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✓ CHILDREN'S DEVELOPING SOCIAL COGNITIONS

ON LOVE AND MARRIAGE

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

---

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Psychology

---

by

Julia Kim-Im

June 1993

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ON LOVE AND MARRIAGE

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Julia Y. Kim-Im

June 1993


Approved by:

  
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## ABSTRACT

Children's concepts regarding love and marriage were investigated using a Love, Marriage, Wedding Questionnaire (LMWQ). One-hundred-and-fifty-four subjects from 5 to 12 years of age, from both sexes and drawn from intact and divorced families were interviewed. Children's age was positively correlated with increasingly abstract concepts about love on several items of the LMWQ. Significant differences in level of performance on the Piagetian conservation tasks and some responses to the LMWQ existed. In addition, significant differences in response between children from divorced versus intact families were found for some of the love and marriage questions on the LMWQ: children from intact homes possessed somewhat more traditional concepts regarding love and marriage, whereas children from divorced families were less traditional and possessed uncertainty regarding their future marital plans. Finally, significant gender differences in some responses to the LMWQ were obtained. More girls than boys defined love and marital roles in terms of traditionally female expressive attributes (e.g. caring, physical affection, being nice, nurturing children). On the other hand, more boys than girls stressed traditionally male instrumental characteristics in their definitions of marital roles (e.g. occupation).

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## INTRODUCTION

Research in the area of children's development in social cognition is a relatively recent topic of study that has expanded dramatically over the past thirty years.

Research in this area has contributed a great deal to the current knowledge of children's understanding and reasoning about a number of social phenomena, situations and issues. For example, researchers have studied children's developing concepts about the self (Damon & Hart, 1982; Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979); about others (Lively & Bromley, 1973; Selman, 1980; Shantz, 1983; Sullivan, 1953); about children's concepts and reasoning involving moral issues (Kohlberg, 1976; Shweder et al, 1981; Piaget, 1965; Turiel, 1983; Walker, 1989); as well as about children's knowledge and reasoning regarding friendship (Berndt, 1981, 1982; Bigelow, 1982; Selman 1980). Similarly, other researchers have focused on children's understanding of more specific life events such as death and dying (Bluebond-Langer, 1977; Hoffman & Strauss, 1985; Kastenbaum, 1977; Kastenbaum & Aisenberg, 1972; Nagy, 1948; Speece & Brent, 1974; Stambrook & Parker, 1987). A rapidly growing body of work has focused on the area of children's response to and understanding of divorce (Addington, 1986; Cantrell, 1986; Hetherington, 1989; Kanoy, Cunningham, White & Adams, 1984; Kurdek, Blist & Siesky, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wyman et al, 1985). Interestingly enough, with only a handful of exceptions, researchers have not systematically investigated children's concepts of "happier" social life events such as

children's concepts of love and marriage.

Although the general topic of love has been an area of discussion and exploration by such people as Freud, Harlow, Fromm and Maslow, systematic research involving the topic of love has been only a recent endeavor (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984). Often an avoided topic, it has been an area relatively neglected by psychologists. Robert Sternberg of Yale University (1988), having recognized the often tacit importance accorded to love in adult relationships in our society, has argued for the obvious potential importance and relevance research in this area might have for many people's everyday adult lives. Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (1986) has defined three components; intimacy, passion and commitment. This theory has tried to contribute a broad basis for understanding the aspects of the love that is involved in close relationships.

Other definitions and theories of love have been proposed. Berscheid-Walster (1978) attempted to provide a distinction between romantic and compassionate love. Rubin (1973) derived a Love Scale using psychometric methods. Lee (1977) defined "a typology of styles of loving" which includes a) eros, a search for one whose physical attributes corresponds to an existing image held by the seeker; b) ludas, game like love; c) storge, developing affection and companionship; d) mania, obsession, jealousy, emotional intensity; and e) agape, altruistic love. More recently, Davis (1985) proposed a physical attraction cluster and a caring cluster. Shaver, Hazan and Bradshaw (1987) based their definitions and study of love on infant attachment theory developed by researchers such as Ainsworth, Bowlby, Bretherton and others. In

general however, there has been a reluctance on the part of researchers to investigate the topic of love. This may be in part, due to public attitudes that love should remain a mystery and not subject to empirical study. In 1975, Senator William Proxmire was critical of the National Science Foundation for using tax dollars to fund research on romantic attraction.

To date, the theories previously discussed as well as other studies in the area of love and marriage have concentrated on adult and college populations. The focus of these studies have concentrated on such topics as the success of and/or satisfaction with marriage (Coleman & Ganong, 1984; Holahan, 1984; Reedy et al, 1981; Rhodes, 1977); interpersonal attraction (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987; Rosenblatt & Greenberg, 1988); mate selection (Murstein, 1970; Salholtz, 1986, Winch, 1958); marital and romantic love relationships (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983; Berscheid & Walster, 1978; Doheny, 1992; Kurdek and Schmitt, 1986; Larson, 1988; Levinger, 1980; Peplau & Gordon, 1985; Rubin, 1973; Shaver & Hazan, 1985; Walster, 1971); impact of divorce, experienced during childhood, on perceptions of marriage and family life (Bloom et al, 1978; Carson & Pauly, 1990; Schwartz & Kaslow, 1985; Trovato, 1986), cultural differences in the awareness and definitions of love (Adler, 1989; Dion & Dion 1988; ) and most recently, the biological and chemical explanations for love (Bloch & Donnelly, 1993).

There appears to be societal expectations and theoretically based notions that love, and especially romantic love does not become a compelling developmental issue until a child reaches adolescence or young adulthood. Therefore, adolescents and young

adults have been the focus of studies investigating issues of love such as: attitudes and feelings about marriage, divorce and marriage roles (Catherall, 1987; Kinnaird & Gerrard, 1986 ); romantic notions and expectations or desires for marriage (Greenberg & Nay, 1982); and dating (Roscoe, Diana & Brooks, 1987) . While information about adolescent and adult perceptions of love and marriage are useful and interesting, a survey of the literature failed to turn up significant published studies extending this research to younger children.

When younger children have been studied, investigators have most often focused on children's concepts or responses to divorce or marital conflict. For example, some studies have attempted to understand effects of the divorce experience on younger children's expectations for their own future relationships and marriage (Kurdek & Siesky, 1980; Rosen, 1977; Wallerstein, 1985). Others have attempted to investigate the attitudes, perceptions and conceptions of divorce that children may have (Strangeland, Pellegrino & Lundholm, 1989; Warshak & Santrock, 1983).

One published study did attempt to investigate children as young as four years of age and their experiences with passionate love (Hatfield, Schmitz, Cornelius & Rapson, 1988). The investigators adapted the Passionate Love Scale (PLS), a love scale for measuring the experience of passionate love in adults, for use with children. This modified scale, renamed The Juvenile Love Scale (JLS), like the adult version, attempted to measure cognitive, physiological and behavior indications of longing to be with the loved one. Using a 9-point response scale, a series of 15 statements were read to the subject such as, "I feel like things would always be sad and gloomy if I had

to live without \_\_\_\_\_ forever." The investigation had two main premises. One, that as early as three or four years of age, children would be able to experience and describe their passionate feelings. Second, that from a young age, girls would begin to receive higher JLS scores than boys. Subjects ranged in age from 4 to 18 years, with 114 boys and 122 girls interviewed. It was concluded that the youngest and oldest children, in their study, obtained the highest JLS scores, while 12-year-old boys secured the lowest scores. The investigators also concluded that there were gender differences regarding passionate love which began early. After 6 years of age, girls generally obtained slightly higher JLS scores than did the boys.

In another, somewhat related study, investigators interviewed 25 children at 37 months (3-years-old), then again at 54 months of age (approximately 4-1/2-years-old) regarding their understanding and perceptions of family relationships (Bretherton, Prentiss & Ridgeway, 1990). The authors did not indicate the marital status of the families who were identified through newspaper birth announcements. The children's perceptions of family relationships were assessed by using an "attachment story-completion task." Five stories involving attachment related scenarios, such as spilled juice, hurt knee, monster in the bedroom, departure of parents and reunion with parents were narrated and acted out for the children using small family figures and props. The children were asked to complete the story. The children's responses as well as the physical placement of family figures in relation to each other were coded. Behaviors, including emotions were also coded. Children who completed the stories openly and developed endings in which parents were depicted as caring and the child as

competent were given positive scores. Negative scores were given if children did not address the story issues, could not provide resolutions or described odd or violent endings. Children's perceptions of four different family relationships were of interest to the authors: parent-child relationships; husband-wife relationships; role of Grandmother in the family, and the family as a system. The attachment story-completion task was administered at both 37 months and at 54 months of age. The authors concluded that as a group, the 37-month-old children understood the central issues presented in the five stories and that most were able to respond with appropriate resolutions. They also concluded that between 37 and 54 months of age, family roles were portrayed with increasing differentiation and with greater complexity of family interactions which were not directly suggested by the content of the story beginnings. Unfortunately, the investigators neither addressed the issue of possible influences by different marital situations nor did they seem to analyze their data with this possible influence taken into account.

Another study of young subjects attempted to explore children's perceptions of parents' marital interaction and child rearing behavior (Aquilino, 1986). One-hundred-and-twenty-six, 8- to 15-year-old boys and girls, all from intact, original two-parent families were investigated. The author noted that the dimensions of marriage to which children attend were not very well understood by researchers. Therefore, his study attempted to investigate children's perceptions of four aspects of marriage: a) expression of affection; b) companionship; c) tension; and d) marital power. The relationship between these factors and the perceptions of parental child



rearing was also of interest. Children's perception of their parents' marital adjustment was assessed by administering the revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) which used an affectional expression scale to measure the overt manifestation of love between the father and mother. Children's perceptions of their parents' child rearing behavior was assessed by the Cornell Parent Behavior Inventory (CPBI) which had three factors defining parental behavior: a) parental love and support versus rejection and hostility, b) discipline or overt control and c) covert or psychological control. The author concluded that children in his sample were capable of judging and reporting on issues involving parental control and parental marital interactions. Children in this study perceived marriage very positively with parents receiving high ratings for affectionate expression, companionship and egalitarianism and low ratings for marital tension. However, the largely positive views expressed by children in this study may have been a result of the fact that the sample excluded children who experienced severe marital tension characteristic of divorce. Unfortunately, independent confirmation of parental interactions were not obtained.

Three unpublished studies focusing on young children's concepts regarding love and/or marriage were located. Valeria Lovelace, a psychologist and director of research for Educational Television Workshops, was contacted after her interest regarding children's perceptions on love was identified through an APA publication (Landers, 1988). Through a personal communication, it was discovered that an upcoming Sesame Street episode planned to introduce two characters getting married. To plan this episode, Lovelace sought information on young children's level of

understanding of concepts related to love and marriage. She was unable to locate literature on the topics of love and marriage as it related to young children. Due to this gap she conducted her own pilot using 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds. Using a subject pool of 90 children, she devised a game in which a girl called Laurie could be seen doing nine different activities with a male character. For example, one scenario had Laurie and her companion eating ice-cream, another had Laurie and a different companion hugging, another kissing, another picking flowers and still another arguing. The children were then asked which man Laurie loved the most. Kissing, hugging and picking flowers were the top three responses offered by the children. Preliminary results of the pilot study indicated preschoolers were sensitive to certain highly stereotypical behaviors (e.g., picking flowers and kissing) as being important to a romantic relationship.

Also through personal communication, Elizabeth Mazur was contacted at the University of Michigan, who in an unpublished doctoral dissertation focused on children's developing understanding of various marital statuses (marriage, divorce, remarriage and stepparents), and the benefits and problems associated with each one. She interviewed 126 children in kindergarten, 2nd and 4th grade who lived within intact families, with single, divorced mothers or with remarried mothers. She presented children with a story line illustrated with paper dolls. She asked them questions regarding marriage, divorce, remarriage, stepparents, and the benefits, problems and reasons for these different marital situations. Her preliminary findings suggested that most of the children expected to marry and believed that overall, marriage was a positive experience. In addition, children in her study generally accepted divorce as a

viable solution to an unhappy marriage. Her data also suggested that a shift in children's attitudes toward divorce occurred between kindergarten and second grade. Older children were less likely to believe that being married means living "happily ever after."

Finally, another unpublished masters thesis by Daphne Elizabeth de Marneffe at University of California, Berkeley focused on children's developing understanding of family relationships as a function of being either from a divorced or intact family. She interviewed 28 subjects ranging from 6 to 12 years in age, using Selman's level sequence for interpersonal understanding. Although this study had serious methodological problems, for example an extremely small sample size, her results indicated children's interpersonal understanding increased with age and that children from divorced families scored lower on interpersonal understanding, using Selman's measure than did children from intact families.

Although the three described investigations attempted to explore children's understanding of marriage and marital situations, none focused specifically on romantic love as an important quality for marital relationships. Moreover, none of the foregoing studies assessed children's knowledge about other qualities necessary for a happy marriage. Given the absence of research in children's developing concepts of love and marriage, it seems that research into this area is both timely and significant. In brief, this thesis had the following purposes: First, this study attempted document, in detail, children's developing concepts about love and marriage thereby providing preliminary baseline data for children from 5 to 12 years of age regarding their knowledge about

love and marriage. Second, this study attempted to provide a theoretical conceptualization that may account for a developmental progression in children's concepts. It is proposed that development in these social cognitive domains should also be related to children's advances in cognition more generally. Hence, children more advanced on Piagetian measures (e.g., having attained concrete and/or formal operations), should understand and define love and marriage in more abstract ways than younger preoperational children. Third, this investigation attempted to identify other situational or individual variables that may influence children's concepts regarding love and marriage. In particular, three individual variables were of interest: parental marital status (divorced or intact), sex of the child (male or female), and the extent to which children reported having had discussions about love and marriage with their parents and friends.

Four hypotheses were of interest to this investigation. **Hypothesis 1:** It was expected that children's level of description, understanding, and awareness of the socially defined concepts of love would decrease in level of egocentrism and increase in detail and abstractness from 5 to 12 years of age. **Hypothesis 2:** It was expected that children's concepts regarding love would be positively related to their general level of cognitive development as assessed by a standard Piagetian conservation task.

**Hypothesis 3:** It was expected that children from original, intact families would view love and marriage more traditionally whereas children from divorced families would tend to be somewhat more negative in their views about marriage and possess greater awareness of factors related to marital disharmony or disillusion. **Hypothesis 4:** It

was expected that females would show greater interest in and more knowledge of concepts related to love and marriage than males.

With regard to hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2, children's concepts about love were expected to undergo significant developmental change from the preschool to later years. According to Piagetian theory, preoperational children, between 2 and 7 years of age are egocentric and lack complex reasoning skills. Consequently, they are not fully logical nor can they always justify their reasoning. Beginning from age 7 to age 11, the concrete operational child gradually begins to become capable of more complex and abstract ways of thinking and is likewise capable of understanding and manipulating perspectives other than their own. However, the concrete operator is still limited to concrete situations and may have difficulty with abstract or hypothetical situations that older formal operators can handle with greater ease (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Children at the concrete operational stage tend to be more aware of social and cultural cues although their perspective still tends to be rather narrow (Meyer, 1980; Rabben, 1950).

However, as children's general cognitive abilities continue to advance into the formal operational stage, the ability to comprehend more abstract or complex social and interpersonal situations should also improve. For example, Piagetian theory addressing moral development and children's understanding and judgments regarding complex concepts of fairness and justice incorporate such developmental profiles. Similarly, love is also a socially complex concept involving many aspects and dimensions in its definitions and the way in which it is perceived. Hence, it was

reasonable to expect that children's understanding of love would vary as a function of their overall level of cognitive development. This was not a new proposal insofar as level of cognitive development had been correlated with advances in other types of socially relevant concepts, such as children's developing understanding of pregnancy and birth (Bernstein & Cowan, 1975) and healthy children's concepts regarding death (Speece & Brent, 1984). Thus, it was expected that children's understanding of love would become increasingly less egocentric and more abstract as they progressed from preoperational to formal thought.

Although Piagetian theory does provide a foundation for general, developmental predictions, it does not account for individual differences that may influence concepts regarding love and marriage. A possible source of influence could involve children's direct experience) with love and marital relationships through their immediate family life. Abundant research in the area of divorce generally seemed to indicate that children from divorced families tended to experience greater difficulties in some areas of life including behavior and psychological distress (Allison & Furstenbert, 1989); adjustment and well being (Amato, 1987; Amato & Keith, 1991); self concept and marital expectations (Carson et al, 1987; Kinnaird & Gerrard, 1986); control of emotions (Chitnik et al, 1986; Kalter, 1987); and school performance (Guttman et al, 1987). As hypothesis 3 indicated, it was expected that children from families experiencing the disruptions characteristic of divorce might possess somewhat more negative or guarded attitudes regarding love and marriage than children from intact families.

Hypothesis 4 expected that children would also differ in their concepts regarding

love and marriage as a function of their gender. Research in the area of adolescent identity development indicated that females are more heavily socialized to depend on interpersonal relationships as critical to their identity formation. Males tended to rely more on occupation, political and/or religious decisions for their identity formation (Aries & Over, 1985; Birns, 1976; Fitch & Adams, 1983; Orlossky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973). According to Brehm (1992), a substantial amount of research show males and females as constructing their realities of love in very different terms. She also noted that females made finer discriminations about their feelings regarding love and romance. She concluded in her chapter discussing gender differences, that love appeared to be more salient to women than to men. She attributed this difference, in part, to the socialization practices that emphasize traditional roles of the woman as the loving care taker. She also noted that due to the economic reality of unequal wage earnings, falling in love could have far greater consequences for the future socioeconomic status of a woman than for a man. Based on such commentaries and research with young adults and adults in general, it was predicted that females, at even younger ages, could have somewhat more elaborated or well articulated concepts regarding love and marriage than males, due to the greater social pressures on females in this area.

In summary, this thesis attempted to systematically document children's developing concepts regarding love and marriage, determine if concepts of love were associated with age and with cognitive developments, and determine if gender and parents' marital status influenced their understanding of love and marriage.

## METHOD

### Subjects

One-hundred-and-fifty-four subjects from four age groups and both sexes were drawn from intact, two parent families and divorced families. The four age groups included 5- to 6-year-olds, 7- to 8-year-olds, 9- to 10-year-olds and 11- to 12-year-olds. A total of 33 females and 35 males from divorced families participated in the study. A total of 43 females and 43 males from intact, two-parent families participated in the study. Table 1 on the following page provides the mean age for age groups by marital status and sex of the child.

Subjects were recruited from a private elementary school, a YMCA after school program, through students attending psychology and child development classes and through summer recreation programs.



Table 1

Mean Ages of Children in Months from Divorced and Intact Families in  
the Four Age Groups Tested

Gender	Age Groups	Family Status	
		Divorced	Intact
Females	5 - 6	9F ( 74.0, <u>SD</u> = 5.86) <sup>a</sup>	12F ( 71.7, <u>SD</u> = 8.23)
	7 - 8	8F ( 94.4, <u>SD</u> = 6.50)	15F ( 98.5, <u>SD</u> = 6.23)
	9 - 10	8F (115.6, <u>SD</u> = 5.21)	8F (124.3, <u>SD</u> = 7.39)
	11 - 12	8F (140.7, <u>SD</u> = 5.34)	8F (140.3, <u>SD</u> = 7.80)
Males	5 - 6	8M ( 73.1, <u>SD</u> = 7.61)	12M ( 67.2, <u>SD</u> = 6.82)
	7 - 8	9M ( 92.3, <u>SD</u> = 5.32)	8M ( 93.3, <u>SD</u> = 4.93)
	9 - 10	10M (121.6, <u>SD</u> = 6.05)	9M (120.3, <u>SD</u> = 7.65)
	11 - 12	8M (146.2, <u>SD</u> = 7.13)	14M (140.8, <u>SD</u> = 8.02)

F = females M = males

<sup>a</sup> Number of subjects and mean age in months.

Materials, Tasks and Coding

Two major questionnaires were administered. One of the measures developed by Junn (1991) was the **Love, Marriage, Wedding Questionnaire (LMWQ)**. The LMWQ involved a standardized interview task comprised of approximately 35 items regarding love, marriage, dating and wedding concepts (see Appendix A). Children's

responses to each of these 35 items were further coded into several response categories. For the purpose of this thesis, analyses were focused on 10 items related to love concepts, and 11 items related to marriage concepts. Among the 10 items related to love concepts, 5 were designed to assess the level of abstractness in children's love concept; the remaining 5 items were used to obtain specific information about love.

Love Items -- Five items on the LMWQ assessed the level of abstractness in children's responses regarding love concepts. These five items were: **"What is love?"**; **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"**; **"What could you do or say when you love someone?"**; **"Think of the people you love and tell me why you love them."**; and **"How do you know you love someone?"**. Remaining items assessed more specific information about love. Among these more specific questions in the LMWQ, five items which were of interest to this thesis were: **"What are the different kinds of love?"**; **"Can love change or is love forever?"**; **"Do you ever talk to your parents about love?"**; **Do you ever talk to your friends about love?"**; and **"Do you know anyone your age who is in love with another boy or girl?"**.

The LMWQ began with the interviewer presenting a simple line drawing of a male and female couple embracing (see Figure 1 on the following page).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this item was to help children settle into the content of the interview. Rather than requiring children to respond immediately with specific definitions, a drawing was used to introduce the topic of love in a context more familiar to young children (visual

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, only heterosexual relations were investigated.

Figure 1: Line Drawing for Introduction to Love Related Questions of LMWQ



observation of a drawing versus interview questions). The child was asked simply to describe the picture. The 10 love related items of the LMWQ which were of interest to this thesis are described in more detail below.

For the questions, **"What is love?"** and **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"**, children's responses to both of the questions were coded in exactly the same way. Responses were coded for the absence or presence of each of the following 12 rank ordered response categories: a) mentioned an example of a loved person; b) mentioned "like" or "love" as part of definition; c) mentioned physical gestures such as hugs, kisses; d) mentioned helping or protecting; e) mentioned caring and being nice; f) mentioned relations between man and woman; g) mentioned the term "forever" in the definition; h) mentioned marriage and/or children; i) mentioned dating; j) mentioned wanting to be with the loved one; k) mentioned talking, having secrets or friendship; and l) mentioned respect, trust or faithfulness. The highest response category was also determined by classifying children's responses into four abstractness levels: 1) low abstractness; 2) mid-low abstractness; 3) mid-high abstractness and 4) high abstractness. Children's responses were considered to be low in abstractness if they provided responses from categories a) to c). Children's responses were considered to be mid-low in abstractness if they provided responses from categories d) to f). Responses were considered to be mid-high in abstractness if children provided responses from categories g) to i). Children's responses were considered to be high in abstractness if they provided responses from categories j) to l).

For the question, **"What could you do or say if you loved someone?"** children's

responses were coded for the absence or presence of each of the following four rank ordered response categories: a) concrete nice actions such as playing or giving; b) concrete affectionate actions such as hugs and kisses; c) verbal expressions and d) abstract emotional support such as listening or understanding. Children's responses were also rank ordered on a four level scale that ranged from concrete to abstract answers: 1) concrete nice actions; 2) concrete affectionate actions; 3) verbal expressions and 4) abstract emotional support.

For the question, "**Think of the people you love very much and tell me why?**", children's responses were coded for the absence or presence of each of the following nine rank ordered response categories: a) mentioned, "because he/she is my \_\_\_\_\_"; b) mentioned "like" or "love" in definition; c) mentioned hugs or kisses; d) mentioned familiarity; e) mentioned that the loved one gives or buys them things; f) mentioned loved one as nice; g) mentioned that loved one spent time with them; h) mentioned understanding and i) mentioned trust or respect. In order to ascertain the highest response category, children's responses were also classified into three abstractness levels: 1) low abstractness; 2) mid abstractness and 3) high abstractness. Children's responses were considered to be low in abstractness if they provided responses from categories a) to c). Children's responses were considered to be mid in abstractness if they provided responses from categories d) to f). Children's responses were considered to be high in abstractness if they provided responses from categories g) to i).

For the question, "**How do you know you love someone?**", children's responses

were coded for the absence or presence of two response categories: a) mentioned actions and behaviors and b) mentioned feelings and emotions. The highest response category was determined by classifying children's responses into either 1) concrete actions and behaviors or 2) abstract feelings and emotions.

Children were asked to respond with a "yes", "no" or "unsure" to the question, **"Do you think there are different kinds of love?"**. Children who responded that there were different kinds of love were asked to describe them. Their responses were coded for the presence or absence of the following five types of love: a) love for inanimate objects; b) love for pets; c) love for parents and/or other family members; d) love for friends; and e) romantic love.

For the question, **"Do you think love is forever, or can love for someone change?"**, children's responses were coded as "yes, love is forever"; "no, love can change"; or "unsure/don't know".

Finally children were asked the following three questions: **"Do you ever talk to your parents about love?"**; **"Do you ever talk to your friends about love?"** and **"Do you know anyone your age who is in love with another boy or girl?"**.

Children's responses were coded as "yes", "no" or "unsure/don't know".

Marriage Items-- The next area of importance to this thesis involved the section of the LMWQ which concentrated on concepts of marriage. Once again, children were introduced to this section of the LMWQ with a simple line drawing of a male and female dressed in wedding attire. (See Figure 2 on the following page). Children were asked to describe the picture in order to introduce the topic of marriage by means of a

context more familiar to young children (visual means through a drawing versus interview questions). The 11 questions regarding marriage concepts which were of interest to this thesis are described in detail below.

When asked the question, "**What is marriage?**" children's responses were coded for the presence or absence of six response categories: a) mentioned liking or loving each other; b) mentioned the term "forever"; c) mentioned helping each other; d) mentioned caring for each other; e) mentioned having children; and f) mentioned legal contract or agreement.

Children were asked, "**Who thinks more about getting married, men, women or both?**". Responses were coded as men, women, or both.

Children were asked, "**Do you think life changes for the better, worse or stays the same after someone gets married?**" Responses were coded as "better", "worse" or the "same".

Children were asked, "**What do you think makes a marriage happy?**". Children's responses could be categorized into 10 different groups. Children's responses were coded for the presence or absence of these 10 categories:

- a) mentioned hugs or kisses; b) mentioned caring, liking or loving; c) mentioned similarities; d) mentioned doing things together; e) mentioned helping or sharing;
- f) mentioned not arguing or fighting; g) mentioned children and/or family;
- h) mentioned having or buying a home; i) mentioned intimacy or talking; and
- j) mentioned trust or respect.

Children were then presented with a list of 12 qualities and were asked to rate how

Figure 2: Line Drawing for Introduction to Marriage Questions of LMWQ





important these qualities were to a happy marriage. Children were asked, "**How important is \_\_\_\_\_ to a happy marriage?**" with each of the following 12 items substituted for the blank: a) love; b) understanding; c) having a pet ; d) communication; e) trust; f) loyalty; g) having a job; h) common interests; i) sharing same ideas about God or religion; j) having children; k) respect ; and l) kissing and hugging.

Children rated the importance of these items using a 5-point Likert scale. Five line drawings depicting faces with different degrees of smiles and frowns were presented to the child (see Figure 3 on the following page). The ratings ranged from not important at all (1) to extremely important (5). If the child thought an item was extremely important for a happy marriage (5), he or she was asked to point to the face with the largest smile. If the item was quite important (4), the child was instructed to point to the face with a small smile. If the item was a little bit important (3), the neutral face was to be chosen. If the item was not very important (2), then the face with the small frown should be selected. Finally, if the child thought an item was not important at all (1) to a happy marriage, he or she was instructed to point to the face with the biggest frown. A pretest was administered to ensure the child understood how to indicate the ratings using the faces. Children were also asked if they understood what they were being asked to do. One hundred percent of the children responded affirmatively.

Children's responses to the question, "**What does it mean to be a good wife?**" were coded for either the presence or absence of the eight following response categories: a) mentioned "female" domestic chores such as cooking or cleaning;

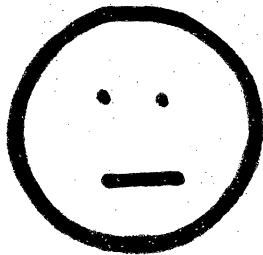
Figure 3: Figures for Rating Qualities of Happy Marriage



very, very or extremely important



pretty important or quite important



a little bit important



not very important



not important at all

b) mentioned bearing and raising children; c) mentioned buying husband gifts; d) mentioned being nice to the husband; e) mentioned having a job; f) mentioned physical gestures; g) mentioned stereotypical female traits such as not nagging; and h) mentioned respect or loyalty.

Children's responses to the question, "**What does it mean to be a good husband?**" were coded for either the presence or absence of the following eight response categories: a) mentioned "male" domestic chores such as yard work; b) mentioned helping to care for their children; c) mentioned buying gifts for the wife; d) mentioned being nice to the wife; e) mentioned having a job; f) mentioned physical affection; g) mentioned stereotypical male traits such as protecting his family, not making a mess, or coming home on time; and h) mentioned helping with "female" domestic chores such as cooking or cleaning.

Children were asked, "**Do you want to get married someday?**". Responses were coded as "yes", "no" or "unsure." In addition, they were asked to **explain why they would like to (or not like to) get married.** Children's responses were coded for the presence or absence of these nine response categories: a) mentioned companionship; b) mentioned having kids; c) mentioned physical affection such as hugs or kisses; d) mentioned buying home; e) mentioned doing things together; f) mentioned being taken care of by their spouse; g) mentioned loving or caring for someone; h) mentioned sharing their life with someone; and i) mentioned fear of divorce.

Children's responses to the question, "**How can you tell if someone is unhappily**

**married?"** were coded for the presence or absence of the following nine categories:

- a) mentioned being sad; b) mentioned fighting or arguing; c) mentioned get a divorce;
- d) mentioned doing things separately; e) mentioned not liking or hating each other
- f) mentioned not talking or communicating with one another; g) mentioned withdrawal of physical affection; h) mentioned loss of abstract emotional support such as respect or trust; and i) mentioned complaining in front of others about their spouse.

Children were asked, "**What may happen if two people are not happily married?"**. Responses to this question were coded for the presence or absence of the following four categories: a) mentioned getting a divorce or separating; b) mentioned disliking or hating each other; c) mentioned spousal abuse; and d) mentioned seeking counseling.

Children were asked, "**Have your parents ever told you about how they met and got married?"**. Children's responses were coded as "yes" or "no."

To assess each individual child's stage of cognitive development, the second part of the interview employed **Piagetian physical conservation-identity and conservation-volume tasks** (PCT). The PCT (see Appendix B), developed by Bernstein and Cowan (1975), consists of two major tasks, each with two parts. The PCT assumes Piaget's theory of development. The first task involved two identical balls of clay. The shape of one of the balls was changed from a sphere to a rod. The child was then asked if the two balls of clay still had the same amount of clay. They were asked to explain their answer. The child was then asked to determine if the rolled out piece of clay, broken in equal-sized links had the same amount of clay. Once again, the

child was asked to justify their answer. The second task involved placing two identical pieces of clay into two identical cups of water. The first ball of clay was dropped into the first cup of water. The child was then asked to predict the water level of the second cup, relative to the first cup and ball, if the second ball of clay were to be dropped into the second cup. Once again, subjects were asked to justify their answer. Finally, the second ball of clay was removed from the water and rolled out forming a different shape. The child was then asked to predict the rising water level that this piece of clay would cause, relative to the first cup and ball. Once again, an explanation was requested.

Piagetian conservation task scores, ranging from level 0 to level 6 were assigned after completion of the conservation identity and volume tasks. The different levels were assigned according to the children's ability to judge the equality of clay amounts, estimate height of water in a glass and the sophistication of their reasoning behind the answers given. Level 0 was assigned when children could not provide answers or all the answers were incorrect. Level 1 or preoperational stage was assigned when incorrect answers with perceptual explanations or correct answers with no explanations were given. Level 2 was assigned when satisfactory explanations on one but not both tasks were given by the children. Level 3 or concrete operations was assigned when conservation of amount in both tasks, with adequate explanations were provided, but the children were unable to conserve volume. Level 4 was assigned when correct predictions of water height with concrete explanations such as, "It will rise to the same height because it's the same amount." were given. Children received a Level 5 when

correct predictions and adequate explanations for only one of the two volume tasks were given. Level 6 or formal operations was assigned when a successful conservation of amount and volume existed and explanations reflected knowledge that volume was conserved despite the transformation in appearance.

In addition, parents were asked to read a brief cover letter, consent form and to complete a **Parent Demographic Questionnaire** (see Appendix C). This page requested various background information such as the parents' marital status, number of children in the family along with corresponding age and gender.

### General Procedure

Parental consent forms and cover letters briefly explaining the study were distributed to parents of the children involved in the study. Along with the consent form, participating parents were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire designed to collect demographic information about the child and parents. Data collected from the parents and children were kept completely confidential. One of three female experimenters interviewed each child individually. The interview lasted approximately 35 to 40 minutes. The order of the different measures were counterbalanced and randomly assigned across subjects. Both the parents and participating child were informed of their right to discontinue the interview at any time without penalty. The interview was tape recorded for a more accurate transcription at a later point in time. Parents interested in learning about the results of the study were given the opportunity to supply the experimenter with an address where a summary of results could be sent upon completion of the study.

## RESULTS

Responses from each subject for the love, dating, marriage and wedding questions (LMWQ) were coded into 224 response categories. Each child's performance on the Piagetian Conservation Task (PCT) was classified into six levels, as mentioned in the method section. For each subject, his or her family demographic data (e.g., gender, age, marital status of parents, number of children in the family, education of parents, ethnicity) were also recorded. Of the 154 sets of interview results, 30 (15%) were coded by two similarly trained, independent individuals working separately. For the 6,720 individual responses, the interrater reliability was .98.

For the purpose of this thesis, analyses were limited to a narrower subset of specific response categories related to the four hypotheses described in the introduction. A significance level of  $p = .05$  was adopted for the study.<sup>2</sup> Because of the limited prior research in this area, some contributory results, even though they are not significant, are reported.

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<sup>2</sup>It is recognized that the potential for an increase in the probability of making Type I errors, and the necessity for adjusting the significance level for each comparison when large numbers of analyses are conducted. However, because of the exploratory nature of the study, it was decided to accept this risk while keeping in mind the constraints associated with the decision. In those situations where the assumptions of  $X^2$  analysis were violated (i.e., expected frequency < 10 per cell for the 2 x 2 table), statistical analyses were not conducted. In the  $X^2$  tables, NA is used to denote "Not Analyzed."

### Concepts Regarding Love and Age Effects

Four age categories were used: 5- to 6-; 7- to 8-; 9- to 10-; and 11- to 12-year-olds. Spearman's rank order, one-tail correlational analysis for age and all five questions related to abstract love concepts resulted in significance. Once again, the five questions rank ordered for level of abstract concepts were: (1) **"What is love?"**; (2) **"What could you do or say when you really love someone?"**; (3) **"Think of the people you love and tell me why."**; (4) **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"**; and (5) **"How do you know you love someone?"**.

Children's responses to **"What is love?"** were positively correlated with age,  $r_s = 0.19$ ,  $p = .013$  indicating that with increasing age, children's definitions involved more abstract concepts. A significant, positive correlation was found for age and children's responses to the question, **"What could you do or say if you loved someone?"**,  $r_s = 0.23$ ,  $p = .003$  indicating that with increasing age, children's responses involved concepts such as verbal expressions or emotional support rather than just concrete actions. Age and responses to the question, **"Think of the people you love and tell me why."** were positively correlated,  $r_s = 0.23$ ,  $p = .002$  indicating that with increasing age, children's responses were based on more abstract emotional or psychological reasons. Finally, a significant, positive correlation was found for age and children's responses to the question, **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"**,  $r_s = 0.31$ ,  $p = .001$ , indicating that with increasing age definitions about romantic love became more abstract and emotionally based. A significant, positive correlation was found for age and children's responses to the question, **"How do you**



**know you love someone?"**,  $r_s = 0.28$ ,  $p = .001$ . The results suggested that with increasing age, children's ideas about how they knew they loved someone involved more abstract and emotionally based concepts. Results from the analyses indicated that with increasing age, children's definitions regarding love, romantic love, expressions of love, reasons for loving someone and ideas about how they knew they loved someone involved more abstract descriptions.

Spearman's rank order, one-tail correlational analyses were performed to assess the relationship between children's age and their responses to the questions, **"Do you ever talk to your friends about love?"** and **"Do you know anyone your age who is in love with another boy or girl?"** Both these questions were coded as "yes" (0) or "no" (1). The analyses did not indicate a significant relationship between age and the response type. However, with increasing age, more children tended to discuss topics concerning love with their friends. The results also indicated that with increasing age, children tended to notice more love related issues among their peers, as in noticing or knowing someone in love.

#### Intercorrelations Among Concepts Regarding Love

Spearman's rank order correlational analysis resulted in a positive significant correlation between children's responses to the questions, **"What is love?"** and **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"**,  $r_s = 0.30$ ,  $p < .001$ . Both these questions used the same 12 levels of low abstract to highly abstract responses. This result indicated that children who defined love in more abstract terms also defined romantic love in more abstract terms. A positive significant correlation also was

found between responses to the questions, **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"** and **"Think of all the people you love and tell me why."**,  $r_s = 0.28$ ,  $p < .01$ . This result suggested that children who defined romantic love in more abstract terms also gave more abstract reasons for loving someone. Analysis also revealed some relationship between the questions **"What is love?"** and **"Think of all the people you love and tell me why."**. Children who defined love in more abstract terms tended to also give more abstract reasons for loving someone.

Spearman's rank order, one-tail correlational analyses were performed between children's responses to the question, **"Do you ever talk to your parents about love?"** and responses to the question, **"Do you ever talk to your friends about love?"**. Analyses revealed that the responses to these questions were positively and significantly correlated,  $r_s = 0.21$ ,  $p < .01$ . This result indicated that more children who talked to their parents about love, also talked to their friends about love.

Chi-square analyses were performed between children's responses to the questions, **"Do you ever talk to your parents about love?"** and **"What is love?"**. Analyses revealed a nonsignificant relationship.

#### Concepts Regarding Love and Relation to Cognitive Development

Spearman's rank order, one-tail correlational analysis resulted in a significant, positive correlation between Piagetian task scores and age. Spearman's rank order, one-tail correlational analysis partialing out the factor of age also resulted in a significant positive correlation between Piagetian task scores and children's responses to the question, **"How do you know you love someone?"**. Some

relationship was found between children's levels of Piagetian task and their responses to three of the love related questions (rank ordered for level of abstract concepts): (1) **"What could you say or do when you really love someone?"**; (2) **"Think of all the people you love and tell me why."**; and (3) **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"**. Children who scored high on the Piagetian task also tended to provide more abstract concepts of love. On the other hand, the analysis indicated a nonsignificant correlation between Piagetian task scores and children's responses to the question, **"What is love?"**.

Children's Piagetian conservation task scores and age were positively correlated,  $r_s = 0.62$ ,  $p = .0001$ , indicating that with increasing age, children received higher levels of task scores on the Piagetian conservation tasks. Piagetian conservation task scores and responses to the question, **"How do you know you love someone?"**, were positively correlated,  $r_s = .16$ ,  $p = .04$  indicating that children performing at higher levels on the Piagetian tasks responded with more abstract concepts in defining ways of how they knew they loved someone.

Nonsignificant positive trends were found for children's scores on the Piagetian Conservation Task and their responses to the following three questions: (1) **"What could you do or say when you really love someone?"**, (2) **"Think of all the people you love and tell me why."**, and (3) **"What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?"**. The results indicated that children who scored higher on the PCT also gave more abstract answers to these questions.

### Concepts Regarding Love and Relation to Marital Status of Parents

There were no significant differences in response between children from intact and divorced families when asked the question, "**What is love?**". The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children from Intact versus DivorcedFamilies When Asked, "What is Love?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
loved person	NA			8.4 (13)	11.8 ( 8)	5.8 ( 5)
like or love	0.01	1	.93	58.4 (90)	58.8 (40)	32.6 (28)
hugs,kisses	NA			10.4 (16)	5.9 ( 4)	14.0 (12)
helping	NA			2.6 ( 4)	0.0 ( 0)	4.7 ( 4)
caring, nice	0.08	1	.78	31.2 (48)	32.4 (22)	30.2 (26)
relation between	NA			10.4 (16)	8.8 ( 6)	11.6 (10)
forever	NA			4.5 ( 7)	4.4 ( 3)	4.7 ( 4)
marriage,kids	0.99	1	.32	18.2 (28)	14.7 (10)	20.9 (18)
dating	NA			1.3 ( 2)	1.5 ( 1)	1.2 ( 1)
wanting to be with them	NA			3.9 ( 6)	2.9 ( 2)	4.7 ( 4)
talking, secrets	1.10	1	.30	13.0 (20)	16.2 (11)	10.5 ( 9)
respect, trust	NA			2.6 ( 4)	1.5 ( 1)	3.5 ( 3)

\*p&lt; .05 \*\*p&lt; .01

Table 3 displays the results of chi-square analyses for children's responses when asked, **"What could you do or say if you love someone?"**. The analyses yielded two nonsignificant trends in responses between children from divorced families versus intact families. There was a tendency for more children from intact families (34.9%) versus divorced families (23.5%) to mention more stereotypical physical affection such as hugging or kissing as ways of expressing love for someone. There was also a tendency for more children from intact families (73.2%) compared to divorced families (61.8%) to say "I love you." or "You're special." as an expression of love.

Table 3

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children From Intact versus Divorced

Families When Asked, "What Could You Do or Say If You Love Someone?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
concrete nice actions	0.95	1	.33	60.4 ( 93)	64.7 (44)	57.0 (49)
concrete physical gestures	2.34	1	.13	29.9 ( 46)	23.5 (16)	34.9 (30)
abstract verbal expression	2.31	1	.13	68.2 (105)	61.8 (42)	73.2 (63)
abstract emotional support	NA			5.2 ( 8)	8.8 ( 6)	2.3 ( 2)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

Results of chi-square analyses on children's responses when asked, "**Are there different kinds of love?**" are displayed on Table 4. There were no significant difference in responses between children from intact versus divorced families.

Table 4

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children from Intact versus DivorcedFamilies When Asked, "Are There Different Kinds of Love?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
yes, different	0.03	1	.88	81.2 (125)	79.4 (54)	82.6 (71)
object love	0.00	1	1.00	11.8 ( 18)	11.8 ( 8)	11.6 (10)
pet love	NA			7.1 ( 11)	11.9 ( 8)	3.5 ( 3)
parent/family love	0.002	1	.97	22.2 ( 34)	22.1 (15)	22.1 (19)
friend love	0.02	1	.88	15.7 ( 24)	16.2 (11)	15.1 (13)
romantic love	0.53	1	.47	34.9 ( 54)	30.9 (21)	36.1 (31)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

Chi-square analyses on children's responses to, "**Think of the people you love and tell me why.**" yielded two nonsignificant trends in the responses of children from divorced versus intact families (see Table 5). More children from intact families tended to mention an example of a loved person ( i.e., "Because he/she is my dad/mom.") when asked why do you love someone (30.2%) than children from divorced families (17.6%). On the other hand, more children from divorced families tended to mention being nice (e.g., playing or helping) as a reason for loving someone (86.8%), as compared to children from intact families (75.6%).



Table 5

Chi-square Values for Responses by Children From Intact versus DivorcedFamilies When Asked, "Why Do You Love Someone?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
loved person	3.24	1	.07	22.7 ( 35)	17.7 (12)	30.2 (26)
like or love	1.79	1	.18	22.7 ( 35)	17.7 (12)	26.7 (23)
physical gestures	NA			3.2 ( 5)	1.5 ( 1)	4.7 ( 4)
familiarity	1.67	1	.20	11.0 ( 17)	14.7 (10)	8.1 ( 7)
gives, buys	0.32	1	.57	28.6 ( 44)	30.9 (21)	26.7 (23)
nice	3.03	1	.08	80.5 (124)	86.8 (59)	75.6 (65)
spends time with	0.01	1	.94	13.0 ( 20)	13.2 ( 9)	12.8 (11)
understands	NA			11.0 ( 17)	4.4 ( 3)	16.3 (14)
respect, trust	NA			5.8 ( 9)	7.4 ( 5)	4.7 ( 4)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

The question, "Is love forever or can love change?" initially had three possible responses: "yes, love is forever"; "no, love can change"; and "unsure". For the analyses, responses of "yes, love is forever" were computed as yes. Responses of "no, love can change" and "unsure" were combined and computed as a no response. There

were no significant differences in the responses between children from intact versus divorced families. Overall 19.9% of the children thought love was forever.

Table 6 displays the analyses for the children's responses to the question, "**What is 'romantic love' or 'true love'?**". There were no significant differences between the responses of children from divorced versus intact families for this question.

Table 6

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children From Intact versus Divorced

Families When Asked "What is Romantic Love?"

Response	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
like or love	0.10	1	.75	38.3 (59)	39.7 (27)	37.2 (32)
physical gestures	NA			8.4 (13)	11.8 ( 8)	5.8 ( 5)
helping, protecting	NA			0.6 ( 1)	0.0 ( 0)	1.2 ( 1)
caring, nice	NA			8.4 (13)	10.3 ( 7)	7.0 ( 6)
relations between men and women	1.05	1	.59	11.7 (18)	13.2 ( 9)	10.5 ( 9)
forever	NA			7.1 (11)	5.9 ( 4)	8.1 ( 7)
marriage, kids	NA			9.7 (15)	5.9 ( 4)	12.8 (11)
dating	NA			9.7 (15)	10.3 ( 7)	9.3 ( 8)
wanting to be with	NA			5.8 ( 9)	7.4 ( 5)	4.7 ( 4)
talking, secrets	NA			0.6 ( 1)	0.0 ( 0)	1.2 ( 1)
respect, trust	NA			3.2 ( 5)	2.9 ( 2)	3.5 ( 3)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

When asked if they **knew someone their age in love with someone else**, 58.5% of the children responded affirmatively. However, there were no significant differences in response to this question between children from divorced and intact families.

When children were asked **how life changed after marriage**, 47.6% responded that life changed for the better, 10.3% responded that it changed for the worse, and 42.1% responded that life stayed the same. Overall, these responses were not significantly different for children from divorced versus intact families.

Table 7 displays the results of chi-square analyses on responses for children from intact versus divorced families when asked, "**What makes a happy marriage?**". There were no significant differences in responses between children from divorced and intact homes.

Table 7

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children from Intact versus DivorcedFamilies When Asked, "What Makes a Marriage Happy?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
physical gestures	NA	--	--	5.8 ( 9)	1.5 ( 1)	9.3 ( 8)
caring, loving	0.59	1	.44	36.4 (56)	39.7 (27)	33.7 (29)
similarities	NA	--	--	3.9 ( 6)	4.4 ( 3)	3.5 ( 3)
doing together	NA	--	--	5.8 ( 9)	5.9 ( 4)	5.8 ( 5)
helping	NA	--	--	8.4 (13)	4.4 ( 3)	11.6 (10)
no fighting	NA			12.3 (19)	17.6 (12)	8.1 ( 7)
kids/family	0.23	1	.63	11.7 (18)	10.3 ( 7)	12.8 (11)
home	NA			1.9 ( 3)	2.9 ( 2)	1.2 ( 1)
talking	NA			4.5 ( 7)	2.9 ( 2)	5.8 ( 5)
respect, freedom	NA			7.1 (11)	8.8 ( 6)	5.8 ( 5)

\*p&lt; .05 \*\*p&lt; .01

Independent-groups t-tests, comparing the responses of children from intact and divorced families, were conducted for the ratings of importance for each of the 12 items concerning a happy marriage. Each of the 12 items was rated on a scale which

ranged from not important at all (1) to extremely important (5). No significant differences between family types were found for any of the 12 items. However, the children from intact homes tended to rate the quality of love as slightly more important to a happy marriage ( $M = 4.87$ ) than did children from divorced homes ( $M = 4.72$ ). On the other hand, children from divorced homes tended to rate communication as slightly more important than children from intact homes ( $M = 4.28$  vs.  $M = 4.01$ ).

Table 8

T-Test Values for Responses by Children From Intact versus DivorcedFamilies When Asked to Rate Items of Happy Marriage

Response	t	df	p-value	Mean Ratings		
				Overall	Divorced	Intact
love	1.89	153	.06	4.81	4.72	4.87
communication	1.60	152	.11	4.13	4.28	4.01
understanding	1.32	152	.19	4.23	4.13	4.31
pets	0.36	153	.72	2.92	2.96	2.88
trust	1.08	152	.29	4.26	4.38	4.16
loyalty	.027	148	.79	4.36	4.34	4.38
financial security/ having a job	0.21	152	.83	4.21	4.19	4.22
common interest	0.13	151	.90	4.27	4.28	4.26
same religion	0.14	151	.90	3.97	3.99	3.96
having children	1.18	152	.24	3.99	4.12	3.89
respect	0.71	152	.48	4.44	4.50	4.39
physical gestures	1.00	152	.32	3.97	3.87	4.06

\*p&lt; .05 \*\*p&lt; .01

As Table 9 displays, chi-square analyses performed on children's responses to the

question, "**What does it mean to be a good wife?**", resulted in no significant differences in responses between children from divorced and intact homes. However, more children from divorced families (32.4%) than children from intact families (20.9%) tended to mention that a good wife was someone who was nice to her husband (e.g. giving surprises).



Table 9

Chi-Square Values for Children from Intact versus Divorced FamiliesWhen Asked, "What Does it Mean to be a Good Wife?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
female chores	0.32	1	.58	42.4 (65)	39.7 (27)	44.2 (38)
raising kids	0.36	1	.55	13.6 (21)	11.8 ( 8)	15.1 (13)
giving gifts	0.01	1	.94	14.9 (23)	14.7 (10)	15.1 (13)
being nice	2.58	1	.11	30.0 (40)	32.4 (22)	20.9 (18)
job	NA			5.2 ( 8)	7.4 ( 5)	3.5 ( 3)
physical gestures	NA			5.8 ( 9)	4.4 ( 3)	7.0 ( 6)
female stereotype	NA			7.8 (12)	7.4 ( 5)	8.1 ( 7)
respect, loyalty	0.47	1	.49	20.1 (31)	2.9 ( 2)	22.1 (19)

\*p&lt; .05 \*\*p&lt; .01

Chi-square analyses revealed that the responses between children from divorced versus intact families when asked, "**What does it mean to be a good husband?**", were nonsignificant. However, more children from divorced families (39.7%) tended to mention that a good husband helped his wife with domestic chores (such as cooking or cleaning) than children from intact homes (27.9%)

Table 10

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children From Intact versus DivorcedFamilies When Asked, "What Does it Mean to be a Good Husband?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
"male" chores	NA			4.5 ( 7)	1.5 ( 1)	7.0 ( 6)
help with kids	NA			7.1 (11)	7.3 ( 5)	7.0 ( 6)
buying gifts	0.21	1	.65	25.3 (39)	23.5 (16)	26.7 (23)
being nice	0.13	1	.73	33.8 (52)	35.3 (24)	32.6 (28)
job	0.56	1	.45	18.8 (29)	16.2 (11)	20.9 (18)
physical gestures	NA			10.4 (16)	10.3 ( 7)	10.5 ( 9)
male stereotype	NA			7.8 (12)	2.9 ( 2)	11.6 (10)
respect, loyalty	1.16	1	.28	15.6 (24)	19.1 (13)	12.8 (11)
"female" chores	2.39	1	.12	33.1 (51)	39.7 (27)	27.9 (24)

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

There was a significant difference in responses between children from intact homes and children from divorced homes when asked **if they wanted to marry someday**,  $X^2(1, N = 154) = 4.14, p < .05$ . More children from intact families (76%) than children from divorced families (60%) responded "yes" to this question. This analysis was done

by combining the "no" and "unsure" responses into one response category (ambivalence toward marriage). However, when a chi-square analysis was performed by including only the "yes" and "no" responses (i.e., excluding the "unsure" response), no significant difference was found. As can be seen from Table 11, more children from divorced families (25%) were unsure about the prospects of marriage than children from intact families (9%).

Table 11

Responses by Children from Intact versus Divorced Families When Asked, "Do You Want to Marry Someday?"

Marital Status	Actual Number of Responses		
	Yes%	No%	Unsure%
Intact	65 (76%)	13 (15%)	8 ( 9%)
Divorced	41 (60%)	10 (15%)	17 (25%)

An independent-groups t-test, comparing the responses given by children from intact and divorced families to the question, "**At what age would you like to marry?**" was conducted. The overall average age at which children most wanted to marry was 23.7 years. No significant difference was found between children from the intact families and those from divorced families.

Table 12 displays the results of chi-square analyses on children's responses when asked **why they did or did not want to marry**. No significant difference was found

between the answers given by children from intact versus divorced families. However, more children from intact families tended to report "having children" as a reason to marry (23.3%) than children from divorced homes (13.2%).

Table 12

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children from Intact versus Divorced Families When Asked Why They Did or Did Not Want to Marry

Reason	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
companionship	0.21	1	.65	17.5 (27)	19.1 (13)	16.3 (14)
kids	2.49	1	.11	18.8 (29)	13.2 ( 9)	23.3 (20)
buy home	NA			2.6 ( 4)	1.5 ( 1)	3.5 ( 3)
do together	NA			3.9 ( 6)	1.5 ( 1)	5.8 ( 5)
taken care of	NA			3.9 ( 6)	2.9 ( 2)	4.6 ( 4)
love/care	0.28	1	.60	14.9 (23)	13.2 ( 9)	16.3 (14)
share life	NA			4.5 ( 7)	2.9 ( 2)	5.8 ( 5)
fear of divorce	NA			7.1 (11)	7.3 ( 5)	7.0 ( 6)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

Chi-square analyses were performed examining the differences in response of children from divorced versus intact families to the question, "**How can you tell if**

**someone is unhappily married?"**. Again, no significant difference was found between the answers given by children from intact versus divorced homes. However, more children from intact families mentioned fighting or arguing as an indication of an unhappy marriage (41.9%) than children from divorced families (29.4%). More children from intact families also mentioned divorce as an indication of an unhappy marriage (12.8%) than did children from divorced families (4.4%). (See Table 13.)

Table 13

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children from Intact versus DivorcedFamilies When Asked, "How Can You Tell if Someone is Unhappily Married?"

Reason	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
sad	0.74	1	.39	16.2 (25)	19.1 (13)	13.9 (12)
fight/argue	2.54	1	.11	36.4 (56)	29.4 (20)	41.9 (36)
divorce	3.23	1	.07	9.1 (14)	4.4 ( 3)	12.8 (11)
separate ways	1.12	1	.29	14.3 (22)	17.7 (12)	11.6 (10)
don't like/hate	0.25	1	.62	18.8 (29)	20.6 (14)	17.4 (15)
don't talk	0.02	1	.90	13.6 (21)	13.2 ( 9)	13.9 (12)
no physical	NA			1.3 ( 2)	2.9 ( 2)	0.0 ( 0)
no trust, loyalty	NA			5.2 ( 8)	7.3 ( 5)	3.5 ( 3)
criticizes	NA			5.2 ( 8)	4.4 ( 3)	5.8 ( 5)

\*p&lt; .05 \*\*p&lt; .01

As Table 14 displays, a chi-square analysis was performed examining the difference in the response of children from intact versus divorced families for the question, **"What may happen if someone is unhappily married?"**. No significant difference was found in responses between the divorced and intact groups for the mention of separating or divorcing as something that may happen if two people are

unhappily married. Other remaining responses could not be analyzed due to the small expected frequencies.

Table 14

Chi-Square Values for Responses by Children from Intact versus Divorced

Families When Asked, "What May Happen if Unhappily Married?"

Reason	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Divorced N = 68	Intact N = 86
separate/divorce	0.0001	1	.99	72.1 (111)	72.1 (49)	72.1 (62)
dislike/hate	NA			8.4 ( 13)	11.8 ( 8)	5.8 ( 5)
abuse	NA			1.3 ( 2)	1.5 ( 1)	1.2 ( 1)
counseling	NA			3.2 ( 5)	2.9 ( 2)	3.5 ( 3)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

Chi-square analyses further revealed a nonsignificant difference in responses between children from divorced versus intact families, when asked **if they talked to parents about love**. Overall, slightly over one-third of the children from both divorced and intact families (38.8%) participated in discussions concerning topics of love with one or both of their parents.

Nonsignificant results were obtained for responses between children from divorced and intact families when asked, **"Do you talk to your friends about love?"**. Overall,

37.7% of the children responded that they did discuss topics concerning love with their friends.

Chi-square analyses revealed nonsignificant differences in the responses between children from divorced versus intact families when asked, "**Do you know someone your age in love?**". Overall, 58.8% of the children responded that they did know someone their own age in love.

Responses between children from divorced versus intact families were significantly different for the question, "**Have your parents ever told you about how they got married?**",  $X^2(1, N = 154) = 5.70, p = .02$ . More children from intact homes reported having had a conversation with one or both parents about how their parents met and married (61.2%) than did children from divorced homes (41.5%).

#### Concepts Regarding Love and Gender Effects

Table 15 on the following page displays the results of the children's responses to "**What is love?**". Chi-square analyses revealed no significant differences in the responses between boys and girls.



Table 15

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What is Love?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
loved person	NA			8.4 (13)	6.4 ( 5)	10.5 ( 8)
like or love	0.02	1	.89	58.4 (90)	59.0 (46)	57.9 ( 8)
hugs,kisses	NA			10.4 (16)	5.1 ( 4)	15.8 (12)
helping	NA			2.6 (4)	1.3 ( 1)	3.9 ( 3)
nice,caring	1.33	1	.24	31.2 (48)	26.9 (21)	35.5 (27)
relations between	1.00	1	.31	10.4 (16)	12.8 (10)	7.9 ( 6)
forever	NA			4.5 ( 7)	2.6 ( 2)	6.6 ( 5)
kids	0.01	1	.93	18.2 (28)	17.9 (14)	18.4 (14)
dating	NA			1.3 ( 2)	0.0 ( 0)	2.6 ( 2)
be with	NA			3.9 ( 6)	5.1 ( 4)	2.6 ( 2)
talking, secrets	1.89	1	.17	14.3 (22)	16.7 (13)	11.8 ( 9)
respect, trust	NA			2.6 ( 4)	2.6 ( 2)	2.6 ( 2)

\*p&lt; .05 \*\*p&lt; .01

Chi-square analyses on the responses to the question, **"What could you say or do when you really love someone?"** are displayed on Table 16. There was a significant

difference between boys and girls in mentioning affectionate actions such as hugs or kisses,  $X^2(1, N = 154) = 4.92, p < .05$ . More girls mentioned affectionate actions such as hugs or kisses as means of expressing love to someone (38.2%) than did boys (21.8%). Even though the difference was not significant, we found that, in general, there were more boys (66.7%) than girls (53%) who defined expressions of love in terms of concrete nice actions such as playing or sharing.

Table 16

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What Could You Do or Say When You Really Love Someone?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
concrete nice actions	2.60	1	.11	60.4 (93)	66.7 (52)	53.9 (41)
physical gestures	4.92	1	.01**	29.9 (46)	21.8 (17)	38.2 (29)
verbal expression	0.17	1	.68	68.2 (105)	66.7 (52)	69.7 (53)
abstract emotional support	NA			5.2 ( 8)	5.1 ( 4)	5.3 ( 4)

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Table 17 displays the results of chi-square analyses on children's responses to, "What different kinds of love are there?". Overall, about 81% of the children

believed there were different kinds of love. There was a significant difference between boys and girls in their mentioning of love for parent and/or other family members,  $X^2(1, N = 154) = 3.95, p < .05$ . Significantly more girls reported love for parents and/or other family members (28.9%) than did boys (15.6%). Analyses further revealed a significant gender difference in mentioning the response of love for friends as another type of love,  $X^2(1, N = 78 \text{ males}, N = 76 \text{ females}) = 5.10, p < .05$ . More girls reported love for friends as type of love (22.4%) than did boys (9.1%).

Table 17

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses To "Are There Different Kinds What of Love?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
object love	0.22	1	.64	11.7 (18)	12.8 (10)	10.5 ( 8)
pet love	NA			7.1 (11)	5.1 ( 4)	9.2 ( 7)
parent/family	3.95	1	.05*	22.1 (34)	15.4 (12)	28.9 (22)
friend love	5.10	1	.03*	15.6 (24)	9.0 ( 7)	22.4 (17)
romantic love	0.55	1	.46	33.8 (52)	30.8 (24)	36.8 (28)

\*p < .05 \*\*p < .01

Responses to the question, "Is love forever or can love change?" were coded as "yes, love is forever", "no, love can change" or "unsure." For the analysis, responses of "unsure" were not included because of their very small frequency and because only definitive responses to the question were of interest. In general, there were no significant differences between boys and girls in their responses to the question, "Is love forever?". (See Table 18 below.)

Table 18

Responses to "Is Love Forever?" as a Function of Gender

Gender	Actual Number of Responses and %		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)
Males	63 (81%)	13 (17%)	2 (2%)
Females	58 (76%)	17 (23%)	1 (1%)

As Table 19 displays, chi-square analyses revealed no significant difference in responses between boys and girls to the question, "What is romantic love?".

Table 19

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What is Romantic Love?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
loved person	NA			1.9 ( 3)	2.6 ( 2)	1.3 ( 1)
like or love	0.39	1	.53	38.3 (59)	35.9 (28)	40.8 (31)
hugs,kisses	NA			8.4 (13)	3.8 ( 3)	13.2 (10)
helping	NA			0.6 ( 1)	0.0 ( 0)	1.3 ( 1)
nice,caring	NA			8.4 (13)	5.1 ( 4)	11.8 ( 9)
forever	NA			7.1 (11)	9.0 ( 7)	5.3 ( 4)
kids	NA			9.7 (15)	7.7 ( 6)	11.8 ( 9)
dating	NA			9.7 (15)	7.7 ( 6)	11.8 ( 9)
be with	NA			5.8 ( 9)	3.8 ( 3)	7.9 ( 6)
talking, secrets	NA			0.6 ( 1)	1.3 ( 1)	0.0 ( 0)
respect, trust	NA			3.2 ( 5)	5.1 ( 4)	1.3 ( 1)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

Chi-square analyses were performed examining differences in response between boys and girls regarding the question, "**What is marriage?**". As can be seen from Table 20, no significant gender differences were detected. However, more girls

(17.1%) tended to mention the nurturing concepts of caring or helping in defining marriage than did boys (9%).

Table 20

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What is Marriage?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
be together, love	0.98	1	.32	70.8 (109)	74.4 (58)	67.1 (51)
forever	0.01	1	.99	33.8 ( 52)	33.3 (26)	34.2 (26)
helping, caring	2.25	1	.13	13.0 ( 20)	9.0 ( 7)	17.1 (13)
kids	0.80	1	.37	13.0 ( 20)	15.4 (12)	10.5 ( 8)
contract, bond	NA			12.3 (19)	16.7 (13)	7.9 ( 6)

\*p < .05    \*\*p < .01

Chi-square analyses indicated no significant difference in responses between boys and girls in their mention of caring or being nice when asked, "**What makes a happy marriage?**". The other response categories were not analyzed because expected frequencies were too small. (See Table 21 on the following page.)

Table 21

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What  
Makes a Happy Marriage?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
physical gestures	NA			5.8 ( 9)	7.7 ( 6)	3.9 ( 3)
caring, nice	0.01	1	.90	36.4 (56)	35.9 (28)	36.8 (28)
similarities	NA			3.9 ( 6)	3.8 ( 3)	3.9 ( 3)
doing things together	NA			1.7( 9)	5.1 ( 4)	6.4 ( 5)
helping, sharing	NA			8.4 (13)	6.4 ( 5)	10.5 ( 8)
no arguing	NA			12.3 (19)	10.3 ( 8)	14.5 (11)
having family	NA			11.7 (18)	9.0 ( 7)	14.5 (11)
having home	NA			1.9 ( 3)	2.6 ( 2)	1.3 ( 1)
talking, intimacy	NA			4.5 ( 7)	6.4 ( 5)	2.6 ( 2)
respect, freedom	NA			7.1 (11)	6.4 ( 5)	7.9 ( 6)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

Table 22 displays the results of chi-square analyses on children's responses to the question, **"What does it mean to be a good wife?"**. There was a significant

gender difference in defining a good wife as being nice or doing nice things for her husband,  $X^2(1, N = 154) = 7.12, p < .01$ . Significantly more girls mentioned this characteristic for being a good wife (36%) than did the boys (17%).

Table 22

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What Does it Mean to be a Good Wife?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
"female" chores	0.39	1	.53	42.2 (65)	39.7 (31)	44.7 (34)
raising kids	0.03	1	.86	13.6 (21)	14.1 (11)	13.2 (10)
buying gifts	0.37	1	.54	14.9 (23)	16.7 (13)	13.2 (10)
being nice	7.12	1	.01**	26.0 (40)	16.7 (13)	35.5 (27)
job	NA			5.2 ( 8)	5.1 ( 4)	5.3 ( 4)
physical gestures	NA			5.8 ( 9)	7.7 ( 6)	3.9 ( 3)
female stereotype	NA			7.8 (12)	6.4 ( 5)	9.2 ( 7)
loyalty, respect	2.21	1	.14	20.1 (31)	15.4 (12)	25.0 (19)

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Chi-square analyses also revealed significant gender differences in children's responses to the question, "**What does it mean to be a good husband?**". These



results are displayed on Table 23. A significant difference was found between boys and girls in defining good husbands as someone who was nice or did nice things for his wife,  $X^2(1, N = 154) = 8.07, p < .01$ . More girls mentioned this characteristic as a quality of a good husband (44.7%) than did the boys (23%).

In general, more boys (24%) than girls (13%) tended to mention that a good husband was someone who had a job and provided economic support to the family.

Table 23

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What Does it Mean to be a Good Husband?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
"male" chores	NA			4.5 ( 7)	6.4 ( 5)	2.6 ( 2)
caring for kids	NA			7.1 (11)	5.1 ( 4)	9.2 ( 7)
buying gifts	0.69	1	.41	25.3 (39)	28.2 (22)	22.4 (17)
being nice	8.07	1	.01**	33.8 (52)	23.1 (18)	44.7 (34)
job	3.16	1	.07	18.8 (29)	24.4 (19)	13.2 (10)
physical gestures	NA			10.4 (16)	9.0 ( 7)	11.8 ( 9)
male stereotype	NA			7.8 (12)	12.8 (10)	2.6 ( 2)
loyalty, respect	0.26	1	.61	15.6 (24)	14.1 (11)	17.1 (13)
help with chores	0.08	1	.78	33.1 (51)	32.1 (25)	34.2 (26)

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

When children were asked **if they wanted to get married someday**, there was a significant gender difference,  $X^2(2, N = 154) = 5.86, p < .05$ . Significantly more boys expressed a desire not wanting to marry (20.5%) than did the girls (9.2%). (See Table 24 on the following page.)

Table 24

Percentage of Response to "Do You Want to Marry Someday?" as

a Function of Gender

	Actual Number of Responses and %		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)
Females	59 (77.6%)	7 ( 9.2%)	10 (13.2%)
Males	47 (60.3%)	16 (20.5%)	15 (19.2%)

Chi-square analyses on children's reasons for wanting to (or not wanting to) get married are displayed in Table 25. There was one significant difference: more girls mentioned having children as a reason for wanting to get married someday (26.3%) than did boys (11.5%),  $X^2(1, N = 154) = 5.50, p < .05$ .

Table 25

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Reasons for Wanting to andNot Wanting to Marry.

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
companionship	0.50	1	.48	17.5 (27)	15.4 (12)	19.7 (15)
children	5.50	1	.05 *	18.8 (29)	11.5 ( 9)	26.3 (20)
buy home	NA			2.6 ( 4)	3.8 ( 3)	1.3 ( 1)
do things together	NA			3.9 ( 6)	2.6 ( 2)	5.3 ( 4)
taken care of	NA			3.9 ( 6)	2.6 ( 2)	5.3 ( 4)
love, care	0.09	1	.77	14.9 (23)	14.1 (11)	15.8 (12)
share life	NA			4.5 ( 7)	6.4 ( 5)	2.6 ( 2)
fear of divorce	NA			7.1 (11)	5.1 ( 4)	9.2 ( 7)

\*p< .05 \*\*p< .01

Chi-square analyses revealed no significant differences between boys and girls in their responses to the question, "**How can you tell if someone is unhappily married?**". The results are summarized in Table 26 on the following page.

Table 26

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "How Can You Tell if Someone Is Unhappily Married?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
sad	0.34	1	.56	16.2 (25)	17.9 (14)	14.5 (11)
fight	0.63	1	.43	36.4 (56)	33.3 (26)	39.5 (30)
divorce	NA			9.1 (14)	6.4 ( 5)	11.8 ( 9)
do things separately	0.97	1	.32	14.3 (22)	11.5 ( 9)	17.1 (13)
hate	0.48	1	.49	18.8 (29)	16.7 (13)	21.0 (16)
don't talk	0.59	1	.44	13.6 (21)	11.5 ( 9)	15.8 (12)
no physical gestures	2.08	1	.15	1.3 ( 2)	2.6 ( 2)	0.0 ( 0)
loss of abstract support	NA			5.2 ( 8)	3.8 ( 3)	6.6 ( 5)
criticizes	NA			5.2 ( 8)	5.1 ( 4)	5.3 ( 4)

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Chi-square analyses revealed no significant differences between boys and girls in their responses to the question, "**What may happen if two people are not happily married?**". The results are illustrated in Table 27 on the following page.

Table 27

Chi-Square Values for Gender and Responses to "What MayHappen if Two People Are Unhappily Married?"

Response	$X^2$	df	p-value	Percentage %		
				Overall N = 154	Males N = 78	Females N = 76
divorce	1.34	1	.25	72.1 (111)	67.9 (53)	76.3 (58)
dislike	NA			8.4 ( 13)	7.7 ( 6)	9.2 ( 7)
abuse	NA			1.3 ( 2)	1.3 ( 1)	1.3 ( 1)
counseling	NA			3.2 ( 5)	2.5 ( 2)	3.9 ( 3)

\*p&lt; .05 \*\*p&lt; .01

Chi-Square analyses revealed nonsignificant results for responses between boys and girls when asked, "**Do you talk to your parents about love?**". Overall, 38.3% of the children responded that they did talk to their parents about love. Further analyses revealed nonsignificant differences for responses between boys and girls to the question, "**Have your parents ever told you about how they met and got married?**". Overall, 51.3% of the children responded that their parents did talk to them about how they met and were married. A significant gender difference was detected in children's responses to the question, "**Do you talk to your friends about love?**",  $X^2 ( 1, N = 154) = 7.76, p < .005$ . Significantly more girls (48.7%) indicated

that they engaged in discussions with their friends about love related topics than did the boys (26.9%). For the question, "**Do you know anyone your age in love?**", responses between boys and girls were not significantly different. Overall, 56.5% of the children replied that they did know someone their age in love.

## DISCUSSION

The current thesis provided several important findings concerning children's development of the concepts of love and marriage. Although many results were not statistically significant as we predicted, they reflected interesting patterns that deserve some attention and discussion.

### Concepts Regarding Love and Age Effects

The results indicated that children's level of description and understanding of socially defined concepts of love did increase in sophistication as a function of age. In accordance with hypothesis 1, it was found that with increasing age more children incorporated abstract responses such as emotional support and closeness into their definitions of love, definitions of romantic love, concepts of how one could express love to another, reasons for loving someone and concepts of how you knew that you loved someone.

The results also indicated that with increasing age, more children tended to engage in discussions about love related topics. Similarly, with increasing age, more children tended to know someone their age who was in love. These response patterns were not unexpected because relations with and interest in peers would take on greater importance as children became older.



### Concepts Regarding Love and Relation to Cognitive Development

The results indicated that with increasing age, children scored higher levels on the Piagetian conservation tasks. The results also showed that children obtaining higher scores on the Piagetian conservation task, responded with abstract and/or emotionally based concepts in explaining the ways they knew they loved someone. More children, who scored higher levels on the Piagetian conservation tasks, also tended to define romantic love, expressions of love and reasons for loving someone with abstract concepts than did children who scored lower on the Piagetian conservation tasks. The analyses seemed to suggest partial support for hypothesis 2. Children's concepts regarding some aspects of love were positively related to their general level of cognitive ability and there was a tendency for children at higher levels of cognitive ability (as defined by the PCT) to incorporate more abstract concepts into their responses regarding love. However, the results also indicated that level of cognitive ability was a necessary but not sufficient variable in perceiving love in more abstract terms.

### Concepts Regarding Love and Relation to Marital Status of Parents

Overall, the results of this investigation did not indicate significantly widespread difference in response between children from divorced versus intact families. However analyses did suggest some significant differences and several patterns.

More children from intact homes tended to express traditional aspects of love and marriage whereas more children from divorced homes tended to express somewhat guarded and less traditional concepts regarding love and marriage.

More children from intact homes versus divorced families defined love in terms of

physical gestures of affection such as kissing or hugging. More children from intact homes versus divorced homes also tended to respond that verbal expressions of affection such as saying, "I love you." or "You're special." were ways in which to show someone love. When asked as to why they loved someone, more children from intact homes tended to provide specific examples of a loved one such as mommy or daddy. More children from intact homes versus divorced homes tended to discuss how their own parents met and were married. Moreover, more children from intact families tended to respond that they themselves wanted to marry someday and indicated that having children was a reason. Finally, more children from intact homes tended to rate the importance of love to a happy marriage with a higher degree of importance than did children from divorced homes. These results suggested that more children from intact homes in this study, tended to perceive some aspects of love and marriage with more traditional and stereotyped concepts involving displays of physical affection and verbal expressions, wanting to marry and having children and considering love as an important quality of a happy marriage.

On the other hand, more children from divorced families versus intact families tended to express less traditional ideas regarding husband and wife roles and were more guarded about marriage prospects. More children from divorced homes mentioned that they were unsure about getting married in the future. More children from divorced homes also tended to mention that they loved someone because the loved one was nice to them. More children from divorced homes tended to define a "good" wife in terms of her being nice to her husband and doing nice things for him like giving him surprises

or taking him out to eat, while a "good" husband was characterized as someone who helped with the domestic chores like cleaning or cooking. Finally, more children from divorced families tended to rate the quality of communication for a happy marriage with a higher degree of importance than did children from intact homes. Taken on a whole, these results revealed that more children from divorced homes tended to perceive some concepts of love and marriage in less traditional and stereotypical ways in terms of a "good" husband's role in taking part in the domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning. More children from divorced homes tended to perceive some concepts of love in terms of their emphasis on nice actions and behaviors in defining a "good" wife and reasons for loving someone which are not as traditionally based as definitions of physical affection and verbal expressions of love. Whereas more children from intact homes tended to rate higher the traditional idea of love as a characteristic of a happy marriage, more children from divorced homes provided a less traditional idea that communication was a quality that a good marriage possessed .

In partial accordance with hypothesis 3, more children from intact families versus divorced families provided traditional views of love and marriage. It did not seem that children from divorced families had particularly negative views about love and marriage as hypothesis 3 expected, nor did they possess more knowledge about factors related to marital disharmony. However, more children from divorced families tended to mention less traditional concepts regarding love and marriage and were more guarded about their own future desires for getting married.

### Concepts Regarding Love and Gender Effects

In their study investigating the perception of passionate love in young children, Hatfield, Schmitz, Cornelius & Rapson (1988) concluded that as early as 6 years of age, girls generally responded with higher responses to the questions designed to tap into their desire of wanting to be with a loved one. Brehm (1992) noted that females tended to make finer discriminations in their emotions about love and that it appeared to be more salient to women than to men due in part to the greater socialization pressures on females in this area. Identity development research undertaken by such investigators as Orlossky, Marcia and Lesser (1973), concluded that females were more heavily socialized to depend on interpersonal relationships for their identity formation whereas males tended to rely more on their occupation, political or religious decisions. The results of this thesis indicated gender differences as well regarding perceptions of love and marriage.

Significantly more females tended to include physical displays of affection such as hugs or kisses than did males in defining ways of expressing love to someone. Significantly more females also tended to mention love for parents, other family members and love for friends in differentiating types of love. Significantly more girls in this study tended to discuss love related topics with their friends than did the boys in this study. The results suggested that the girls in this study tended to provide greater detail in their definitions of love and love related issues.

Whereas significantly more females tended to mention being nice, such as surprising the spouse or going out to eat as a characteristic of both a "good" wife and

"good" husband, more males tended to mention stereotypical male traits, such as providing economic support or having a job in defining a good husband. Significantly more boys than girls tended to express a desire not to marry, whereas significantly more girls wished to marry and mentioned having children as a reason for marriage. These results indicated that more males tended to express traditional, male instrumental orientations (e.g., having a job) regarding a good husband's role in a marriage. On the other hand, more females in this study possessed expressive role orientations (e.g., caring dimensions) in defining roles and marriage.

The results indicated a partial support of hypothesis 4. There was a tendency for more females to show greater interest in and more knowledge of concepts related to love and marriage than males in this study. Surprisingly however, there were no overwhelming sex differences regarding love and marriage.

### General Conclusions

It was somewhat expected that some of the more general questions regarding love would be correlated. It was not surprising to discover that a significant correlation existed between "What is love?" and "What is romantic love?"; and between "What is romantic love?" and "Why do you love someone?". As noted earlier, there was a pattern in responses between "What is love?" and "Why do you love someone?".

Since romantic love is a dimension of love, the kinds of definitions and level of responses given in defining love, romantic love and reasons for loving another would invariably overlap. While there are many different dimensions of love, it appears that society in general is most preoccupied with the "romantic" aspects of love. One would

only have to investigate the expressions of history and society through such medium as songs, books, films, television and art to see the common theme of passion woven through. In this study, 82% of the girls and 81% of the boys believed there were different kinds of love. When asked to describe them, 31% of the boys and 37% of the girls mentioned romantic love. Other than love for parent and other family members, mentioned by females (29%), other dimensions such as object love, pet love, friend love and parent/family love for boys did not have as high a mention.

As the results of this investigation indicated, only a starting point in the advancement of understanding love and marriage was made. Love and marriage are social phenomena which will affect most of American society. It has been estimated that approximately 90% of Americans will marry (Yankelovich, 1981). Certainly, an understanding of children's concepts and the processes whereby they acquire these concepts should be of significant interest, even if only rudimentary. Because this research is new, many other potentially important avenues of future exploration exist. Future research will be necessary to address the question of exactly how, or in what way, children actually go about acquiring these socially relevant concepts, an issue that psychologists continue to wrestle with in other areas of social cognition. Yet another very important issue to be investigated further will involve examining societal or cultural variations in children's concepts regarding love and marriage. Knowledge of cultural variations regarding concepts about love and marriage is extremely sparse, even among adult populations.

As useful as this initial project may turn out to be, some disadvantages do exist.

The optimal way to investigate developing concepts of love and marriage would be to gather longitudinal data. Such data would be much richer in that it would enable us to see if concepts developed over childhood continue into adulthood. Longitudinal data would also provide a better means of determining if attitudes held about love and marriage do in fact affect behavior. The current study is also at a disadvantage because of the rather crude way in which "divorce" and "intact" families were defined. Simply identifying subjects as coming from divorced and intact families is only a very global distinction that does not necessarily get at the quality of the actual spousal relationship and family atmosphere. Perhaps this rather crude distinction accounts for the lack of more widespread significant differences between the two groups. Some of the divorce literature generated by such researchers as Wallerstein and Kelly also points out the existence of a differential impact on children depending upon the age of the child at which the parents divorced. A child whose parents divorced when he or she was 3-years-old and then who within a few years lived with a step-parent would have different perceptions from a child whose parents divorced when he or she was 3-years-old and who began living with a step-parent at the age of 10. Such considerations may prove valuable for future research.

Despite these disadvantages, this initial study represents an important contribution to an area that has been largely overlooked. It is an initial step in providing new and potentially significant insights into children's developing cognitions regarding love, marriage, and factors that may influence these socially defined concepts.

## APPENDIX A: The Love, Marriage and Wedding Questionnaire

I'm going to show you a picture and I want you to tell me what you see. **(PICTURE A: couple embracing, RED BORDER)**

1. Can you describe what you see in this picture? Tell me what's happening here:  
(Anything else?)

We would like to find out what kids know about love and marriage. Can you help us by answering some of our questions? Thank you!

2. What is love? What does the word love mean to you?

3. How do you know that you really love someone?

- a. What could you say?

- b. What could you do?

4. Do you think there are different kinds of love? **yes no unsure**  
(If yes), what different kinds of love are there? Describe:



5. Can you think of all the people you love very much and tell me why?

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Anyone else?

mother

father

brother or sister

other relative (grandmother/grandfather/aunt/uncle/cousins)

friend

neighbor

teacher

6. Do you think love is forever or can love for someone change?

\_\_\_ love is forever

\_\_\_ love can change: Why might this happen?

\_\_\_ unsure

7. What is "romantic love" or "true love"? (repeat if necessary)

8. Do you believe in "falling in love at first sight?" **yes no unsure**

9. Now I'm going to show you some more pictures. Can you pick out the picture that best shows two people romantically in love with each other? (PICTURES 1-5: set with 5 couples, GREEN BORDER) Child chooses: # \_\_\_\_\_ (# on back of each drawing) Why did you choose this picture?

10. Now, can you arrange these pictures from most romantic to least romantic? There are no right or wrong answers, we just want you to arrange the pictures the way you think is best.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you arrange the pictures like this? Can you explain why this is the most romantic and so on?

11. Do you ever talk to your parents about love? **yes no unsure**  
What do you discuss?

12. Do you ever talk to your friends about love? **yes no unsure**  
What do you discuss?

13. Do you know anyone your age who is in love with another boy or girl?  
**yes no unsure**

14. Do you know any songs/books/movies/TV shows that talk about or deal with people in love? (Prompt each category again separately, e.g., Can you think of any **songs** that deal with people in love? What about **books**? etc.)

songs \_\_\_\_\_

books \_\_\_\_\_

movies \_\_\_\_\_

TV shows \_\_\_\_\_

15. What do people do on a date?

16. When do you think young people can begin dating for the first time?  
(Get answer in number of years): \_\_\_\_\_ **years**

17. How long do you think people should date before they get married?  
\_\_\_\_\_ **years**

18. Do you know anyone your age who has gone out on a date? **yes no unsure**

19. Have you ever gone out on a date? **yes no unsure**  
What happened? (Did you have fun?)

20. Now I'm going to show you another picture. Tell me what you see in this picture. Describe what is happening: **(PICTURE B: bride and groom, BLUE BORDER)**

21. What is marriage? Can you give me a definition? What does it mean to be married?

22. Who do you think thinks more about getting married? Men, women or both?  
**men women both**  
Why do you think this?

23. Do you think life changes for the better, worse or stays the same after a person gets married? **better worse same unsure**  
Why do you think life gets \_\_\_\_\_?

24. What do you think makes a marriage happy? (i.e., what are some of the ingredients or reasons for a happy marriage?)

(GET SMILING FACES): Now I'm going to tell you some things that may or may not be important for a happy marriage. You can use these faces to tell me how important you think each one of these things is for a **happy** marriage.

- \* For example, if you think that "being good" is very, very or extremely important to a happy marriage, then which face should you choose? \_\_\_\_\_ (correct choice is #5). That's right, good job!
- \* But, if you think that "being good" is pretty important or quite important to a happy marriage, then you should choose: \_\_\_\_\_ (#4)
- \* If you think that "being good" is only a little bit important to a happy marriage you would choose this one: \_\_\_\_\_ (#3)
- \* And if you think that "being good" is not very important to a happy marriage you would pick this one: \_\_\_\_\_ (#2)
- \* Finally, if you think that "being good" is not important at all to a happy marriage, which face should you choose? \_\_\_\_\_ (#1)

Do you think you understand how to do this? **yes no unsure**

So, if you think something is very very important, choose a very very happy face; if you think something is only a little bit important, choose the middle face; and if you think something is not important at all, choose a very sad face.

So now we are ready. Tell me how important you think each one of the things I say are for a happy marriage:

- 5= very, very important or extremely important (large smile on face)
- 4= pretty important or quite important (small smile on face)
- 3= only a little bit important (neutral face)
- 2= not very important (somewhat sad face)
- 1= not important at all (very sad face)

How important is love for a happy marriage? etc.,

- a. love \_\_\_\_\_
- b. understanding \_\_\_\_\_
- c. having a pet \_\_\_\_\_
- d. talking to one another/communication \_\_\_\_\_
- e. trust \_\_\_\_\_
- f. loyalty \_\_\_\_\_
- g. having a job/financial security \_\_\_\_\_
- h. doing things together/common interests \_\_\_\_\_
- i. sharing the same ideas about religion/God \_\_\_\_\_
- j. having children \_\_\_\_\_
- k. respect \_\_\_\_\_
- l. kissing and hugging \_\_\_\_\_
- m. anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

25. What does it mean to be a good wife? What do you think a good wife can do to make her husband happy?

26. What does it mean to be a good husband? What do you think a good husband can do to make his wife happy?

27. Do you want to get married someday? **yes no unsure**  
When? How old would you like to be when you get married? \_\_\_\_\_ **years**  
Why would you like to (or not like to) get married?

28. How can you tell if someone is unhappily married?

29. What may happen if two people are not happily married?

30. Have your parents ever told you about how they met and got married?  
**yes no unsure**

What did they tell you?

31. Where can people get married? \_\_\_\_\_

32. Here's another picture for you to look at. **(PICTURE C: bridal party, YELLOW BORDER)**

Can you point to the bride? **correct incorrect** \_\_\_\_\_

Can you point to the groom? **correct incorrect** \_\_\_\_\_

33. Have you ever seen anyone get married? **yes no unsure**

Did you go to this/or attend wedding in person? **yes no unsure**

How many weddings have you been to? \_\_\_\_\_

Who's wedding? **friend relative parents**

Have you ever watched a wedding on TV? **yes no unsure**

How many weddings do you think you've seen on TV? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the name of the TV show (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever seen a wedding in the movies? **yes no unsure**

How many weddings do you think you've seen in the movies? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the name of the movie(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

34. Have you ever been in a wedding? **yes no unsure**  
Who's wedding was it? **friend relative parent**  
What did you do?

35. What happens at a wedding? Can you describe how two people get married in a wedding ceremony? What happens first? etc.,



## APPENDIX B: Piagetian Conservation Task

### Task 1:

O.K., now we have a little demonstration for you to see. I'm going to show you two shapes made of playdoh and you have to answer a few questions for me. O.K.?

Alright, here I have two balls of playdoh and they are exactly the same amount. These two balls are made up of exactly the same amount of playdoh--that is, there is just as much playdoh in this ball (point to first ball) as there is in this second ball (point).

Can you see that this ball (point) has the same amount as this ball (point)? O.K. Good.

(If the child insists on touching, holding or examining the balls in some other way, this is permissible. They must, however agree that the two balls are the same amount.)

O.K., now I'm going to take this second piece of playdoh and do something to it-- I'm just going to roll it out like this.

Now, tell me, is there still the same amount of playdoh here (point) as there is here (point)? **yes no**

Why or why not?

How do you know that there still is/isn't the same amount of playdoh in these two shapes? Very good.

Task 2:

O.K., now let's do this (break the second rolled out playdoh into two approximately equal-sized links).

Is there the same amount of playdoh here (point) as there is here (point)? **yes no**

Why or why not?

How do you know that there is/isn't the same amount of playdoh in these two shapes?

Task 3 and 4: ONLY FOR CHILDREN WHO SUCCEEDED AT TASKS 1 & 2

Very good, now let's try another demonstration. Here are two other balls of playdoh that are exactly the same. Would you agree that there is the same amount of playdoh in these two balls? O.K., great.

Now, I'm going to put one of these balls into this glass of water. Now, watch what happens to the level of the water in the glass (drop ball into water glass one). What happened? yes, you're right, the water level went up. Very good.

O.K., now suppose I take this second identical ball with the same amount of playdoh and drop it into this second glass. If I do this, where will the water level go? Point to where you think the water level will be on this second glass if I drop this second ball into the water.

**higher**                      **lower**                      **same**                      **unsure**

(Take a rubberband, encircle second empty glass, and mark the spot the child points to, or have the child mark the spot with the rubberband for themselves.)

Why do you think the water level will go there? How do you know?

Great! Now, where would the water level be if we take this same second ball, do this (roll the same second ball into a cylinder), and drop it into this second glass? Can you point on this second glass to where the water level will be?

**higher**                      **lower**                      **same**                      **unsure**

Why do you think the water level will be there?

**TERRIFIC JOB!! OKAY, NOW I HAVE SOMETHING ELSE FOR US TO DO.**

## APPENDIX C: Informed Consent and Demographic Questionnaire

Dear Parent(s):

Your school's officials have approved this research project, and we hope that you will allow your child to participate in our study by reading the form below.

This study is designed to investigate children's developing knowledge regarding social concepts such as friendships and weddings to help us better understand the factors that may contribute to children's increasing awareness of these social relationships. Although there is now considerable research regarding children's conceptions of divorce, interestingly enough, there is virtually no research on children's understanding of the "happier" side of relationships!

We are interested only in children's concepts about marriage and weddings in general terms. We are absolutely not asking children any questions about their personal lives or their family histories. We simply want to know what young children know about wedding ceremonies when asked in general, and what they know about marriage and friendship in overall terms. In other words, how does a young child define the words, "marriage", "wedding", and so on? And are young children's concepts in this area related to other factors, for example, their play behavior, books, etc.,.

We want to assure you that your child's participation in this study poses no risks. This study has already been reviewed and approved by the California State University, San Bernardino's Human Subjects Ethics Review Board and conforms to all ethical standards. In addition, your child's participation will be extremely important to our understanding of what young children do, in fact, know about these social concepts. For more information, see the points below:

- (1) Your child will be given a questionnaire, lasting about 20 - 25 minutes. ( A copy of this questionnaire is on file with your school's principal or director.)
- (2) Both yours and your child's responses will be kept **COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL**.
- (3) Your child's participation is completely voluntary. If your child becomes tired or does not want to continue the questionnaire, they may withdraw whenever they want without any problem.
- (4) Your child will receive a small gift or prize and a coupon for participating in our study (e.g., Snoopy pencils, notebooks, erasers, stickers, etc.,)
- (5) The final results of this study will be available to you if you are interested. Simply include your name and address if you want the results sent to you when the study is completed.

## INFORMED CONSENT

I have read and understood the information provided and have agreed to let my child participate in this study.

Your child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Your child's birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Your name/signature \_\_\_\_\_

If you want the results of this study sent to you when the study is completed please write your name and address below and we will be happy to send you a summary of the results:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The information requested below is critical to this study and while it is personal, it is not intended to be prying or offensive. Remember, your responses are **completely confidential**. Please try and answer the items as honestly as possible. We appreciate your candor and interest.

1. Marital status of biological father and mother:  
 original, intact parents (never divorced)  
 separated  
 divorced, single-parent  
 divorced, remarried  
 single-parent, never married
  
2. Number of children: \_\_\_\_\_ Age/sex of children \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Education of Mother  
 some high school  
 high school degree  
 some college or AA degree  
 BA college degree  
 Masters degree: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Professional degree (Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.D.S., etc.)
  
4. Education of Father  
 some high school  
 high school degree  
 some college or AA degree  
 BA college degree  
 Masters degree: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Professional degree (Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.D.S., etc.)
  
5. Mother's Occupation (job title/description) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Father's Occupation (job title/ description) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Mother's Ethnicity:  
 Caucasian/White  
 Hispanic or Latino  
 African American  
 Asian or Pacific Islander  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Father's Ethnicity:  
 Caucasian/White  
 Hispanic or Latino  
 African American  
 Asian or Pacific Islander  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Religious Affiliation:  
 Protestant (e.g., Lutheran, Baptist, etc.)  
 Catholic  
 Jewish  
 Buddhist, Hindu, Islam  
 none  
 other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
10. If you have a religious affiliation, how often do you attend:  
 once a week or more  
 once a month or so  
 once in a while  
 rarely or never
11. Estimate the average number of hours/day your child watches TV:  
 4 hours or more per day  
 about 4 hours per day  
 about 3 hours per day  
 about 2 hours per day  
 about 1 hour per day  
 less than 1 hour per day  
 never

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