{\dagger}$	NS
Illness/Death	N/A	$F_{(1,111)} = 3.95^*$	NS
Miscellaneous	N/A	$F_{(1,111)} = 4.95^*$	NS
<u>Hand Test</u>			
Interpersonal	$F_{(1,111)} = 33.71^{**}$	NS	NS
Environmental	$F_{(1,111)} = 12.15^{**}$	NS	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.82^*$
Withdrawal	NS	NS	NS
Maladjustment	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 6.14^*$	NS
Pathological	$F_{(1,111)} = 6.80^*$	NS	NS
Acting Out Ratio	NS	NS	$F_{(4,111)} = 2.49^*$

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     †  $p = .06$   
 NS = Not significant    N/A = Not applicable

Table 6 (Continued)

Univariate Analyses of Variance for Dependent Variables by Parental Stress and Financial Stress and Family Structure x Parental Stress Interactions

Dependent Variables	Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Financial Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value	Family Structure x Parental Stress Degrees of Freedom/ <u>F</u> Value
<u>Sentence Completion</u>			
Death Fears	NS	NS	NS
Separation Fear	NS	NS	NS
Control/Dependency	$F_{(1,111)} = 4.99^*$	NS	NS
Goals	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 7.24^{**}$	NS
Injury/Disease	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 6.63^*$	NS
Hostility	$F_{(1,111)} = 17.77^{**}$	NS	NS
Anxiety	NS	$F_{(1,111)} = 19.12^{**}$	NS
<u>Inventory of Family Feelings</u>			
Mothers' Report of:			
Natural Mother/Child	$F_{(1,111)} = 14.81^{**}$	N/A	NS
Natural Father/Child	NS	N/A	NS
Stepfather/Child	NS	N/A	NS
Children's Report of:			
Natural Mother/Child	$F_{(1,111)} = 8.73^{**}$	N/A	NS
Natural Father/Child	NS	N/A	NS
Stepfather/Child	$F_{(1,38)} = 6.24^*$	N/A	NS

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     †  $p = .06$   
 NS = Not significant    N/A = Not applicable

### Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate analyses (see Tables 2, 3, 4) indicated that main effects for the mothers' reports of their children's overt fears were present for Overall Stress, ( $F_{6,106} = 3.57, p < .01$ ), Financial Stress ( $F_{6,106} = 2.30, p < .05$ ), and for Family Structure ( $F_{24,416} = 3.57, p < .01$ ). No main effect for Parental Stress was indicated which suggests that the main effect found for Overall Stress was highly influenced by the Financial Stress items. An interaction between Family Structure and Overall Stress was approximated ( $F_{24,416} = 1.48, p = .07$ ) and cautiously explored in the univariate analyses.

### Family Structure Univariate Main Effects

Univariate main effects (see Table 5) were found for all overt fear categories with the exception of fear of animals. Post hoc analyses revealed that mothers who had been divorced for less than two years and had not remarried reported higher fears of noise in their children than did mothers who were divorced for greater than two before remarriage ( $p < .05$ ). Mothers who were divorced for greater than two years and had not remarried also reported greater fears of noise in their children than did either group of mothers who had remarried after divorce ( $p < .05$ ). Greater children's fears related to illness/death were reported by mothers who had been divorced less than two years and had

not remarried in comparison to all other groups ( $p < .05$ ). Mothers' reports of classical fears in their children were higher in the unremarried, divorced less than two years group when compared to reports of mothers who had been divorced greater than two years, divorced for years before remarriage, and from intact families. Unremarried mothers who had been divorced for less than two years reported greater miscellaneous and social fears in their children than did mothers of all other groups ( $p < .05$ ). At  $p < .01$ , these same mothers reported greater miscellaneous fears than mothers of intact families and mothers who had been divorced more than two years before they remarried. At the same level of significance, they also reported higher levels of social fears than did both groups of divorced and remarried mothers and mothers in intact families.

#### Overall Stress Univariate Main Effects

Significant univariate main effects for Overall Stress (see Table 5) indicated that higher Overall Stress levels in mothers were related to greater levels of reported overt fears in their children in all but one (social) overt fear category ( $p < .01$ ). Social/interpersonal fears, however, approximated significance in the same direction ( $p = .053$ ).

#### Financial Stress Univariate Main Effects

Mothers reporting high levels of Financial Stress (see Table 6) also reported their children to have greater levels

of fears of noise ( $p < .01$ ), illness/death ( $p < .05$ ), classical ( $p < .05$ ), and miscellaneous fears ( $p < .05$ ). These same mothers tended also to rate their children as having greater levels of social/interpersonal fears although this only approximated significance ( $p = .06$ ).

#### Interactions of Family Structure and Stress Variables

When the interaction that approximated significance (see Table 5) was investigated at the univariate level it was suggested that mothers indicating high levels of overall stress who were divorced for less than two years and had not remarried ( $p < .01$ ) and mothers of intact families ( $p < .05$ ) both had the tendency to report the presence of higher levels of classical and miscellaneous fears in their children.

#### Additional Secondary Analyses

The Hand Test, Sentence Completion, and Inventory of Family Feelings were utilized to address covertly expressed concerns about aggression, death fears/feelings of anxiety and hostility, and positive feelings between the children and their parent figures respectively. Although these areas were not the primary focus of study, they appeared to have additional qualitative aspects related to the adjustment to changes in family structure and possibly associated with the stress of the parent. The same multivariate analyses of variance and subsequent univariate analyses with appropriate

post hoc tests were carried out on the above mentioned children's data.

Hand Test - Covert Prototypal Action Tendencies: Impact of Family Structure, Overall, Parental, and Financial Stress  
Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate main effects (see Tables 2, 3, 4) for the set of data utilizing the Hand Test were found for Family Structure ( $F_{24,418} = 8.19, p < .01$ ), Overall Stress ( $F_{6,106} = 6.06, p < .01$ ), and Parental Stress ( $F_{5,105} = 5.98, p < .01$ ). Main effects for Financial Stress approximated significance ( $F_{5,105} = 2.06, p = .08$ ). A significant multivariate interaction for Parental Stress and Family Structure was also indicated ( $F_{20,414} = 1.72, p < .05$ ), and an interaction between Overall Stress and Family Structure was approximated ( $F_{24,418} = 1.51, p = .07$ ). No other significant interactions were found.

Family Structure Univariate Main Effects

Univariate group main effects for Family Structure (see Table 5) indicated that higher interpersonal scores were obtained by children of mothers who had been divorced for less than two years and had not remarried when compared with children of mothers in all other groups at  $p < .05$  and higher than mothers of intact families at  $p < .01$ . Children of both groups of mothers who were divorced and not remarried showed higher suggestions of tendencies towards

hostile, overt behavior than did the other three groups ( $p < .01$ ), although children of unremarried mothers who had been divorced for less than two years obtained higher acting-out response scores than all four other groups ( $p < .05$ ).

Children of mothers who were unremarried and divorced for more than two years obtained higher withdrawal and pathological scores than did all other groups ( $p < .05$ ). At  $p < .01$ , children of mothers who were unremarried and divorced for more than two years obtained higher withdrawal scores than children whose mothers were divorced for less than two years and had not remarried and mothers who had remarried less than two years after their divorce.

#### Overall Stress Univariate Main Effects

Univariate Overall Stress main effects (see Table 5) indicated that children with mothers who indicated lower levels of stress gave higher levels of interpersonal scores ( $p < .01$ ), while children whose mothers indicated higher levels of stress gave higher environmental ( $p < .05$ ) and maladjustment ( $p < .01$ ) scores.

#### Parental Stress Univariate Main Effects

Main effects (see Table 6) indicated that children whose mothers reported high levels of Parental Stress had higher environmental ( $p < .01$ ) and pathological ( $p < .05$ ) scores. Children of low parental Stress mothers reported higher interpersonal scores ( $p < .01$ ).



### Financial Stress Univariate Main Effects

The lone main effect for Financial Stress (see Table 6) indicated that children whose mothers reported high levels of such stress showed higher levels of maladjustment ( $p < .05$ ).

### Interactions of Family Structure and Stress Variables

The lone interaction for Overall Stress and Family Structure (see Table 5) only approximated significance and should therefore be interpreted with caution. There were suggestions that children of unremarried mothers who have been divorced for more than two years tended to show more withdrawal tendencies when their mothers reported experiencing low levels of overall stress ( $p < .05$ ).

Significant interactions for Parental Stress and Family Structure (see Table 6) indicated that children whose unremarried mothers had been divorced for more than two years showed higher levels of environmental scores when their mothers expressed lower levels of parental stress ( $p < .05$ ). It should also be noted, however, that there was no variance among the mothers in the high parental stress.

Sentence Completion - Death Anxiety, General Anxiety, and Hostility: Impact of Family Structure, Overall, Parental, and Financial Stress

### Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate analysis (see Tables 2, 3, 4) for this set of children's data using the Sentence Completion indicated

main effects for Family Structure ( $F_{28,414} = 8.59, p < .01$ ), Overall Stress ( $F_{7,105} = 3.56, p < .01$ ), Parental Stress ( $F_{7,105} = 3.59, p < .01$ ), and Financial Stress ( $F_{7,105} = 4.38, p < .01$ ). Interactions between Family Structure and Overall Stress ( $F_{28,414} = 1.95, p < .01$ ) and Family Structure and Parental Stress ( $F_{28,414} = 1.94, p < .01$ ) were found.

#### Family Structure Univariate Main Effects

As shown in Table 5 for Family Structure, significant main effects were found. Children of unremarried mothers who have been divorced for less than two years gave more sentence completion responses indicating concerns or fears of death, separation, and control/dependency when compared to all other groups of children ( $p < .05$ ). Children whose unremarried mothers were divorced for longer than two years showed more limited but similar effects, with indications that these children expressed more covert fears of separation than did children of mothers who had remarried after at least two years of divorce and children of intact families ( $p < .05$ ). They also expressed more covert fears of control and dependency than did either of the divorced/remarried groups and the intact families ( $p < .05$ ). Children whose mothers remarried within two years of the divorce indicated more fears of separation than children whose mothers remarried after at least two years of divorce and children of intact families ( $p < .05$ ). Regarding

anxiety, children of unremarried mothers and mothers who had remarried within two years of their divorce showed higher indications of anxiety than did children of mothers who had remarried at least two years after the divorce and children of intact families ( $p < .05$ ). Interestingly, children of intact families express more concerns in the area of goals than did children of unremarried mothers who had been divorced more than two years ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Overall Stress Univariate Main Effects

The only main effect for Overall Stress (see Table 5) occurred on responses related to hostility where children who gave more indications of having hostile feelings had mothers who reported lower levels of overall stress ( $p < .01$ ).

#### Parental Stress Univariate Main Effects

Main effects for Parental Stress (see Table 6) interestingly indicated that children of mothers rating themselves as having low levels of parental Stress showed greater concerns with control/dependency issues ( $p < .05$ ) and gave responses indicating higher levels of hostility ( $p < .01$ ).

#### Financial Stress Univariate Main Effects

Children of mothers who reported low levels of Financial Stress (see Table 6) gave higher levels of concerns about goals and achievement ( $p < .01$ ) while

children of mothers who reported high levels of Financial Stress showed greater concerns and fears about injury and disease ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Interactions of Family Structure and Stress Variables

Table 5 shows that one of the significant univariate interactions that indicated that children of unremarried, divorced mothers gave higher numbers of responses indicating feelings of hostility when the mothers rated themselves as experiencing low levels of overall stress ( $p < .05$ ). The other significant interaction (see Table 6) suggested that children of unremarried mothers who had been divorced less than two years and indicated low levels of parental stress gave more responses indicating concerns around injury and disease ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Perception of Positive Family Interactions: The Impact of Family Structure, Overall, Parental, and Financial Stress Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate analysis indicated main effects (see Tables 2, 3, and 4) for Family Structure, both when only natural parents were involved with the children ( $F_{16,426} = 3.62, p < .01$ ) i.e. intact, divorced, and unremarried, and when stepfathers were involved ( $F_{2,37} = 3.40, p < .05$ ) i.e. divorced and remarried groups. A main effect was indicated for overall stress ( $F_{4,108} = 3.16, p < .05$ ) only when there was no stepfather present. A main effect for parental

stress ( $F_{4,108} = 3.10, p < .05$ ) was also indicated when only natural parents were present but approximated significance when there was a stepfather in the family constellation ( $F_{2,37} = 3.25, p = .050$ ). No main effect for Financial Stress was indicated and no interactions were found to be significant between Family Structure and levels of any type of stress.

#### Family Structure Univariate Main Effects

Univariate analyses (see Table 5) indicated that all mothers with the exception of unremarried mothers who had been divorced less than two years, indicated higher levels of positive interactions between themselves and their children and between the natural fathers and their children. Children whose mothers remarried more than two years after their divorce and children from intact families gave ratings of greater positive interactions between their natural fathers and themselves. Children of mothers who had remarried greater than two years after their divorce indicated higher positive feelings toward the stepfather than did children of mothers who had remarried in less than two years since their divorce ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Overall Stress Univariate Main Effects

Main effects for Overall Stress (see Table 5) indicated that mothers' and children's reports of more positive feelings about each occurred significantly more when the

mothers reported experiencing higher levels of overall stress ( $p < .01$ ).

#### Parental Stress Univariate Main Effects

Main effects (see Table 6) indicated that mothers who reported higher levels of parental stress tended to rate their relationship with their child as more positive ( $p < .01$ ) as did their children ( $p < .01$ ). In divorced and remarried families, mothers who reported higher levels of Parental Stress also rated their perception of their child's relationship with their stepfather as more positive ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Other Miscellaneous Variables

#### Family Structure and Overall Stress Findings

Multivariate analyses were performed on many of the tertiary variables in order to investigate their importance in relationship to family structure and overall stress. The following multivariate findings are being reported since they may, in varying degrees, signify mediating variables that may play a role in increasing or minimizing children's and mothers' negative experience of the aftermath of divorce. Unless otherwise noted, the following data are all significant at least at  $p < .05$ .

Family Structure and overall stress differed significantly and understandably in income (married groups had greater income and reported lower stress than unmarried

groups). A post hoc stress by family structure analysis of variance was performed. The results indicated that divorced mothers who had not remarried reported lower levels of parental stress than did either the divorced/remarried or intact family structures ( $F_{(4,116)} = 9.14, p < .01$ ). In contrast, these same mothers (divorced/single) reported higher levels of financial stress than the remaining three groups ( $F_{(4,116)} = 10.01, p < .01$ ).

Additional analyses indicated that the mothers' frequency of social activities (single mothers, divorced for more than two years reported significantly less frequent social activities and higher levels of overall stress than did mothers who were divorced and had remarried), the child's age (mothers of younger children reported more stress), and the mother's educational level (lower education yielded greater stress).

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

In summary, the major findings of the data analyses suggest that family structure and overall stress are significant variables in their effect upon children's overtly expressed fears as well as the mothers' reports of their children's overt fears, although Family Structure appeared to be the more salient of the two. Moreover, there also appears to be some support for a differential effect between (a) stress related to parental duties, concerns, and expectations, and (b) stress related to financial worries.

#### Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that regarding overt fears, a main effect for family structure would be found and that children of divorced, single parents would express different types of overt fears with greater intensity than children of intact two-parent families and that the children of mothers who had been divorced for less than two years would express the highest levels of fears. Children of intact families were expected to demonstrate the lowest fear intensity levels in comparison to all other family structures. The remaining family structures were expected to fall between these two groups.



The data suggested that children of divorced, single parents did indeed report significantly higher levels of overt fears than did children of intact two-parent families. Children whose parents had been divorced for less than two years indicated the highest levels of overt fears in all but one overt fear category. This exception occurred between the two single/divorced groups (divorced less than two years and divorced for more than two years) where these two groups did not differ with respect to children's reports of fears of noise. Children whose parents had been divorced for less than two years did indicate the most diverse fears. Interestingly, children of intact families did not generally differ from the two remarried groups. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was only partially supported. The data pertaining to Hypothesis 1 seem to support the empirical literature (Chiriboga & Thurner, 1980; Heatherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979; Roberts & Roberts, 1974) and clinical impressions suggesting the immediacy of divorce related effects and that the occurrence and aftermath of divorce is a traumatic event for children such that it evidences itself in a greater level of fearfulness. The fears described by the children of single mothers divorced for less than two years were fairly broad in their content involving fears of noise, animals, social/interpersonal interactions, as well as classical and miscellaneous fears and fears of illness and death. This

may imply a concept of "fearfulness" that is generalized toward various objects and situations in the child's environment as a result of the divorce.

It is noteworthy that while children of mothers who were divorced for less than two years and had not remarried indicated all fears being greater than intact families, children of mothers who had remarried in less than two years of their divorce also indicated higher levels of fears of illness and death (a similar fear of the single, divorced-less-than-two-year families) when compared to single mothers of families who had been divorced for more than two years, mothers who had remarried greater than two years after the divorce, and intact families. These data appear to suggest that while the initial impact of divorce may contribute to increases in overt fears, remarriage within two years of the divorce may also contain elements disruptive and contributory to some specific fears as they pertain to illness and death or perhaps loss and separation. Visher and Visher (1979) have suggested such an impact.

Similar effects of family structure were found when the mothers' reports of their children's overt fears were analyzed. There appeared, however, to be a greater clarity of differences between the unremarried mother who had been divorced less than two years and all other family structure types in reporting greater overt fears in their children.

This was true for intensity as well as diversity (noise, illness/death, classical, miscellaneous, social/interpersonal) of fears. While this appears to generally support the validity on the children's self-reports of their fears noted above, the consistency of the single/divorced less than two years mothers' reports of their children's overt fears in comparison to the other groups may have several plausible interpretations. It is possible that these children generally tended to underreport their own overt fears, and thus the mothers' reports may more accurately reflect the differences between their children and the children in the other groups. However, it may also be the case that the mothers who had been divorced for less than two years overreported their children's fears as a result of their own distress and fears. This is conceivable in the light of the research of Hetherington et al. (1979) and Heatherington (1988) who found that mothers experience substantial increases in demands, distress, and anxiety during the first year or two after a divorce.

Data from the secondary analyses investigating covert fears (Sentence Completion) and prototypal action tendencies toward the environment (Hand Test) differentiated Family Structures and also partially supported Hypothesis 1. Based on the data from both of these measures, it was generally the case that the two divorced, single family structure

types differed significantly from all other groups while the remaining groups (divorced/remarried and intact) did not differ among themselves. Children of single, divorced mothers appeared to have a higher probability of behaving in an overt, hostile manner when compared to all other family structures. This partially supports Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980) study that suggested that an increase in anger was the single feeling most expressed by children after divorce. Bonkowski (1985) found this to be particularly true for boys while girls generally demonstrated greater compliance and anxiety as well as greater mixed feelings. This study did not indicate such sex differences. Children of single mothers divorced for less than two years indicated greater covert fears and concerns with death and separation than did all other children. This suggests that children at this stage of divorce aftermath may experience the change in family structure as a significant loss which may be reflected in personal fears or concerns related at least symbolically to death. There is also the intimation that there may be something about time and/or remarriage that causes a diminution of that concern of fear. Likewise, children of both single/divorced groups showed higher fears of separation and indications of higher feelings of anxiety in comparison to both the divorce/remarried and the intact family groups suggesting the presence of a more generalized

sense of loss in these two groups. Studies (Buehler et al., 1985; Patten-Seward, 1984; Williams et al., 1983) have reported that children of divorce experience feelings of grief, loss, and anxiety with a subsequent period of mourning which these data appear to support.

Indications of covert concerns and fears regarding loss of control and issues of dependency were also significantly higher among the single/divorced family structures than the three other groups. Of interest is the finding that children of single mothers who were divorced for more than two years appeared to show greater indications of withdrawal and responses that suggested higher levels of pathological characteristics as compared to all other groups. There is the implication and plausible interpretation that while in terms of overt fears, the children of single mothers who were divorced for more than two years appeared less fearful to their mothers, withdrawal may have replaced the overt fear behavior in the form of something less observable, hidden, and internal for the child. One of the two overt fears that single mothers who were divorced for more than two years did report was of social/interpersonal interactions. It could be hypothesized that the covert withdrawal tendencies indicated by the children and the overt social fears reported by the mothers may be actually reporting the same phenomena. It is possible that such

withdrawal might appear as a result of lingering feelings of vulnerability as reported by Anthony (1974) as well as a lowered sense of security, an increase in the fear of abandonment, and an uncertainty about the future as suggested by other researchers (Goode, 1956; Pecot, 1970; Toomin, 1974; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976).

The accumulated data on overt fears and the covert measures intimates that as it relates to family structure, reports of children's overt fears by children and their mothers may generally diminish after the second post-divorce years, although covert (less observable) problematic characteristics in the child may be of longer duration than has been suggested by some authors (Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Kolevzon & Gottlieb, 1983). There is some support for this interpretation of the data in Bonkowski's (1985) finding of a longer duration of the impact of divorce as it related to children expressing strong feelings of anger and mixed emotions. Wallerstein (1978) found in her longitudinal study of divorced children that children who were of latency age (6 to 9 years) were more likely to demonstrate greater long-term difficulties, especially in the area of social and interpersonal interactions than younger or older children. Since this study utilized children in this age group, it is possible that the apparent continued overt and especially covert fears/concerns in the

children of families who had been divorced for more than two years may reflect and further support Wallerstein's (1987) age-related findings. The reader is therefore cautioned against overgeneralizing the findings of this study to younger and older children.

### Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that a main effect would also occur for the level of overall stress reported. Higher levels of overall stress were expected to potentiate greater fears in the children. The breakdown of overall stress into parental stress and financial stress was not decided until after the data was gathered and therefore no specific hypotheses regarding these specific variables were made. Also, no specific hypotheses concerning overall stress and the mothers' reports of their children's overt fears were made although such data will be presented in this section.

It should be noted here that the findings involving the overall and parental stress dimensions need to be interpreted with caution due to the fact that in the two divorced/single groups significant uneven cell sizes existed. The cells in these two groups tended to be unbalanced in favor of a higher frequency of reports of low stress. An inordinate number ( $N = 36$ ) of these mothers reported themselves as having low levels of overall, parental, and financial stress as compared to those

reporting high levels of the same stress variables ( $N = 9$ ). For overall stress, mothers reporting themselves as having low stress ( $N = 29$ ) also differed from the high stress mothers ( $N = 16$ ), although to a slightly lesser extent. Some possible interpretations and rationales for this finding will be discussed later.

The data suggested that children of mothers who reported higher levels of overall stress reported greater overt fears of animals, classical and miscellaneous fears, and fears of illness and death. Interestingly, children of mothers who reported lower levels of overall stress showed higher fears of noise. Social/interpersonal fears were not found to be significantly related to high or low overall stress. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported in that most of the overt fear categories showed an increase, although it was not true for all of them (noise and social/interpersonal fears).

While no hypotheses were made regarding parental and financial stress, post hoc data analyses indicated that higher levels of parental stress reported by the mothers were associated with children reporting higher fears of animals and classical fears approximated significance ( $p = .06$ ). Children of mothers who reported higher levels of financial stress indicated higher levels of fears of illness and death as well as social/interpersonal fears and fears of



animals. The rationale for the increase in animal fears is puzzling. Multivariate analyses indicated that mothers who reported higher levels of overall, parental, and financial stress were also mothers who had younger children.

Literature suggests that younger children report greater fears of animals than do other children (Bowlby, 1973; Kissel, 1972; Miller, Barret, & Hamp, 1974). This could explain why high-stressed mothers had children who reported higher fears of animals. Mothers reporting lower levels of parental stress tended to have children who reported greater fears of noise. A possible rationale for this finding will be discussed later.

While the parental and financial breakdowns had the increase in fears of animals in common, there appeared to be other overt fear categories that suggested a differential impact of these two stress categories. While parental stress additionally yielded increased overt classical fears, financial stress appeared to result in increased overt fears related to illness and death and social/interpersonal interactions.

There is an implication here that mothers' concerns and stresses around financial affairs may not only play a significant role in the increase in parental anxiety, tension, and feelings of instability (Buehler, 1985; Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Roberts & Roberts, 1974) but

also in impacting children's fears. It seems of significance that in this study fears related to financial stress appeared to have more potential affecting children's daily lives than did parental stress and strain. Social and interpersonal fears and insecurities, in particular, could have ramifications in daily on-going relationships and activities. The income of the family of single mothers (mean = \$10-\$15,000) was understandably lower than that of the remarried or intact families (mean = \$20-\$30,000). For single mothers, it is plausible that stress related to financial concerns and difficulties may reflect the broad impact that such difficulties may bring to bear on a family, i.e. appropriate and adequate feeding of the children, paying mortgage or rent and utilities, attending to sickness with medical assistance, car repairs, etc. as well as the financial means with which to even marginally interact in leisure or social events, all which have potentially negative consequences if not attended to properly. The stresses involved in the above examples could possibly evidence themselves in greater tension and insecurity in the mothers and subsequently less emotional availability and greater emotional loss to the children as suggested by Stolberg and Anker (1983). These results appears to have direct implications for the issue of child support and assistance.

For mothers who were remarried or living in intact families and experiencing financial stress, it would appear that the above concerns of the single mothers could also be of impact to them. However, it should also be acknowledged that these mothers have another adult with whom to confer and discuss strategies for dealing with financial matters. Of course, having another adult present may not insure that such discussion and cooperation occurs, in which case additional marital stress from such a lack of communication and mutual support may be experienced. It is also possible that parents who are under severe financial stress may tend to be more easily upset, demonstrate less patience and understanding, and are more critical with their children. The children's feelings of their own self-worth and self-esteem may be lowered, resulting in less confidence in their dealings with persons outside of the family. The average income for the families of divorced/remarried and intact mothers was between \$20,000 and \$30,000, a reasonably average income. This appears to rule out that the main effect for financial stress might have been partially due to a lower socioeconomic status sample of remarried and intact families.

#### Mothers' Reports on Children's Fears

Mothers who indicated experiencing higher levels of overall stress reported their children as having higher

fears in all overt fear categories with the exception of social/interpersonal fears, although the social/interpersonal fears approached significance. It appears that as it relates to mothers' high levels of overall stress in comparing the children's reports of overt fears and the mothers' reports of their children's overt fears, mothers reported their children as having more diverse fears than the children themselves indicated. It could be hypothesized that mothers who are more highly stressed tend to project their own anxiety and fears upon their children which may result in being more prone to overinterpret their children's behaviors as being related to fears or specific anxieties in the light of their current emotional state. It is also possible that high-stressed mothers are more acutely aware of or sensitive towards their children's emotional states which in turn could possibly play a part in their own feelings of being highly stressed, i.e. feelings of responsibility and guilt over the impact of divorce or remarriage upon their children, perceiving their children as becoming more fearful as a result of the trauma and consequently more stressed.<sup>1</sup> Mothers with high parental stress reported their children as having increased classical, miscellaneous, and interpersonal fears. Mothers reporting higher levels of financial stress reported their children having greater fears of noise, illness and death,

classical fears, and miscellaneous fears, with social fears approximating significance. Thus, as with the children's own reports of their overt fears, the impact of severe financial stress appeared to exacerbate the mothers' reports of their children's overt fears.

It is of interest that high-stressed mothers reported their children as having greater fears of noise in the light of the earlier finding that their children did not report such a fear. However, children of low-stressed mothers did report an increase in this fear. The significance of these two findings is unclear. It is possible that, as hypothesized earlier, that high-stressed mothers may tend to overreport the incidence of their children's fears in general and that the noted increase in the mothers' reports of their children's fears of noise is a mere reflection of this tendency.

The children of low-stressed mothers reporting greater fears of noise is more difficult to explain. One might wonder why these mothers experience low levels of stress (median split) when most of them had been through the event of divorce and/or remarriage. In considering this, it may be that these mothers were either highly resilient or possibly were less likely to admit to the impact of stress and the resulting sequela either for themselves or their children. With the former interpretation, it could be that

for some reason, the children of low-stressed mothers are well-adjusted and express only a primitive and common fear (noise) experience by most children at some point in their development. Regarding the latter hypothesis, there were, in this study, very few of the overt fear variables that showed a significant relationship with low levels of stress. Given this finding, it is plausible that these low-stressed mothers reflected a different home or emotional environment where children, like their mothers, were not inclined to express their fears or internal states except on this specific category. In such a nondisclosing environment it could be hypothesized that expressing fears of various noises is a more acceptable fear to acknowledge than the fears in the other categorical areas. However, it is also acknowledged that the author is perhaps taking liberty in proposing this interpretation.

It is possible that the above data is the result of chance; however, further light was cast upon this finding by the data involving measures of covert fears and concerns where several of the variables were found to vary significantly with low-stressed mothers. Increased interpersonal oversensitivity and indications of hostility expressed by the children were found among mothers who reported themselves to have low levels of overall and parental stress. In addition, children of mothers who

indicated low levels of parental stress expressed higher covert concerns regarding control and dependency and increased hostility. These particular findings give further weight to the hypothesis that low-stressed mothers in this sample may not have been better adjusted than their high-stressed mother counterparts, but rather may have been mothers who were dealing with the events in such a manner, i.e. denial, detachment, that may have had its own repercussions and sequela for their children.

It should be noted that parental and financial stress were negatively correlated in this population ( $r = -.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ) suggesting that mothers who reported higher levels of one of these types of stress also tended to report lower stress in the other. The stress by family structure analysis of variance performed indicated that in the two divorced, single family structures the mothers reported lower levels of parental stress than the divorce/remarried and intact family structures. These same mothers (divorced/single) also reported higher levels of financial stress as compared to the remaining three groups. The interesting implication of these data is that significant stress in either one of these areas might have had the impact of causing the mother to be experienced as less of a stressor to the mothers. It is also possible that the mothers who felt overly stressed in one of these two areas

(parental stress) may have attempted to feel some degree of control over their situation by reporting the other stress area to be "more in control," i.e. less stressful. Some support for the latter interpretation was indicated in a significant negative correlation between the Lie Scale and overall stress ( $\underline{r} = -.19, \underline{p} < .05$ ) as well as the negative correlation that approached significance between the Lie Scale and parental stress ( $\underline{r} = -.13, \underline{p} = .07$ ). While these correlation coefficients are low, they do, however, suggest that mothers reporting high overall and high parental stress also tended to report aspects about themselves in an overly favorable light.

Further indications of the impact of high levels of overall stress in mothers were found in their children's increased covert tendencies to form attachment to things rather than people and higher maladjustment indicators as measured by the Hand Test. High parental stress favored not only similar covert tendencies for attachment to things, but also greater indications of pathology. Mothers with high levels of financial stress had children who expressed greater fears of injury and disease as well as higher maladjustment scores. Thus, on a covert level it seemed that greater emotional disturbance (pathology) was related more to the mothers' parental stress, while significant problems in adaptive functioning were related more to the



level of financial stress.

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that an interaction would occur between the type of family structure and the level of overall, parental, and financial stress. It was suggested that children who had experienced a significant change in family structure and whose mothers were emotionally stressed would show greater overt fear levels than when either structure or parental stress existed without the other.

Few multivariate interactions between the two independent variables were found. Interpretations are tentatively reported due to the uneven cell sizes in the stress dimension reported earlier. The nature of the unbalanced distribution of high stress and low stress mothers in the divorced/unremarried groups gives further support, however, that low stress mothers may have been less well adjusted than would be suggested by low-stress self-reports since such a high number of low stress reports occurred in the groups that empirical research and intuition indicates should be two of the highest stress groupings (Chiriboga & Thurner, 1980; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979; Papalia & Olds, 1979).

No interactions between family structure and overall, parental, and financial stress occurred involving the children's reports of their own overt fears. The lone overt

fear interaction that approached significance ( $p < .07$ ) occurred in the mothers' reports of their children's overt fears where it was suggested that single mothers who had been divorced for less than two years and who reported high overall stress reported their children as experiencing greater general categorical fears (i.e. classical and miscellaneous), again, perhaps supporting the general concept of "Fearfulness," in this case, as it pertains to the mothers' perceptions.

Another interaction occurred between family structure and parental stress within the covert data where the single mothers who were divorced less than two years were involved. The children of these mothers indicated higher levels of sensitivity to others' opinions and reactions when their mothers reported low levels of parental stress and a higher propensity for overt, hostile behaviors when their mothers reported experiencing high levels of parental stress as compared to the other groups. This data further supports the earlier interpretation offered that the mothers who reported low levels of such stress may have had a tendency to not report internal conflicts and stresses possibly due to denial or negative reactions to such disclosure. These interactional findings would seem to suggest that regarding covert fears or concerns, the children may "take the lead" of their parent in assessing the "correct" manner in

expressing stress or anxiety, i.e. the children of mothers who reported low stress tended to have a heightened awareness of others and, taking this into account, may then adjust what they "should" say, while children of mothers who did report high levels of stress may have felt more "free" to express their conflictual feelings in more overt behaviors.

#### Additional Post Hoc Analyses

Other analyses were performed in a post hoc manner in order to shed some light on the various possible mediating variables that may play a part in the impact of divorce and/or remarriage with children and their mothers' levels of overall stress.

#### Positive Parent-Child Relationships

##### Family Structure Findings

Mothers and their children who had been divorced for less than two years and had not remarried reported less positive relationships between themselves and between the child and the natural father as compared to all other family structures that involved only relationships with natural parents (no stepfathers). This finding may be an indication of the initial impact of the aftermath of divorce. However, the mothers and children from other families who had experienced divorce within two years but had remarried reported more positive relationships with their natural

parents. This may suggest that the length of time since the divorce may not be the sole factor in determining in reported positiveness in parent-child relationships. The data seem to support Visher and Visher's (1979) suggestions that remarriage may have a positive effect upon the satisfaction of the various relationships. The mother may have more emotional and financial support as well as increased intimacy and pleasure. It is also conceivable, however, that a child who has already experienced the loss of the original father figure may fear a loss of his mother to the stepfather with the remarriage. To some degree the reality exists that the child does lose a degree of time and attention from his/her mother. Subsequently, the child may tend to "tread on egg shells" and thus report in a positive manner out of fear of further abandonment. The data further indicated that children of divorced mothers who had remarried more than two years after their divorce reported greater levels of positiveness with their stepfathers when compared to their counterparts whose mothers remarried less than two years after their divorce. This finding supports Visher and Visher's (1979) and Toomin's (1974) research that remarriage too soon after the divorce may create complications for the child's adjustment in the remarried family constellation in regards to feelings of loss and abandonment, issues of loyalty, as well as adjustment to

another significant family reorganization.

### Stress Findings

Regarding the impact of stress on positive family relationships, mothers and their children rated their relationships as positive towards each other when the mothers' level of overall and parental stress was reported as high. It is possible that this may indicate a type of "mutual support" between the mother and the child that could conceivably be an important source of security when stress is high as in the aftermath of divorce and/or remarriage. It is less clear as to whether the reports of positiveness in the relationships were actually present in the form of a tighter bonding or whether this finding is an artifact of the mother and child's need for the security in believing in the positiveness of their relationship. This data may also cause one to question the validity of self-reported stress data. Until this area is investigated more fully the reader should question the validity of these data applied in a broad context.

### Communication

As stated earlier, several authors have suggested that the communication between the parent and the child may have implications for the child's adjustment and subsequent reactions to the divorce (Jacobson, 1978; Papalia & Olds, 1979). In this study, mothers were also asked to rate how

easily their children could bring up concerns that were bothersome to them (the child), how difficult it was for them as parents to bring up eight specific topical areas with their children, and how frequently in the last two years the mothers had talked about the eight topical areas with their children. The eight areas were school, anger, divorce, fears, the death of a relative, problems with peers, feelings of sadness, and sexual-related topics.

#### Family Structure Findings

Generally, single/divorced mothers tended to express having greater difficulty in bringing up all such general topics themselves with their children. This was true also, but to a lesser extent, for mothers who had been remarried after less than two years of their divorce. Mothers of intact families expressed having fewer problems in initiating such areas of concerns. However, it is interesting, but understandable, that the divorced and divorced/remarried mothers reported having talked more frequently with their children about the areas of divorce and their intact family counterparts. Thus, it seems that these mothers exerted effect in overcoming their reluctance of a difficult and perhaps emotional subject. It is not clear from the data whether the mothers or the children initiated the discussions about divorce, which would be an interesting clarification. This finding may in part explain

the perceived positiveness of the mother-child relationship as a function of stress levels.

Further analyses of the mother-child communication suggested significant differences between the divorced/single and divorced/remarried family structures. Mothers who had remarried less than two years after their divorce talked less to their children about divorce, feelings of sadness, and fears than single mothers who had been divorced for more than two years and mothers who had remarried greater than two years after their divorce. It is conceivable that such issues were resolved for these individuals and families; however, the interesting implication here is that the mothers who remarried less than two years after their divorce may talk less to their children about possible areas of problems related to divorce at a time when the child may need this in his/her attempts to deal with the initial loss and the changes created by the remarriage. To talk about the divorce may be disturbing to the mother or bring up unresolved issues with her past spouse, and indeed, the current spouse may be uncomfortable hearing or knowing that the previous relationship continues to remain an issue for the child and/or the mother. Greater fearfulness expressed by the children in this family structure may be related to this finding.

This suggests that mothers who remarry relatively soon after their divorce may spend less time talking with their children about such issues, a finding that may be a plausible although partial explanation of why their children expressed greater overt fears of illness and death, general anxiety, and covert concerns of separation than did the children of mothers who remarried greater than two years after their divorce. This finding suggests that perhaps one of the negatively impacting variables involved in the former group may be decreased communication between the child and the mother at a time at which the child may continue to have multiple concerns even though the mother may herself experience the situation more favorably with increased financial and emotional resources. Thus, this data appears to support the earlier reported studies and discussions that suggested that the communication between the mother and child and sensitivity to the child's anxiety and concerns may have a positive influence on the child's ability to adjust to this major life disruption (Jacobson, 1978; Papalia & Olds, 1979).

#### Stress Findings

The data regarding the impact of stress on parent-child communication indicated that mothers who reported higher levels of overall stress reported being able to talk more easily about anger, problems with peers, sadness, and sexual



topics with their children. However, only the mothers who reported lower levels of overall stress actually reported having talked to their children about such topics within the last two years. Thus, the higher stressed mothers generally appeared to overestimate the ease with which they could talk to their children but did not appear to reflect this ability by their own report. This finding further supports the empirical literature (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1975; Hetherington & Parke, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976) that suggests that due to the parent's own stress or ambivalence they (the parents, or mothers in this case) may present problems in communicating about significant topics.

It is noteworthy that neither the high or low stressed groups differed significantly in their report of ease in discussing divorce with their children or actually doing so. Given the previous family structure finding that divorced and divorced/remarried mothers reported talking more to their children about divorce, it appears that talking about this specific topic has less to do about the stress levels of the mothers than perhaps other variables, i.e. ambivalence, attempts at protecting the child from further hurt, or protecting the parent from recalling emotionally painful thoughts and feelings.

In summary, this study indicated that during the first two years after the divorce of their parents, children of

single mothers (those divorced for less than two years and those divorced for more than two years) reported a higher intensity and diversity of overt fears than did children of mothers who had divorced and remarried or were in intact families. Children of single mothers who had been divorced for less than two years showed the greater intensity and diversity between the two single/divorced groups. The diversity of fears on the part of the children's self-reports as well as the mothers' reports of their children's fears gives rise to the notion of a general concept of "Fearfulness" of which the overt fears reported may have been a reflection. Measures of covert fears and concerns were likewise significantly higher among the same group and involved issues of concerns about death, loss and separation, control and dependency, and an oversensitivity toward other people's reactions and opinions.

Mothers' reports of their children's overt fears followed the above findings for the most part with the addition that mothers who were single and divorced less than two years reported their children to have greater overt fears as compared to all other family structures.

It was, however, unexpected that the children of intact families and divorced/remarried families did not differ in their self-reports of overt fears or covert fears/concerns. This suggests that, at least as addressed by this study, a

clear case cannot be made that fears in children of divorced/remarried families are greater than in intact families as a result of changes in family structure. If such fears do occur they would seem to have to be related to other intervening factors.

Overall, parental and financial stress appeared to also have impact upon children's reports of overt fears generally by showing an increase in most overt fear categories. The interesting exception was that mothers reporting low levels of overall and parental stress were associated with children who reported greater fears of noise. However, from investigating the data on covert fears and concerns, it appears plausible to interpret that the mothers who reported low levels of stress in these generally stressful home situations may have been less likely to disclose such internal feelings and experiences. In fact, that their children likewise reported few overt fears but showed higher covert indications of hostility, issues of control and dependency and concerns about goals seems to support this interpretation.

When overall stress was broken down into parental and financial items, a somewhat higher degree of specificity in children's reported overt fears was noted with high stress around finances. These fears seemed to be related to somatic concerns, fears of loss, and social and

interpersonal insecurity.

Partial support for previously cited research was found in this study suggesting that an increase in fears occurs as a result of the impact of divorce. It is consistent with this data to posit that during the first two years after the divorce, overt fears may show an increase that could be related not just to immediacy effects of the divorce; however, but also related to the single status of the mothers. The finding that increases in overt fears were generally not related to children experiencing both divorce and remarriage in less than two years (with the notable exception of fears of illness and death), could indicate that remarriage has a positive impact upon the child's development of overt fears. However, it may also imply that the overt expression of such fears may instead become less observable and perhaps somatized through concerns with illness, disease, and loss (actual or symbolic). Covert measures (Sentence Completion) indicated that anxiety levels were higher in children of mothers who had remarried in less than two years of their divorce. This was a finding that this group had in common with both of the single/divorced family structures, giving some support to the latter interpretation.

#### Implications for Child Development

This data raises concerns of the impact of early

remarriage upon the emotional and coping abilities of the child. This data would suggest that careful consideration should be given prior to remarriage, not so much for the purpose of inhibiting early remarriage but rather for the purpose of understanding the possible impact upon the child. With this understanding it might be possible for the mental health worker to assist the mother and child in a preventative manner, helping them to learn how to more freely communicate their feelings and attitudes about the divorce and remarriage prior to the remarriage as well as after it. Loyalty issues could be addressed directly as well as assurances to the child, if appropriate, from the mother regarding her bond and attachment. It might also be helpful to plan a preconceived strategy for the child to be able to appropriately bring up concerns or get the mother's attention when she/he is feeling "left out."

Mothers demonstrated difficulty in talking about divorce, death, and other significant topics with their children during the first two years after the divorce and also when highly stressed. This is likely to be the time when the child may experience the greatest need for explanations and understanding. Creating an awareness of the need and helpfulness of this kind of communication between mother/parent and child would appear to be essential in aiding the family in the extended process of learning to

cope and adjust. Parents also need direction in knowing how to go about talking with their children concerning difficult and emotionally-laden subjects as well as how to achieve some respite themselves from stress and emotional drain.

Sex differences in children's reports of overt fears, mothers' reports of children's overt fears, covert fears/concerns were found. Females were found to indicate greater overt fears of all types with the exception of fears of noise ( $p < .01$ ). Mothers also tended to report their daughters as having greater illness/death, animal, classical, and miscellaneous fears ( $p < .01$ ). However, regarding covert fears/concerns, females tended to indicate greater oversensitivity and dependency upon others as well as greater inclinations towards hostility ( $p < .01$ ). Males showed greater tendencies toward overt, hostile, and antisocial behaviors and concern for environmental pursuits ( $p < .01$ ). These findings could be related to the fact that low stress mothers were likely to have daughters. This may imply that low stress mothers may be more sensitive to and aware of their daughters' fearfulness. If, as the data has indicated, high stressed mothers tended to have sons, the impact of their fears is likely to reflect disruptiveness of the mother-son relationship. In part, this may be due to the lack of an adult male role model in divorced families and the fact that, in general, there is a strong

identification of boys with their fathers during these ages (6-11 years). The lack of interaction between boys and their fathers may therefore make the influence of same sex peers more pervasive. This data appear to support the findings of other authors (Graziano et al., 1979) that girls tend to report more fears and are reported as having more fears by their parents. It is of interest that in this study girls were found to demonstrate anger and aggression; given the data also indicating the females' inclinations toward dependency and oversensitivity to others, at least two possible interpretations are offered. It may be that the anger is a reaction to the restrictiveness that increased dependency and sensitivity towards others could foster since this increase might be a regressive step in the child's development of independence and autonomy. The ambivalence created might be seen in an alternating pattern of anger and submission as the child struggles with the competing needs of dependency and autonomy. The same findings, however, might also be the result of two different groupings of females, one of which tended to be more dependent/oversensitive and the other more aggressive and angry.

The age of the child was also a factor with the expression and reports of overt fears and covert fears/concerns. Supporting what was earlier reported by Jacobson

(1978), younger children tended to report more overt fears of all types ( $p < .01$ ) with the exception of social/interpersonal fears which was instead associated with older children ( $p < .01$ ). Mothers of younger children inclined to report their children as having greater overt fears of all types ( $p < .01$ ). Regarding covert fears/concerns, younger children tended to obtain higher scores suggesting maladjustment, pathology, overt death, separation, injury/disease, and anxiety. Older children tended to indicate greater interpersonal concerns, concerns around goals/achievement and inclinations of feelings of hostility.

While it is acknowledged that this is not a longitudinal study, the results regarding overt fears and family structure suggest that after the second postdivorce year, reports of children's overt fears by children and their mothers may generally diminish. However, covert emotional features may continue for a longer duration, at least in this study, among children of mothers who have not remarried. This has implications for the expectations of parents, teachers, and mental health workers. If such emotional features are normal long-term reactions for this specific life experience, awareness may insure that such emotions and internal reactions are not overlooked, dismissed, or discounted. The fact that they are expressed



overtly, however, suggests that such concerns were not addressed.

The data from this study suggests stress experience by the mother appears to be a significant factor in children's overt fears whether or not it is expressed by the mother directly. Both mothers reporting high levels of stress as well as those reporting low levels of stress were associated with children who either indicated higher overt and covert fears and concerns or primarily covert fears and concerns respectively. In either case, the data points to the need for the parent to learn to cope with the stress effectively. Parental stress may be addressed through association with other supportive parents, attendance of parent-support groups, outside activities, or assistance from other mental health resources. Financial stress is a more difficult matter to resolve, whether it involves low income from a job or issues related to child support. Because financial stress is not easily ameliorated and because it potentially affects so many different aspects of the family, it may be more easily understood why severe financial concerns appeared to have more impact on the child's fears. The direct implication here is the necessity and need for regulations and the ability to enforce child custody payments as well as agencies who can be helpful in assisting mothers in various ways with bettering their current

situation.

The idea of a concept of general "Fearfulness" has been introduced in this study already. The overt fear categories did not reflect well the different family structures or stress levels. This may be a reflection of the poor discriminative qualities of the measures themselves. There were moderate to high correlations between the overt fears categories (correlation coefficients ranged from .34 to .83,  $p < .01$ ) which adds further support to this possible interpretation. It might, however, be an indication that a heightened state of anxiety or fearfulness may tend to evidence itself in a generalized manner where fear is attributed to numerous situations, objects, and thoughts by the children as well as their mothers.

Mothers' reports of their adoption of traditional feminine, masculine, or androgenous roles did not appear to be affected by different family structures or levels of overall stress. This finding is somewhat in conflict with Meyers (1976) data suggesting that women who were less traditionally feminine appeared to have an easier time with coping and adjusting to divorce. While it is understandable on an intuitive level why more androgenous women might have a broader perspective of themselves and therefore more options for behavior and adjustment, it may also be true that the same broad perspective and options for behavior may

carry with it added responsibility, a feeling of needing to be able to "do it all," i.e. the "superwoman" syndrome, and higher levels of guilt if unable to fulfill those high expectations. Thus, the aspect of sex-role behaviors may not be a significant factor in itself. Perhaps it is more influential when combined with other mediating factors not explored in this study.

Through an oversight on the part of the author, two important facets of information were not obtained for this study. These variables would seem to have potentially significant implications that could have possibly aided the interpretation of the data. These involved obtaining the number of years that the divorced couples had been married and whether or not this was the mother's first divorce. While multiple divorces are comparatively rare, not having this information might call into question as to what effect a "contaminated" sample has upon the findings. It is conceivable that a child and/or mother who has experienced a previous divorce might react differently than those who have not. A case could be made that either situation might be more traumatic, that is a first time experience versus repeated losses over time. That is precisely why it would have been beneficial to have had the data included in this study. It is also possible that a family that has been together for a longer duration may have a different response

to divorce than if they had been in a more brief marriage. For a child, however, especially if it is the first experience with divorce, a shorter or longer period of family life may not make a significant difference since for him/her it would still be their total lifetime. For the mother, however, a different reaction might be possible given a shorter or longer marriage.

However, information was obtained as to (a) how long the natural parents that were still together had been married, (b) how long the natural parents had been divorced if they were no longer together, (c) how long any of the parents had been separated prior to the divorce, (d) and how long the divorced/remarried couple had been remarried. Post hoc analyses indicated that none of these variables were significant for overall, parental, or financial stress. Significant results were understandably found for family structure, that is the length of time since divorce, length of separation, and length of remarriage all fall into specific family structure groups. Since no significant findings were found for the items above related to length of time and any of the stress variables, the point could be argued that the length of time the couple might have been married may not have been quite as important as one might initially question. Furthermore, multiple divorces are comparatively rare.

Another limitation was the self-reported stress data of the mothers. Additional measures that would more covertly assess the presence of stress would give greater validity and reliability to the mothers' reports of overall stress ( $r = -.19, p < .05$ ) indicating that lower reports of overall stress were associated with a tendency of the mothers' to report themselves in a favorable light. A covert measure would give information that could either support or reject the interpretations about these mothers that were made and validate their own reported stress levels.

The sampling of subjects consisted of a fairly homogenous area where many of the families are mobile. Because the subjects reside in a semirural location made up primarily of Caucasians with fairly conservative religious values, based on the reported demographic data, the mothers' perceptions of the world are likely to be conservative also. Because of this, the generalizability of the mothers' reactions to overall, parental, and financial stress may be somewhat limited and care should be taken not to attempt to apply these data and findings over a broad heterogeneous spectrum of people until further support for these results is reported.

As mentioned earlier, the uneven cell sizes in the stress dimension for divorced/unremarried mothers also should give rise to some caution in generalizing the

results. This specific sample characteristic is puzzling. It appears to have reflected a tendency for subjects in this sample not to admit to high stress, at least in this particular subject area. If such a response style or tendency exists, it might be attributed to a "just handle it - don't complain" outlook. However, it seemed apparent from the covert measures that such a parental response style to stress was associated with internal, unexpressed fears and concerns in their children. This would suggest that the extended inhibition or denial of stress in stressful situations may not assist the children's coping abilities, but rather make their conflicts and concerns less observable and thus less available to intervention or relief.

Future research should attempt to correct the above criticisms of this study through the adding of aforesaid information as well as in using a different or more heterogenous population. Since there appeared to be few interactions between family structure and parental and financial stress, it may be helpful to replace the stress independent variable with another dimension that may be more interactional with the different family types.

Such a dimension might consist of using additional parent measures to assess if and how parents had or had not attempted to cope with the stress of divorce and remarriage. Subsequently, how successful the parents' efforts actually

were in dealing with this stress would give added information pertinent to counselors and therapists, as well as those who distribute self-help literature to such parents in distress.

The level of stress as it relates to different family structures might be of further research interest. This is particularly true given that the divorced/single mothers tended to report low parental stress but high financial stress. Support or lack of support for this finding would aid in the generalizability of the results.

Several other variables not addressed specifically in this study that may serve as mediating variables should also be investigated. These include the further exploration of how stress, fears, and family structure are influenced by the age of the child at the time of divorce, the number of siblings in the family, and the child's ordinal position among the siblings; and whether the mothers had participated in counseling via the divorce and what effect such counseling may have had on the mothers' stress levels.

It would also be profitable to perhaps look at a better defined but longer post-divorce time span such as three, four, or five years after the divorce to assess a better cross-section of time. This could give a clearer picture of the longer coping process of the child and mother which would also add information to those researchers involved in

performing longitudinal studies on children of divorce (Hetherington, 1988; Wallerstein, 1986).

The addition of different measures of overt and covert fears might add to the discriminative ability and validity of the measures used in this study. It would also broaden the scope of the exploratory nature of research on children's fears.

Although often neglected, including more indepth information from the fathers of the children who have been through divorce would provide invaluable data in more comprehensively understanding the nature of this other significant child-parent relationship and the influence of this relationship upon the child's adjustment to divorce and remarriage. Research of the type in this study involving children's fears as it relates to divorce and remarriage in situations where the father is the custodial parent would make a major contribution in being able to compare findings between the two groups.

Much is slowly being accumulated and learned about the impact of divorce and remarriage. As in most fields of study, the influence of any studied phenomena upon children lags several years behind the information understood about how adults are affected. The area of children's fears also continues to need further investigation. It is hoped that this study will serve as an impetus for research to further



our knowledge about these two complex areas that affect so many.

APPENDIX A

PARENT'S INFORMED CONSENT FORM

## Parent's Informed Consent Form

**TITLE OF STUDY:** "Children's Fears and Family Structure"

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The purpose of this study is to explore and develop an understanding of some of the variables involved in commonly experienced fears of children. Children appear to fear different types of objects and situations at different ages. Past experiences may also provide many clues to this prevalent phenomenon. To study some of the differences and similarities of fears of children, a large number of children from various backgrounds will be needed. In order to provide a broader range of past and present experiences for each child, the mothers of the children in this study will be asked to complete additional helpful information.

**PROCEDURE:** For those who voluntarily consent to be a part of this study, the children will be seen individually for approximately thirty (30) to forty (40) minutes during which five (5) brief measures will be given to assess different aspects of fears. This is all that will be required of each child's participation in the study. The mothers of the children will be asked to complete seven (7) brief measures assessing various personality characteristics, aspects of the family structure, current and past life experiences, and demographic data. These measures should take approximately 45 minutes to complete. After the mothers have completed their materials they will be asked to return these materials to the investigator in the post-paid envelope accompanying the forms. This will constitute all of each mother's participation in the study.

**SAFEGUARDS:** All responses by the children and mothers will be kept completely confidential. All individual answer forms will be identified only by a code number that will be assigned to each volunteer at the beginning of the study. We are not interested in comparing individual persons, but only in examining differences among different groups.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may end your participation at any time you desire. The different measures to be used are those which are commonly used in studies of this type. To the best of our knowledge, participation in this study will not cause physical or psychological harm. Any parent or child is free to refuse to answer any question should he or she desire.

This study will help provide much needed information about children's fears, their similarities and differences, as well as factors that may lead to certain kinds of fears. Understanding how these different facets work together may enable researchers and clinicians to better differentiate common fears from problem fears. It may also assist them in developing more effective ways of helping children and their parents when children's fears are of parental concern.

Any questions concerning the procedures used in this study will be answered to the parent's satisfaction. For further information you may contact David Pickard at (817) 283-0215 in the evenings or (214) 426-7945 during the day.

## Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: "Children's Fears and Family Structure"

Investigator: David C. Pickard, M.Ed., Psychological Associate

This is to certify that I, \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Print)  
 hereby give consent to \_\_\_\_\_ to perform or  
 supervise the explained investigational procedures with my  
 child, \_\_\_\_\_, and myself. In agreeing to  
 (Child's Name)  
 participate in this scientific study on the phenomenon of  
 childhood fears I agree:

- (1) To allow my child to be interviewed and given five
- (5) measures related to children's fears;
- (2) To participate, myself, by completing a  
 questionnaire and seven (7) brief measures assessing various  
 personality characteristics and aspects of family structure  
 to be returned in an accompanying self-addressed, pre-  
 stamped envelope.

The investigation and my part in the investigation have  
 been defined and fully explained to me by \_\_\_\_\_  
 and I understand her/his explanation. The procedures of this  
 investigation and their risks and discomforts have been  
 described in a separate statement.

I have been given an opportunity to ask whatever  
 questions I may have had and all such questions and  
 inquiries have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I am able to refuse to answer any  
 question in interviews or questionnaires.

I understand that any data or answers to questions will  
 remain confidential with regard to my and my child's  
 identity.

I FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT I AM FREE TO WITHDRAW MY  
 CONSENT AND TERMINATE MY PARTICIPATION AT ANY TIME.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Participating Parent's  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Study Code Number



APPENDIX B

TABLES

Table 7

Normative Data of Study Sample by Family Structure

Dependent Variable	Family Structure				
	<u>1'</u>	<u>2'</u>	<u>3'</u>	<u>4'</u>	<u>5'</u>
<u>Number of Subjects</u>	21	24	24	18	34
Males	8	10	14	10	19
Females	13	14	10	8	15
<u>Age</u>					
<u>M</u>	7.9	8.0	8.1	8.0	8.1
SD	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
<u>School Grade</u>					
<u>M</u>	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.6
SD	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.1
<u>Number of Siblings</u>					
<u>M</u>	.96	1.3	1.8	2.1	2.0
SD	.51	.69	.55	.47	.67
<u>Annual Family Income</u>	a <sup>†</sup>	a <sup>†</sup>	b <sup>††</sup>	b <sup>††</sup>	b <sup>††</sup>

\* 1 = Single/divorced less than two years ago; 2 = Single/divorced for more than two years; 3 = divorced/remarried more than two years after divorce; 4 = divorced/remarried less than two years after divorce; 5 = intact families.  
 NA = not applicable

† \$10-15,000

†† \$20-30,000



Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and N's on Overall Stress by Family Structure

Dependent Variable	<u>Family Structure</u>				
	<u>1'</u>	<u>2'</u>	<u>3'</u>	<u>4'</u>	<u>5'</u>
Children's Expressed Overt Fears					
<u>Noise</u>					
Low Stress					
<u>M</u>	6.82	6.21	5.29	5.63	5.50
<u>SD</u>	1.77	1.25	.47	.74	.67
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12
High Stress					
<u>M</u>	6.10	5.80	5.00	5.10	5.36
<u>SD</u>	1.10	.91	.00	.31	.72
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22
<u>Animals</u>					
Low Stress					
<u>M</u>	13.00	12.92	11.52	12.00	11.00
<u>SD</u>	1.54	2.05	1.00	1.77	1.27
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12
High Stress					
<u>M</u>	15.20	13.30	12.42	13.90	12.54
<u>SD</u>	1.87	1.70	1.51	2.37	2.44
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Classical

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	26.72	27.92	20.35	21.62	21.08
<u>SD</u>	5.98	4.85	1.96	2.06	2.61
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	31.10	24.10	21.85	24.90	22.77
<u>SD</u>	6.33	2.51	3.57	3.31	3.39
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Social

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	43.18	32.78	30.29	32.62	29.58
<u>SD</u>	8.15	5.17	4.10	3.96	2.87
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	43.10	36.40	30.85	36.40	31.95
<u>SD</u>	11.27	5.19	2.19	7.48	4.68
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Miscellaneous

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	14.45	12.21	11.11	11.75	10.41
<u>SD</u>	3.95	3.06	1.57	2.05	1.24
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	17.20	12.70	11.42	12.40	12.13
<u>SD</u>	5.39	1.82	2.07	3.09	2.35
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Illness/Death

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	45.54	35.42	32.52	37.87	33.08
<u>SD</u>	6.50	7.05	6.06	5.96	3.80
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	49.50	39.60	35.57	46.50	39.40
<u>SD</u>	9.51	6.34	4.07	8.12	7.28
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

## Mothers' Reports of Children's Overt Fears

Noise

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	6.00	6.57	5.64	5.37	5.58
<u>SD</u>	1.18	1.28	.99	.74	.79
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	7.00	6.60	5.42	5.70	6.04
<u>SD</u>	.81	.97	.78	1.33	1.39
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Animals

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	12.72	11.92	12.76	12.75	11.83
<u>SD</u>	2.05	1.20	1.60	1.28	1.11
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	14.70	13.80	11.85	13.70	12.54
<u>SD</u>	2.71	1.03	1.21	1.49	2.34
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Classical

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	23.18	22.57	21.64	24.75	20.41
<u>SD</u>	4.16	3.58	2.62	3.45	1.83
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	29.80	24.00	22.57	24.20	23.36
<u>SD</u>	4.66	2.78	3.25	4.39	4.14
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Social

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	33.81	31.35	27.70	29.62	29.16
<u>SD</u>	8.71	3.69	2.22	2.13	2.62
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	40.80	31.70	28.42	30.30	30.81
<u>SD</u>	12.90	3.05	2.57	3.33	3.71
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Miscellaneous

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	13.09	12.28	10.70	12.12	10.50
<u>SD</u>	3.93	3.02	1.82	2.10	1.50
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	18.00	12.30	12.14	12.00	12.81
<u>SD</u>	3.43	2.83	2.26	2.44	2.85
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Illness/Death

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	35.36	32.57	32.11	32.75	31.50
<u>SD</u>	8.34	5.19	3.29	2.31	2.54
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	41.80	33.30	33.42	36.00	35.13
<u>SD</u>	8.9	4.52	4.23	4.11	6.49
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

## Hand Test

Interpersonal

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	8.63	6.78	5.82	6.50	6.91
<u>SD</u>	1.96	1.57	1.51	1.30	1.56
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	6.40	6.12	4.85	5.30	4.72
<u>SD</u>	1.07	1.35	1.86	.94	1.57
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Environmental

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	3.26	2.78	3.29	3.12	3.00
<u>SD</u>	2.06	.89	1.44	1.12	1.41
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.60	3.00	3.42	3.60	4.59
<u>SD</u>	2.27	1.60	.78	1.07	1.18
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Maladjustment

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	1.18	.00	.52	.62	.41
<u>SD</u>	1.25	.00	.71	1.06	.51
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	.80	1.25	1.00	1.40	.63
<u>SD</u>	1.03	.70	.81	1.26	.90
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Withdrawal

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	.18	1.64	.47	.25	.41
<u>SD</u>	.40	1.00	.80	.70	.51
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	.60	.87	.71	.20	.77
<u>SD</u>	.69	.99	.95	.42	.81
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Acting Out Ratio

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	2.06	1.49	.32	.27	.34
<u>SD</u>	1.57	1.81	.44	.37	.33
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	2.61	1.98	.39	.29	.20
<u>SD</u>	1.97	1.38	.31	.33	.28
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

## Sentence Completion

Overt Death Fear

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	.09	.07	.00	.12	.00
<u>SD</u>	.30	.26	.00	.35	.00
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	.60	.00	.00	.00	.00
<u>SD</u>	.96	.00	.00	.00	.00
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Separation

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	3.09	1.35	.41	1.25	.00
<u>SD</u>	1.37	1.08	.61	1.16	.00
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.40	1.80	.57	1.60	.36
<u>SD</u>	1.35	1.31	1.13	1.07	.65
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Control/Dependency

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	3.54	1.85	.52	.87	.91
<u>SD</u>	1.44	.86	.71	.99	.79
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>N</u>	3.60	2.00	.71	.50	.36
<u>SD</u>	2.50	1.15	.48	.70	.65
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Goals/Achievement

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	1.27	.57	1.00	1.12	2.00
<u>SD</u>	.90	.93	.86	.83	.95
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	1.10	.70	.85	.90	1.13
<u>SD</u>	1.59	.67	1.21	.56	1.08
<u>N</u>					

Injury/Disease

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	.54	.28	.29	.37	.16
<u>SD</u>	.68	.46	.47	.51	.38
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	.20	.70	.28	.40	.63
<u>SD</u>	.42	.67	.48	.51	.49
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Hostility

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	2.27	1.78	1.23	.50	.83
<u>SD</u>	1.48	1.71	1.30	.92	.57
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	.30	.30	.85	.20	.40
<u>SD</u>	.48	.67	1.06	.42	.79
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22



Anxiety

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	4.18	4.21	1.76	2.50	1.41
<u>SD</u>	2.60	1.42	.66	1.06	1.08
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.40	4.10	2.00	4.00	2.13
<u>SD</u>	1.35	1.44	1.00	1.33	1.93
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

## Inventory of Family Feelings: Mothers' Reports of

Natural Mother/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	26.90	31.35	32.76	33.87	30.75
<u>SD</u>	5.14	6.20	3.58	3.22	3.49
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	32.90	34.20	33.42	33.60	33.81
<u>SD</u>	2.99	1.87	2.50	2.27	3.11
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Natural Father/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	19.72	27.92	29.58	30.25	33.00
<u>SD</u>	4.29	6.42	4.90	6.36	2.52
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	26.00	28.80	30.00	30.80	30.86
<u>SD</u>	7.04	6.12	3.65	4.66	3.39
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Stepfather/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	31.70	31.37	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	3.40	4.24	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	11	8	NA

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	32.28	29.70	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	2.92	3.33	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	12	10	NA

## Inventory of Family Feelings: Children's Reports of

Natural Mother/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	29.82	32.71	32.23	32.25	33.16
<u>SD</u>	5.74	3.53	3.89	3.49	2.44
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	33.50	34.80	34.71	32.10	34.09
<u>SD</u>	6.24	2.70	2.87	3.57	2.68
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Natural Father/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	27.09	32.21	34.35	34.17	35.16
<u>SD</u>	7.25	4.13	3.70	4.91	3.01
<u>N</u>	14	15	11	8	12

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	32.40	32.60	32.85	32.90	31.68
<u>SD</u>	4.11	4.62	5.14	5.84	4.63
<u>N</u>	7	9	12	10	22

Stepfather/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	33.23	29.00	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	4.10	5.13	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	11	8	NA

## High Stress

<u>N</u>	NA	NA	33.43	28.50	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	4.43	5.66	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	12	10	NA

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Table 9

Means, Standard Deviations, and N's on Parental Stress by Family Structure

Dependent Variable	<u>Family Structure</u>				
	<u>1'</u>	<u>2'</u>	<u>3'</u>	<u>4'</u>	<u>5'</u>
Children's Expressed Overt Fears					
<u>Noise</u>					
Low Stress					
<u>M</u>	6.79	6.14	5.36	5.67	5.40
<u>SD</u>	1.76	1.13	.51	.82	.52
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10
High Stress					
<u>M</u>	5.86	5.00	5.08	5.17	5.42
<u>SD</u>	.38	0.00	.28	.39	.78
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24
<u>Animals</u>					
Low Stress					
<u>M</u>	13.79	13.05	11.64	12.33	11.00
<u>SD</u>	2.23	1.91	1.12	2.07	1.16
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10
High Stress					
<u>M</u>	14.57	13.50	11.92	13.42	12.42
<u>SD</u>	1.51	2.12	1.32	2.39	2.43
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Classical

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	28.64	23.09	20.18	22.33	20.70
<u>SD</u>	7.14	4.05	2.09	2.07	2.26
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	29.14	27.00	21.32	24.00	22.79
<u>SD</u>	5.08	0.00	2.87	3.62	3.38
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Social

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	44.29	34.00	30.82	34.17	30.50
<u>SD</u>	9.06	5.49	4.79	4.26	3.03
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	40.86	37.50	30.14	35.00	31.38
<u>SD</u>	10.72	3.54	2.38	7.29	4.70
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Miscellaneous

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	15.79	12.50	11.27	12.00	10.50
<u>SD</u>	4.61	2.69	1.62	2.37	1.27
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	15.71	11.50	11.15	12.17	11.96
<u>SD</u>	5.50	.71	1.82	2.86	2.35
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Illness/Death

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	48.00	36.86	32.46	39.00	34.90
<u>SD</u>	7.70	7.19	6.71	7.24	6.77
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	46.29	40.50	34.23	44.50	38.13
<u>SD</u>	9.45	.71	4.69	8.48	6.91
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

## Mothers' Reports of Children's Overt Fears

Noise

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	6.29	6.59	5.82	5.50	5.80
<u>SD</u>	1.20	1.10	1.67	.84	1.14
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	6.86	6.50	5.39	5.58	5.92
<u>SD</u>	.90	2.12	.65	1.24	1.28
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Animals

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	13.50	12.55	12.91	13.00	11.60
<u>SD</u>	2.38	1.41	1.81	1.27	1.08
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	14.00	14.50	12.15	13.42	12.58
<u>SD</u>	3.00	.71	1.21	.156	2.44
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Classical

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	25.14	22.96	21.36	24.33	20.50
<u>SD</u>	5.35	3.36	1.96	4.23	1.65
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	28.71	25.50	22.39	24.50	23.08
<u>SD</u>	5.28	.71	3.33	3.92	4.14
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

Social

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	35.64	31.36	28.00	29.83	28.70
<u>SD</u>	9.50	3.37	2.49	1.84	2.26
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	40.14	33.00	27.85	30.08	30.88
<u>SD</u>	14.42	4.24	2.23	3.26	3.65
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Miscellaneous

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	14.86	12.23	11.00	11.50	10.40
<u>SD</u>	4.93	3.01	2.15	1.76	1.65
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	16.57	13.00	11.23	12.33	12.67
<u>SD</u>	3.10	0.00	2.01	2.46	2.78
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Illness/Death

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	37.79	32.77	32.64	32.00	30.90
<u>SD</u>	8.85	4.90	3.38	1.55	2.13
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	39.71	34.00	32.39	35.83	35.08
<u>SD</u>	9.95	5.66	3.82	3.88	6.24
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

## Hand Test

Interpersonal

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	8.29	6.70	6.27	6.50	7.30
<u>SD</u>	1.90	1.49	1.68	1.76	1.77
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	6.14	5.00	4.92	5.50	4.75
<u>SD</u>	1.07	0.00	1.38	0.80	1.36
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Environmental

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	3.14	3.00	3.09	2.67	2.60
<u>SD</u>	1.92	1.12	1.58	1.21	1.08
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	4.14	1.50	3.54	3.75	4.63
<u>SD</u>	2.48	0.71	0.97	0.87	1.17
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24



Maladjustment

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	1.07	0.30	0.46	1.17	0.40
<u>SD</u>	1.14	0.57	0.67	1.84	0.52
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	0.86	2.00	0.85	1.00	0.63
<u>SD</u>	1.22	0.00	0.80	0.85	0.88
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Withdrawal

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	0.21	1.30	0.27	0.00	0.60
<u>SD</u>	0.43	1.03	0.65	0.00	0.84
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	0.71	2.00	0.77	0.33	0.67
<u>SD</u>	0.76	1.41	0.93	0.65	0.70
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Acting Out Ratio

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	2.31	1.44	0.34	0.15	0.22
<u>SD</u>	1.74	1.54	0.47	0.27	0.19
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	2.36	4.00	0.34	0.35	0.26
<u>SD</u>	1.92	0.00	0.37	0.37	0.34
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

## Sentence Completion

Overt Death Fear

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	0.07	0.05	0.00	0.17	0.00
<u>SD</u>	0.27	0.21	0.00	0.41	0.00
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	0.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<u>SD</u>	1.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Separation

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	3.14	1.50	0.55	1.67	0.00
<u>SD</u>	1.35	1.19	0.69	1.37	0.00
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.43	2.00	0.39	1.33	0.33
<u>SD</u>	1.40	1.41	0.87	0.99	0.64
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Control/Dependency

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	3.71	1.96	0.82	0.83	1.10
<u>SD</u>	1.82	1.00	0.75	0.98	0.88
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.29	1.50	0.39	0.58	0.33
<u>SD</u>	2.36	0.71	0.51	0.79	0.57
<u>N</u>					

Goals/Achievement

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	1.14	0.68	0.91	1.00	1.80
<u>SD</u>	0.86	0.84	0.83	0.89	1.14
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	1.29	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.29
<u>SD</u>	1.89	0.00	0.89	0.60	1.08
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Injury/Disease

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	0.57	0.46	0.27	0.50	0.20
<u>SD</u>	0.65	0.60	0.47	0.55	0.42
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	0.43	0.00	0.62	0.17	0.33
<u>SD</u>	0.54	0.00	0.87	0.39	0.57
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Anxiety

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	4.21	4.18	2.09	3.17	2.00
<u>SD</u>	2.42	1.47	0.54	1.60	0.82
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.00	4.00	1.62	3.42	1.83
<u>SD</u>	0.82	0.00	0.87	1.38	1.97
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

## Inventory of Family Feelings: Mothers' Reports of

Natural Mother/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	28.14	32.46	31.73	31.83	30.50
<u>SD</u>	5.16	5.23	3.66	1.60	4.35
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	33.00	33.50	34.00	34.67	33.67
<u>SD</u>	3.61	2.12	5.58	2.71	2.71
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Natural Father/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	21.07	27.91	29.00	29.67	32.20
<u>SD</u>	4.92	6.32	3.90	3.45	3.62
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	26.00	32.50	30.31	31.00	31.38
<u>SD</u>	8.25	0.71	5.02	6.14	3.13
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Stepfather/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	31.18	29.00	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	3.49	1.67	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	11	6	NA

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	32.46	31.17	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	2.99	4.32	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	13	12	NA

## Inventory of Family Feelings: Children's Report of

Natural Mother/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	31.07	33.36	30.73	29.83	33.40
<u>SD</u>	5.68	3.39	3.98	2.23	2.80
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	32.57	36.00	34.85	33.33	33.92
<u>SD</u>	7.32	0.00	2.30	3.39	2.57
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Natural Father/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	28.64	32.05	33.82	32.83	34.60
<u>SD</u>	7.25	4.29	4.07	5.08	3.27
<u>N</u>	14	22	11	6	10

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	31.57	36.00	34.00	33.75	32.21
<u>SD</u>	4.16	0.00	4.32	5.64	4.70
<u>N</u>	7	2	13	12	24

Stepfather/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	31.09	25.67	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	4.68	2.66	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	11	6	NA

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	33.85	30.25	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	3.29	5.68	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	13	12	NA

\*1= single/divorced less than two years; 2=single/divorced for more than two years; 3=divorced/remarried more than two years after divorce; 4=divorced/remarried less than two years after divorce; 5=intact families; NA=not applicable.

Table 10

Means, Standard Deviations, and N's on Financial Stress by Family Structure

Dependent Variable	<u>Family Structure</u>				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Children's Expressed Overt Fears					
<u>Noise</u>					
Low Stress					
<u>M</u>	6.25	5.50	5.24	5.40	5.32
<u>SD</u>	2.50	0.84	0.48	0.63	0.57
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22
High Stress					
<u>M</u>	6.53	6.22	5.14	5.00	5.58
<u>SD</u>	1.28	1.17	0.38	0.00	0.90
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12
<u>Animals</u>					
Low Stress					
<u>M</u>	12.25	13.50	11.70	12.73	11.59
<u>SD</u>	0.96	2.67	1.11	1.99	1.82
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22
High Stress					
<u>M</u>	14.47	12.94	12.00	14.67	12.75
<u>SD</u>	1.97	1.62	1.53	3.51	2.73
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Classical

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	25.50	25.17	20.41	22.87	21.86
<u>SD</u>	1.00	6.68	2.03	3.09	3.30
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	29.59	22.83	21.71	26.33	22.75
<u>SD</u>	6.90	2.71	3.55	2.52	3.08
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Social

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	39.00	32.17	30.29	33.27	29.77
<u>SD</u>	2.16	6.56	4.10	5.23	3.25
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	44.12	35.00	30.86	42.00	33.58
<u>SD</u>	10.34	4.95	2.19	7.21	4.87
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Miscellaneous

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	13.75	13.17	11.35	11.60	10.91
<u>SD</u>	1.26	4.17	1.69	2.47	1.85
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	16.24	12.17	10.86	14.67	12.67
<u>SD</u>	5.20	1.92	1.77	2.08	2.35
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Illness/Death

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	41.50	37.33	32.59	40.60	35.18
<u>SD</u>	3.70	7.97	6.12	7.21	6.46
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	48.82	37.11	35.43	53.00	40.83
<u>SD</u>	8.31	6.83	3.95	5.57	6.46
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

## Mothers' Reports of Children's Overt Fears

Noise

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	5.50	5.67	5.59	5.53	5.46
<u>SD</u>	0.58	0.52	1.00	1.13	0.74
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	6.71	6.89	5.57	5.67	6.67
<u>SD</u>	1.11	1.13	0.79	1.16	1.56
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Animals

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	12.75	12.50	12.88	13.33	11.77
<u>SD</u>	0.96	1.05	1.45	1.54	1.51
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	13.88	12.78	11.57	13.00	13.25
<u>SD</u>	2.76	1.59	1.40	1.00	2.49
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12



Classical

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	21.00	23.17	22.24	24.60	21.05
<u>SD</u>	0.82	3.87	2.54	3.62	2.17
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	27.59	23.17	21.14	23.67	24.67
<u>SD</u>	5.34	3.20	3.39	6.03	4.91
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Social

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	33.25	31.00	27.65	29.60	21.32
<u>SD</u>	1.89	2.37	2.37	2.75	2.82
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	38.06	31.67	28.57	32.00	31.92
<u>SD</u>	12.32	3.69	2.15	2.65	3.90
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Miscellaneous

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	12.00	12.83	10.82	12.00	11.64
<u>SD</u>	2.45	4.26	1.98	2.33	2.32
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	16.24	12.11	11.86	12.33	13.17
<u>SD</u>	4.41	2.40	2.12	2.08	3.01
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Illness/Death

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	36.25	32.33	32.65	34.33	32.00
<u>SD</u>	5.25	5.79	3.37	3.62	3.63
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	38.94	33.06	32.14	35.67	37.25
<u>SD</u>	9.76	4.66	4.22	4.93	7.20
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

## Hand Test

Interpersonal

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	10.00	5.83	5.24	5.93	5.73
<u>SD</u>	0.00	0.98	1.52	1.22	1.98
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	7.00	6.81	6.29	5.33	5.08
<u>SD</u>	1.70	1.60	1.80	1.53	1.68
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Environmental

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	4.00	2.50	3.53	3.47	3.82
<u>SD</u>	2.71	0.84	1.33	0.99	1.50
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.35	3.00	2.86	3.00	4.42
<u>SD</u>	2.03	1.27	1.07	1.73	1.38
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Maladjustment

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	0.50	0.00	0.71	0.87	0.41
<u>SD</u>	0.58	0.00	0.77	0.99	0.59
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	1.12	0.63	0.57	2.00	0.83
<u>SD</u>	1.22	0.81	0.79	2.00	1.03
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Withdrawal

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	0.00	1.83	0.65	0.27	0.68
<u>SD</u>	0.00	0.75	0.86	0.59	0.65
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	0.47	1.19	0.29	0.00	0.58
<u>SD</u>	0.62	1.11	0.76	0.00	0.90
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Acting Out Ratio

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	1.90	1.89	0.40	0.32	0.29
<u>SD</u>	0.87	2.44	0.46	0.36	0.34
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	2.43	1.60	0.20	0.08	0.18
<u>SD</u>	1.91	1.34	0.21	0.14	0.23
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

## Sentence Completion

Overt Death Fear

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00
<u>SD</u>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.00
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	0.41	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00
<u>SD</u>	0.80	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.00
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Separation

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	2.25	1.33	0.65	1.27	0.18
<u>SD</u>	0.50	1.21	0.86	1.10	0.59
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.47	1.61	0.00	2.33	0.33
<u>SD</u>	1.38	1.20	0.00	0.58	0.49
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Control/Dependency

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	2.75	1.50	0.47	0.73	0.64
<u>SD</u>	1.50	0.84	0.62	0.88	0.73
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	3.77	2.06	0.86	0.33	0.42
<u>SD</u>	2.05	1.00	0.69	0.58	0.79
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Goals/Achievement

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	1.75	0.67	0.94	1.13	1.82
<u>SD</u>	0.50	0.82	0.90	0.64	1.18
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	1.06	0.61	1.00	0.33	0.75
<u>SD</u>	1.35	0.85	1.16	0.58	0.42
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Injury/Disease

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	0.00	0.33	0.29	0.33	0.32
<u>SD</u>	0.00	0.52	0.47	0.49	0.48
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	0.47	0.50	0.29	0.67	0.75
<u>SD</u>	0.62	0.62	0.49	0.58	0.45
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Anxiety

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	1.75	3.67	1.71	3.00	1.36
<u>SD</u>	0.50	1.51	0.69	1.25	1.26
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	4.29	4.33	2.14	5.00	2.83
<u>SD</u>	2.02	1.37	0.90	1.00	2.04
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

## Inventory of Family Feelings: Mothers' Reports of

Natural Mother/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	28.25	34.17	33.88	33.67	32.32
<u>SD</u>	5.19	5.67	2.67	2.82	3.30
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	30.12	32.00	30.71	34.00	33.50
<u>SD</u>	5.26	4.84	3.68	2.00	3.94
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Natural Father/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	19.50	31.17	29.82	30.27	32.50
<u>SD</u>	5.69	4.84	4.81	5.76	2.24
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	23.47	27.33	29.43	32.00	30.00
<u>SD</u>	6.56	6.40	3.95	2.00	4.20
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Stepfather/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	31.77	30.27	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	3.47	4.08	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	17	15	NA

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	32.14	31.33	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	2.73	1.16	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	7	3	NA

## Inventory of Family Feelings: Children's Report of

Natural Mother/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	31.25	34.67	33.59	32.87	33.50
<u>SD</u>	6.45	2.34	3.20	3.31	2.77
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	31.65	33.22	31.43	28.67	34.25
<u>SD</u>	6.25	3.57	4.76	1.16	2.30
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Natural Father/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	32.00	31.67	34.41	34.00	34.32
<u>SD</u>	2.71	4.76	3.95	5.11	3.72
<u>N</u>	4	6	17	15	22

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	29.06	32.61	32.71	30.67	30.33
<u>SD</u>	6.97	4.19	4.57	6.66	4.58
<u>N</u>	17	18	7	3	12

Stepfather/Child

## Low Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	32.65	29.33	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	4.49	5.18	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	17	15	NA

## High Stress

<u>M</u>	NA	NA	32.43	25.67	NA
<u>SD</u>	NA	NA	3.46	5.69	NA
<u>N</u>	NA	NA	7	3	NA

1= single/divorced less than two years; 2=single/divorced for more than two years; 3=divorced/remarried more than two years after divorce; 4=divorced/remarried less than two years after divorce; 5=intact families; NA=not applicable.

Table 11

Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient MatrixChildren's Reports of Overt Fears and Mother's Reports ofChildren's Overt Fears

	<u>Mother's Reports of Children's Fears</u>					
	Noise	Animals	Social	Illness/Death	Classical	Miscellaneous
<u>Children's Expressed Overt Fears</u>						
Noise	.40 <sup>***</sup>	.11	.37 <sup>***</sup>	.24 <sup>**</sup>	.29 <sup>**</sup>	.28 <sup>**</sup>
Animals	.36 <sup>***</sup>	.56 <sup>***</sup>	.41 <sup>***</sup>	.51 <sup>***</sup>	.62 <sup>***</sup>	.66 <sup>***</sup>
Social	.43 <sup>***</sup>	.39 <sup>***</sup>	.74 <sup>***</sup>	.63 <sup>***</sup>	.65 <sup>***</sup>	.67 <sup>***</sup>
Illness/Death	.34 <sup>***</sup>	.49 <sup>***</sup>	.64 <sup>***</sup>	.67 <sup>***</sup>	.70 <sup>***</sup>	.72 <sup>***</sup>
Classical	.35 <sup>***</sup>	.50 <sup>***</sup>	.74 <sup>***</sup>	.66 <sup>***</sup>	.71 <sup>***</sup>	.76 <sup>***</sup>
Miscellaneous	.36 <sup>***</sup>	.42 <sup>***</sup>	.77 <sup>***</sup>	.77 <sup>***</sup>	.75 <sup>***</sup>	.83 <sup>***</sup>

Note. <sup>\*\*</sup>  $p < .01$ , <sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p < .001$ .



Table 12

Pearson-Product Moment Intercorrelation Coefficient Matrix  
Children's Reports of Overt Fears

	Children's Expressed Overt Fears					
	Noise	Animals	Social	Illness/Death	Classical	Miscellaneous
<u>Children's Expressed Overt Fears</u>						
Noise	-	.26**	.53***	.34***	.43***	.35***
Animals		-	.54***	.72***	.67***	.60***
Social			-	.84***	.77***	.78***
Illness/Death				-	.80***	.77***
Classical					-	.81***
Miscellaneous						-

Note. \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

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