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The Effect of Parent Education upon Parental Attitudes Toward Authority

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Meredith,

Ruth C.

1977

THE EFFECT OF PARENT EDUCATION
UPON PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY

A Specialist Project

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Counselor Education

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the

Educational Specialist Degree

by

Ruth C. Meredith

July, 1977

THE EFFECT OF PARENT EDUCATION
UPON PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY

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Ruth C. Meredith

July 1977

62 pages

Directed by: Emmett Burkeen, DeWayne Mitchell, and
Eugene Harryman

This study attempted to develop and evaluate the content, format and effectiveness of a parent training course which emphasized democratic child rearing methods. The course was conducted by a school counselor in an elementary school. The content was a combination of Dreikur's child-raising techniques and Gordon's communication skills embodied into a commercial program called Systematic Training for Effective Parenting. The format for each of the nine suggested group sessions began with a leader-introduced topic, followed by large and small group discussions, simulated role play, use of worksheets, handouts, audio-visuals, and homework assignments. Objective evidence of program effectiveness was determined by using the F Scale to measure participants' response to the training. The research design utilized two control groups and one experimental group. Ten null hypotheses were designed to test attitudinal changes on the differences between pretest and posttest means, trend differences between experimental and control groups, and significance of posttest means after correction for pretest effects.

The findings were somewhat inconsistent. Attitudes for parents in the experimental group did change in the desired direction. This change registered .07 on the Attitudes

Toward the Freedom of Children scale and .17 for the F Scale, approaching the established .05 level of confidence. On both scales, the experimental group showed a decrease in scores, while the control groups showed an increase. This decrease was interpreted to mean less need for authority and control of children, while an increase denoted greater need. These tendencies were analyzed statistically and proved significant for the F Scale but not for the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale. Parents' subjective responses concerning the training were very favorable.

Concluding recommendations suggested several benefits gained from attending a parent training course for democratic child rearing practices. Parents did show less need for authority and control over children and they did report positive feelings about their participation. The need for additional research in parent education was noted, and it was further suggested that parent training in the school setting be continued. The enthusiastic parent participation in this particular group suggested a possibility for improved home-school relations.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The role of the elementary school counselor may be briefly described as one of counselor, consultant, and coordinator: a counselor to children, their parents and teachers; a consultant to these same clients for human development with its related educational needs; a coordinator in planning, implementing and evaluating guidance services offered within the context of the elementary school (Kentucky State Department, 1974). With so varied and unique a job description, and working within ordinary time constraints, the elementary school counselor may well wonder which area to emphasize in order to effect client change and growth.

There is a growing body of literature which gives evidence that working with parents is an appropriate function for school counselors and that parent education groups should be an integral part of elementary guidance services. McGehearty (1968) suggests that working with the caretakers of children would be an efficient use of counselors' time. Bertie (1972) proposes that individual development can be better facilitated by working with a

focus larger than the single child. Lamb and Deschenes (1973) support working with parents as an appropriate role function of elementary counselors, and their statement was incorporated into the American Personnel and Guidance Association's position paper on the elementary school counselor's role (The unique role, 1974).

Working with parent groups is hardly a new phenomenon in this country. Brim (1959) presents a child rearing study which lists thirty-six national organizations that have parent education as a long-standing goal. For over 40 years parent training groups have been conducted at the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964). Gordon (1970) devised a parent effectiveness training program and claims to have trained thousands of parents in groups taught in community agencies throughout the country.

While parent training offered by agencies has been available for years, its inclusion as a service offered through schools has been recent. However, such an added emphasis for guidance services was not entirely unforeseen. In 1952 Gruenberg predicted that parents would look to the schools for help in understanding child development and in establishing higher quality relationships between parents and children. Gruenberg urged schools to embrace this opportunity rather than withdraw for fear of assuming parental responsibility.

More extensive parent-counselor contact has the

support of teachers, parents and educators. Masih (1969) found that teachers surveyed advocated more counselor contact with parents, both individually and in groups. In a survey of 500 mothers of elementary school children, Garner and Sperry (1968) note that half the mothers indicated parental discussion groups would be the preferred method for obtaining information on child care and services. Hill and Luckey (1969) state that with the advent of the elementary school counselor and the sharpening of elementary guidance functions, parent education is an inescapable function of the schools. Others in this same vein (Muro, 1970; Nelson, 1972; Luckey, 1974) urge that elementary school counselors become involved in parent education. Clearly elementary school counselors can expect greater future involvement with parent education.

Considering the interest shown for parent education both currently and in the past, there has been little attention given to the evaluation of the intervention. Lamb and Lamb (1975) found the amount of research on the effectiveness of parent training extremely small. Brown (1976) states that though participants of parent training report beneficial results, solid research on the effects of such courses is minimal at present.

The lack of empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of parent training indicates a need for further research studies which can substantiate stated attitudinal or behavioral change.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempted to develop a content and format for parent training sessions focusing on democratic techniques for child rearing. Specific evaluative procedures were instituted to determine effectiveness of those training sessions. The resultant data may prove helpful to counselors who anticipate implementing parent training groups. Some of the information may be useful to those responsible for the training of counselors.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine if attitudinal change would occur from parents' having participated in a series of parent training sessions. Information on participants' attitudes toward authority and also toward the freedom of children was obtained using, respectively, the F Scale and the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale. This information together with the participants' subjective evaluation of course content and process was used to test the following assumptions:

1. Authoritarian needs of parent participants will become less as a result of these training sessions.
2. Parent attitudes toward the control of children will become less restrictive.
3. Parents will report a positive response as to the content and format of these training sessions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to this study:

1. Parent--parent or guardian of a child and, specifically, a member of this particular study group.
2. Parent education--term used synonymously with training, study, group sessions, etc., for training designed to enhance parenting skills.
3. Content--specific information and skills applicable in understanding and relating to children. The subject matter in a parent training course.
4. Group sessions--one of a number of regularly held meetings.
5. Group leader--person responsible for conducting group sessions.
6. Leadership style--the manner in which sessions are conducted.
7. Attitudinal scales--the F Scale, which measures attitudes toward authority; and the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale, which measures the control of children.
8. Autocratic child-rearing practices--traditional child-rearing methods in which children were expected to submit to adult authority without question.
9. Democratic child-rearing practices--an approach which emphasizes children's rights with attendant responsibilities, their contribution to the decision-making

process, and the increased parent-child communication.

Limitations of the Study

The intent of this study was to gain knowledge about the effect of and attitude toward having participated in a parent study group. Since the number of participants in both experimental and control groups is extremely small, results cannot be generalized to the population at large.

Rationale for the Study

A common phenomenon of our time is the demand for training for the task of child rearing. Once it was assumed that parents automatically knew how to raise their children. What was required was a repetition of their own rearing. And in a society of little change, where roles and expectations were clearly defined and reinforced throughout the culture, a repetition of established precedent was all that was necessary.

Today's parents are less sure. Rapid change has left them uncertain about the qualities their child may need for successful living two or three decades hence. Conflicting advice from various authorities constantly bombards them. The resultant behavior of seemingly helpless parents and rebellious, disrespectful children mirrors the confusion of all concerned.

Dreikurs (1964) states that it is largely the impact of the democratic ideal of equality that has transformed our social atmosphere and has made traditional methods of child rearing obsolete. In a culture where all persons, despite

individual differences and abilities, have equal claims to dignity and respect, the traditional autocratic-submissive child-rearing practices no longer work. Parents have abandoned traditional autocratic methods in favor of a more democratic approach.

However, democratic child rearing methods are not easily understood by persons never having experienced the process. Parents avail themselves of opportunities for parent education and schools are one of the places where they look. Fears (1976) sees parent education as a logical extension of parent consultations which have occurred naturally between teachers, administrators and parents for years past. Kelly (1976) takes the position that education for the task of child rearing is a necessary function of the schools, a stand that has previously been supported by numerous authors (Christiansen, 1969).

As schools become increasingly involved in parent education, and as counselors become more concerned with specific training programs, there is a need to examine training effectiveness. At present, there is only a small amount of empirical research supporting beneficial effects of parent education. This study attempts to add to that body of knowledge by determining if change from an autocratic to a more democratic attitude would occur after participation in a parent training study course designed to teach democratic child rearing methods.

Summary

Parent training has long been a national concern. In the last decade there has been an increasing impetus for such training to be offered through the schools.

School counselors are considering parent education study groups as a more facilitative way to effect change for the child. There is an increase in the number of these groups being offered in various schools.

The majority of parents who participate in study groups report beneficial results in their attitudes toward themselves and their children. However, these evaluations are mostly subjective; there has been little objective data on the effects of such groups.

This study attempted to determine if a change from autocratic to democratic attitudes would occur on the part of parents who participated in an eight week study course designed to teach democratic child rearing methods.

While the small number in this study precludes generalization, the information provided may prove helpful to school counselors who plan to implement parent study groups.

Chapter II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature supportive of parent education may be categorized into two areas (Campion, 1973). The first area contains articles on parent attitudes, family communication and child-rearing methods, all of which provide a rationale for parent education. The second area deals with specific attempts to educate parents. This review will report on articles relating to the specific educational intervention methods along with pertinent evaluative critiques.

Attempts to intervene with parents are based upon the assumption that parents can learn, change behavior and profit from the experience. Educational intervention can occur in various ways. One approach is reflected in the mass media whereby an unseen target audience receives expert child-rearing advice. Another approach is the parent discussion group, wherein a structured pattern of previously decided content is followed or where voiced parental concerns provide the topics for discussion.

The Mass Media Approach

Mass media attempts to educate and instruct parents in child care practices are reflected in the numbers of books, pamphlets, magazine and newspaper articles, and syndicated columns which are readily available. More

limited in use but included in this market are plays, films lectures, radio and television.

Some critics claim that the mass media endeavor toward parent instruction falls far short of the purpose of parent education, that of changing parent behavior in relation to the child. Auerbach (1968) voiced this criticism in her opinion that a broadside approach provides no means of clarifying feed-back. Hereford (1963) offered this same criticism while adding that providing only factual information to parents ignores the main cause of the difficulty, which is not ignorance but inadequate attitudes, feelings and emotions.

The mass media approach has been supported by others such as Brim (1959), who defended this approach for its cumulative affect. Brim stated that such efforts over time can redirect child-rearing methods in the direction supported by professionals. Many organizations devoted to child welfare utilize the mass media as a means for parent education. While there is little research to support the effectiveness of the mass media approach, the ubiquity of such information would seem to affect the consciousness of parents and, therefore, could be a contributing factor to the increasing prevalence of parent discussion groups.

Unstructured Parent Discussion Groups

Parent education in the group setting has received favorable support from Brim, who cited these advantages:

Group discussion, even while remaining educational, while remaining at the conscious level and not actively seeking to deal with parent anxieties or defenses, nevertheless can reduce anxiety and hostility and relax the defenses so that significant changes in attitudes and feelings occur. This results from participation in free discussion with other parents about child rearing, which permits the parents to make full expression of their feelings under non-punitive conditions. Through airing these concerns and having them accepted by others, and listening to other parents express the same kind of concerns, beneficial results occur. The parents see their own feelings as being less deviant, as being shared by a host of parents, so that if they are normal parents they are able to confront their feelings directly for the first time and deal with them in a constructive way. Freed of tension in the group setting, the parents then are better able to consider changes in child care practices. (p.204)

Auerbach (1954) also presents arguments favoring parent groups. This writer suggests that participation in a discussion group with a democratic and tolerant leader might stimulate members to behave toward their children in this manner. Another favorable point is advanced by Foote and Cottrell (1955) who pointed out that discussion groups serve as an example of "Quasi-families," which may have an important supportive function for group members who are considering a change in child-rearing practices. Given this support for the feasibility of parent discussion groups, some examination of and evaluation of the effort must be made.

Hereford's (1963) exemplary study deserves detailed reporting because of its careful research design. The study described a four year research effort on the effects of parent discussion groups on parents' attitudes, as

measured by the author's Parent Attitude Survey (PAS). The PAS measures confidence in the parental role, causation of child's behavior, acceptance of child's behavior and feelings, mutual understanding and mutual trust. The four years of the study were divided into seven research periods. During each research period, four groups, one experimental group and three control groups, were evaluated. The experimental groups attended six weekly two hour sessions with a non-professional leader, and content responsibility was placed upon group participants. Of the three control groups, one was exposed to a lecture--i.e., participants attended a lecture on a topic similar to those discussed in the experimental group. Another group registered but did not attend, and the other group was randomly selected from school files. Results of the study indicated that parents attending the discussion groups changed significantly more than any of the control groups in attitudes measured by the PAS. Additional information gained through sociometric data indicated that the children of parents in the experimental groups improved in social relationships more than children of control group parents, but teacher ratings of classroom adjustment found no differences between groups.

Following an eight week study involving parents of bright, underachieving boys, Gazda and Ohlsen (1966) reported that members of two of the three parent groups

demonstrated a significant increase in acceptance of self and others as measured by a projective test. Their children improved on congruency measures between the self and ideal-self, as well as on behavior observed by parents and teachers. These findings supported Hereford's work in indicating that parent education in a group setting can promote positive changes in the attitudes and behavior of both parents and children.

Shapiro (1956) found that parents attending a series of 12 discussion groups improved more than did control subjects on three of the five scales measured: authoritarianism, good judgement, and possessiveness. No attempt was made to correlate changes in parental attitudes with children's behavioral change.

MacNamara (1963) did a study of mothers of children who were patients at a child psychiatry department. For two years, these mothers attended weekly meetings with a psychiatric social worker. Discussion revolved around the mothers' feelings associated with parent-child interaction. Results indicated that the mothers involved became less anxious and tense and developed better relationships with their children. This study relied upon subjective evaluations entirely and lacked a control group to indicate that similar results do not happen as a result of time or chance.

In a project notable for its size, the evaluation of Project ENABLE (1967) involved about 11,600 personal interviews with parents and about 6,200 records of group atten-

dance and of services to parents. This research was undertaken to determine if low-income families could be reached by discussion groups. The results indicated that participants were slightly more likely to be communicators and joiners and less likely to be individualistic, independent, and enterprising than were nonparticipants. The parents of this study (mostly women) showed significant change on 55 of the 90 items on the scale used. The scale measured changes in attitudes, information on resources and their use, and other related items. An increase of participation in community affairs and manifested leadership ability was also noted. These results support other studies that have found parent education leading to changed parent attitudes.

A study by the Child Study Association of America and the Westport-Weston Mental Health Association (1959) was not supportive of parental change attributed to participation in discussion groups. This study contained experimental and control groups, and members of the experimental group developed their own curriculum and discussed common problems they experienced daily with their children. No statistically significant changes were noted in parental decision-making or on a variety of other personal or social characteristics. Despite such occasional negative findings, research efforts generally indicate that parent discussion groups benefit the participants in a variety of ways.

A trend away from groups which merely engage in discussion toward groups having more structure and content is evident in looking at research studies of the last

decade. Relying upon the mass of research which demonstrates not only the importance of the parent-child relationship but also the human interactive skills which can effect change in the relationship, group leaders have devised a format which includes a teachable content as well as more affective parent involvement through role-playing, psychodrama and at-home assignments. Persons skilled in this method of group leadership can be found in the related areas of health, social work, religion and education. Parents can and have sought help in any of these areas, and the natural home-school tie has brought about an increasing use of parent training in the schools, where these services are offered under the direction of the school counselor. The remaining studies reviewed are concerned with the results of these more structured approaches to parent training. Many of these studies were conducted in the school setting.

Structured Parent Training Groups

Some studies earlier in the past decade did not establish conclusive evidence of a relationship between parent education and child behavior. Wohlford and Stern (1969) had 13 low-income mothers participate in weekly meetings devoted to demonstration of ways the mother can expand the child's learning skills and to discussion of the mother-child relationship. The purpose of these meetings was to reduce the conflict between the home-school environment by improving the emotional relations within the family and

the cognitive-intellectual functioning of the family. This program did not prove to be effective in modifying participating mothers' behavior.

Swenson (1970) did a study to determine whether attitudes toward child-rearing practices could be changed by an educational approach and whether these changes would be reflected in the child's school adjustment. Two counselor-led groups of parents met for a three month period. One group used the lecture approach, along with individual involvement, while the other group concentrated on films. No significant changes in parental attitudes or concomitant child behavior were noted.

Some supportive evidence for structured parent education was shown by Downing (1971). His study involved a parent training class which met for a series of two and one-half weekly meetings. Course content was a combination of Adlerian, Rogerian and behavioral approaches to communication and child rearing practices. The activities include lecture, class discussion, small group problem-solving, role play and psychodrama. There were three experimental groups along with one control group. Evaluation consisted of parent self-report on attitudes. Significant attitude change occurred in the areas of control techniques, awareness of children's emotional needs, trust and respect for children, and parental confidence in child rearing attitudes. Changes in attitudes toward parent-child communication were not significant.

In a later work, Downing (1974) reported on a program of services offered to parents of children in the Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Lake Tahoe, California. He and other counselors established a "Worry Workshop for Parents" where parents who were concerned about their children's needs and their own parenting skills could avail themselves of family counseling services and parent educational offerings. The educational program included workshops on communication skills, problem-solving, valuing, conflict resolution and behavior modification. The first year evaluation of the total program was based on parental response and observable change in child behavior. Of the 17 case studies of children whose parents were involved in the workshops, 14 showed improved learning progress and social behavior as compared to their performance prior to parent involvement. This work supports other efforts which conclude that parent education creates a change in parental attitudes, which in turn affects child behavior.

Downing's studies confirm the findings of several efforts by other researchers (McWhirter & Cabanski, 1972; McWhirter & Kahn, 1974). The study by McWhirter and Cabanski described a parent program that was part of a day school for the treatment of children with learning disabilities and emotional disorders. Four approaches were used to reach parents: individual contact by the school psychologist, a parents' aid program that encouraged parent

school visits, education groups which provided parents with information on the emotionally disturbed or learning disabled child, and open dialogue counseling groups. Informal feedback showed parents believed the program to have been helpful in understanding themselves, their children, and the goals of the school. An important side result of the program was revealed in reportedly improved public relations between home and school.

The McWhirter and Kahn study described in detail the content and methods used in a parent communication group. The concepts from Gordon's Parent Effectiveness Training (1970) and Carkhuff's The Art of Helping (1972) were used extensively in a seven week program which trained parents in the skills of communication and problem solving. Parent evaluations were entirely subjective and were used by the counselor to modify future presentations. McWhirter concluded that parent education groups offer a unique modality for increasing the school counselor's effectiveness and that public school systems should provide resources for family and parent counseling and for parent educational experiences.

An increasingly positive attitude by parents toward school is indicated in the results of several research efforts (Bank & Brooks, 1971; Finn, 1975; Baruth & Jones, 1975). Bank and Brooks indicated that parents attending a parent program in Detroit became increasingly positive in their attitudes toward school. Finn reported that organized parent discussion groups seemed to fill the communication

gap existing between home and school. Baruth and Jones developed parent groups utilizing the lecture-discussion-involvement-homework format which resulted in a positive evaluation. These authors state that parent study groups offer counselors a vehicle not only to help parents with their children's problems but also to help facilitate the integration of school and community.

Recent research efforts in parent education reflect an increase in the number of groups offering content based on one philosophical approach. Three models commonly used are the behavior modification approach, the Gordon Parent Effectiveness Training program (PET), and the Adlerian counseling pattern. Behavior modification programs teach the environmental contingencies that maintain a child's behavior and help parents learn to change those contingencies in order to shape desired behavior. Gordon's PET program presents a series of communication skills that parents may learn through participation in lecture, discussion, experiential activities and applied homework. The Adlerian model, which is based on the concepts of Alfred Adler and Rudolph Dreikurs, uses a similar format in presenting concepts and skills for democratic child rearing practices.

Hamm and Lyman (1973) reported success with behavior modification research in the school setting. In this project parents of 28 families learned operant techniques which they utilized in child behavior change projects

selected by the parents. Johnson and Brown (1969) and Mira (1970) both reported successful results using behavior modification with parent education groups and Mira offered an objective evaluation. In Mira's work a successful case was one in which the parent successfully completed two behavior modification projects. A successful modification of the target behavior was stringently defined as occurring by chance only once in a thousand times. Of the 82 cases in which a parent came to the training program at least once, 46% did modify two target behaviors.

Parent education utilizing the Adlerian model has been used with positive results. Three of the five studies presented here have collected objective test data as a measure of effectiveness. Frazier and Matthes (1975) made a comparison of Adlerian, behavioral, and no-treatment groups in relation to participants' perceptions of freedom for children, child-rearing practices, and children's actual behavior. Significant differences among the three groups were found. Adlerian parents tested less restrictive than behavioral parents. Both of these groups were also shown to be less restrictive than control group parents. No significant change in any group was indicated by measurement of children's actual behavior. The authors cited this data to challenge the assumption that a change in parent behavior will result in a change in the behavior of the child.

Fears (1976) conducted a study which involved six

parent groups. Pretest and posttest evaluations were obtained using an author-designed scale which contained items directly relating to the child-rearing philosophy taught in the course content. Significant changes were indicated in 23 of the 40 items. Fears suggested that the data supported parents' perceptions of positive changes in their children's behavior as a result of the parents' implementation of Adlerian-suggested behavior in the home. This study lacked any control group to provide a basis for comparison.

Campion (1973) devised a research approach which compared the effects of two separate methods of parent education. One experimental group was patterned on the Adlerian-Gordon model, while the other utilized the Human Synergistics Family Communication Systems (Benson & Berger, 1971), a training model designed to create an awareness of behavior and communication patterns within the family. Parental attitudes toward confidence, causation, acceptance, understanding and trust were measured by the Parent Attitude Survey (PAS). Awareness of family communication patterns was measured by an author-constructed family questionnaire. Data from pretests and posttests on both instruments indicated that the experimental groups showed significant differences on the two instruments while control groups did not. Campion concluded that this data supported several assumptions: (a) parental attitudes can be changed through participation in parent groups and those

changes occur whether emphasis is on learning skills or on open discussion, and (b) participation in parent groups can produce improved communication patterns between parents and children. The author also noted that the experimental group which explored family communications improved significantly more in their awareness of communication patterns than did the Adlerian group.

Other authors (Agati & Iovino, 1974; Kelly, 1976) have reported success with Adlerian parent study groups. In each of these cases the Adlerian model was used as the foundation for an on-going program of parent education offered in local schools. Kelly's program involved approximately 170 parents in nine study groups which met at various times throughout the year. Agati's work involved parents representing 103 families. Neither of these studies offered objective data to support group effectiveness but both authors reported extremely positive parental responses. The authors reported that as a result of the successful impact of these programs continuing parent education groups are now in demand.

Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) (Gordon, 1970) is another seemingly-successful model used in parent education. Since its appearance in 1970, PET has the unique advantage of occupying an eminent place in two areas of parent education: mass media and parent training groups. Larson (1972) and Lillibridge (1972) used both experimental and control groups in testing the effects of PET upon parental

attitudes as measured by the Parent Attitude Survey. Both reported gains on two of the five constructs of the scale: confidence and trust. On the other three constructs of causation, acceptance and understanding diverse results were reported. Both studies supported the view that parental attitudes can be changed through participation in parent education groups. Additionally, Lillibridge tested children's perceptions of parents' behavior and found that children of PET participants viewed their parents as being more accepting of them as individuals. These findings were further supported by data from Peterson's (1970) study which also gave evidence of changed attitudes on the part of parents and children.

Summary

There have been many public and private organizations at all levels of public service that hold parent education as a long-standing goal. Parents are counseled by professionals and laymen affiliated with medicine, social work, religion and education. Books, discussion groups, counseling groups and training classes aimed at teaching specific skills have been used as approaches in reaching parents.

Books, pamphlets, magazine and newspaper articles typify the mass media approach in which the parent is a passive recipient of knowledge. The advantages to this approach are in the low cost of presentation and in the ability to reach unlimited audiences, but difficulties in evaluation limit the measurement of its effectiveness.

Parent discussion groups based on principles of group dynamics and skills oriented parent training sessions have become popular. Because the positive interactive and communication skills so necessary for the development of healthy self-esteem have not occurred naturally in many families, parents have become active directors of their own education and have participated in various models of parent training. These models range from open-ended discussion groups to specific modules where trained leaders follow selected outlines and cover definite content.

There is an increasing number of parent study groups offered in the school setting. The Adlerian model for group study has been frequently used as have the behavior modification and PET approaches. Counselors involved in parent education reported changed parental attitudes as well as an unexpected beneficial side effect--the improved relationship between parents and the schools.

Chapter III

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This study was designed to generate data on the effectiveness of parent education in regards to attitudinal changes toward authority. This section contains an explanation of the training, the selection of subjects, the measurements for evaluation, the hypotheses to be tested and the statistical methods used to determine significance.

Parent Education Training: the Treatment Defined

The experimental group attended eight weekly two hour sessions, for a total of 16 contact hours. Each group session was directed by an elementary school counselor.

The group studied the subject matter offered in a parent training program Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1974). This program utilizes multi-media materials of print, cassette tapes and posters in teaching a combination of Adlerian and Gordon principles pertinent to democratic child rearing procedures. Additional concepts associated with Haim Ginott were incorporated into the course study. Parent handbooks from the program were provided to group participants, and several books were recommended for at-home reading, including Ginott's Between Parent and Child (1965), Gordon's

Parent Effectiveness Training (1970), Dreikur's Children: the Challenge (1964) and Dodson's How to Parent (1970).

Course content for each of the eight sessions was as follows:

1. Introductions of parent participants; personal goal statements; the goals of children's misbehavior.
2. The use of emotions in behavior; the family constellation; the "good" vs. the "responsible" parent.
3. Uses of encouragement; praise vs. encouragement; the "united front" with parents.
4. Parental expectations; sibling competition; praise and encouragement.
5. Active listening; problem ownership.
6. Problem-solving through exploring consequences; communication; I/You messages.
7. Discipline; punishment; use of natural and logical consequences.
8. Decision-making processes in the family; the family council.

The procedure used was one defined in Muro's (1970) succinct statement on the dynamic interaction necessary for successful parent group education:

The key to parent education is dependent on how well the counselor and staff are able to facilitate discussion of a concept among a group of parents. The atmosphere should be similar to that of a counseling group in which the counselor-leader observes the members, moderates the discussion, supports some members, draws silent ones into the proceedings and periodically tests for group

consensus. Parent education is a learning experience. For it to be effective, the psychological conditions necessary for learning to take place must be present. These include an atmosphere of safety wherein perceptions may be brought up and discussed within the context of the views of others. In this sense, parent education becomes a type of group counseling in which the discussion is sometimes programmed by the counselor and sometimes the result of spontaneous group interaction. (p. 238)

The authors of Systematic Training for Effective Parenting specifically recommended a facilitative leadership style comparative to that suggested by Muro. Dinkmeyer (1973) stressed the concepts of collaboration, clarification, consultation, commitment and concern; while Dinkmeyer and McKay (1974) listed feedback, linking, universalization, encouraging, questioning and structuring as necessary components of a model for parent group study which enabled members to acquire knowledge and evaluate beliefs and attitudes.

The format for all sessions in the present study was so structured as to incorporate these cognitive and affective learnings. Lecture, discussion, shared concerns, group encouragement, simulated role play and worksheets were used to reinforce the concepts and skills presented.

Population Selection

Parents of children in the kindergarten, first and second grades of two elementary schools of a local school district were informed by letter of a forthcoming parent

study group. The number of interested replies made possible the formation of two parent groups: an experimental group of 14, composed of those who responded first, and a control group of 14, who were assigned to a parent training course to be held at a later date. For research purposes, a second control group was chosen at random from parents attending classes at Western Kentucky University. Use of an experimental and two control groups is an accepted research procedure. Brim (1959) advocated this as he stressed the need for evaluation of parent education.

In this design, the experimental group completed the parent training course and the evaluation instruments and in this paper are referred to as the experimental group. The first control group consisted of parents who were assigned to a later training course, who were mailed evaluation instruments, and in this paper are called the parent control group. The second control group consisted of parents who were teachers attending classes at Western Kentucky University. These people completed evaluation instruments while attending their regularly scheduled classes, and in this paper are called the parent-teacher control group.

The experimental group (E) held a mixed population of four couples, five women who attended without their husbands, and one divorced woman. The parent control group (PC) consisted of five women, and the parent-teacher control

group (PTC) contained six men and 14 women (no couples). The number in the parent control group was extremely small, due to the fact that some of the tests returned by mail had been marked incorrectly, disqualifying those parents.

Measurements for Evaluation

Two instruments, the F Scale and the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale, were administered on a pretest and posttest basis to experimental and control groups. Participants' authoritarian needs were measured by the F Scale and their need to control children was measured by the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale. Testing with the experimental group was completed during the first and last group sessions. Persons in the parent control group were contacted by phone concerning the later date for their study group and were asked to participate in this present study as a control group. Tests, along with an explanatory cover letter, were mailed on dates identical to pretest and posttest times for the experimental group. Parent-teacher control group members completed tests while attending classes, observing the same time frame as the other groups.

The F Scale is a 30 item test which provides a measurement of anti-democratic tendencies. This scale was developed in a monumental research effort to identify and describe the attitudes which would predispose an acceptance of authoritarian beliefs (Adorno, et al., 1950). Scale items relate to tendencies toward belief in conventionalism, authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, anti-intraception,

superstition and sterotypy, power and "toughness," destructiveness and cynicism, and projectivity. The F Scale has been used extensively in personality research, including studies with parents and children. Byrne (1966) cited the use of the F Scale in several studies which examined family structure and the differences between authoritarians and equalitarians. The Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale contains 33 statements concerning children's rights and liberties. Scores on the scale are determined from the median scale value of items to which the subject agrees. Reliability of the scale values was determined by comparing the scale values from two groups of 100 judges each. The two sets of scale values correlated .97. Shaw (1967) stated that the validity of this scale is relatively well established and that it has been used successfully in research.

Hypotheses

The data obtained from the pretests and posttests were used to test hypotheses regarding attitudes of parents who had participated in the research effort. The null hypotheses were:

1. There will be no significant difference in the pretest and posttest means on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale for the parent control group.
2. There will be no significant difference in the pretest and posttest means on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale for the parent-teacher control group.

3. There will be no significant difference in the pretest and posttest means on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale for the experimental group.

4. There will be no significant difference in the pretest and posttest means on the F Scale for the parent control group.

5. There will be no significant difference in the pretest and posttest means on the F Scale for the parent-teacher control group.

6. There will be no significant difference in the pretest and posttest means on the F Scale for the experimental group.

7. There will be no significant difference in the trends from pretest to posttest means on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale for the experimental group, and for the two control groups.

8. There will be no significant difference in the trends from pretest to posttest means on the F Scale for the experimental group and for the two control groups.

9. There will be no significant difference for the mean posttest scores on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale between experimental and control groups after correcting for the effect of pretest scores.

10. There will be no significant difference for the mean posttest scores on the F Scale between experimental and control groups after correcting for the effect of pretest scores.

Statistical Methodology

A one-way analysis of variance with repeated measures was applied to determine the significance of the difference between pretest and posttest means on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children and the F Scale for the experimental group and for the two control groups.

An analysis of variance for repeated measures was applied to determine significance of difference in the trends from pretest to posttest means on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale and the F Scale for the experimental group and for the two control groups.

An analysis of covariance was applied to determine the significance of difference of posttest means on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale and the F Scale for the experimental group and for the two control groups after correcting for the effects of pretest scores.

The .05 level of significance was adopted for statistical analysis and was used as the criterion of acceptance or rejection for each hypothesis.

Chapter IV
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This research project attempted to determine if an eight week parent training group on democratic child rearing practices would effect changes in participants' attitudes toward authority and the control of children. The F Scale provided the measure for authority, and the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale tested parents' attitudes on the control of children. Ten null hypotheses concerning significant changes in pretest and posttest means and group interaction were tested. This chapter contains tables portraying results of the statistical analyses. Findings for the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale are listed first.

Findings for the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children

The data shown in Table 1 are supportive of hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 which stated there would be no significant difference between pretest and posttest means for the control and for the experimental groups on the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale. For the experimental group the probability of F at the .07 level is near but not at the .05 level of confidence. The probability of F at .77 and .44 for the two control groups was not significant. Therefore null hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are not rejected.

Table 1
Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children Scale
Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores

Group	N	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	F
PC	5	5.95	.79	6.01	1.06	.10
PTC	20	5.66	.54	5.78	.65	.62
E	13	5.83	8.74	5.57	8.60	4.09

On the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale, there was a tendency for posttest scores to increase for the control groups and to decrease for the experimental group. A score increase indicates a greater need to control while a decrease shows less need to control.

An analysis of variance for repeated measures was applied to determine whether these trends were significant. The data in Table 2 indicate that the trends toward an increase in scores for the control groups and a decrease in scores for the experimental group were not significant. Therefore Hypothesis 7, which stated there would be no significant difference in these trends, is not rejected.

Table 2
 Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children Scale
 Analysis of Variance for Repeated Measures

Source	MS	df	F
Total	.44	75	
Between Groups	.71 .30	37 2	.42
Error (G)	.73	35	
Within Trials	.17 .02	38 1	.10
G by T	.25	2	1.42
Error (T)	.18	35	

As a further check on posttest results for the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale, an analysis of covariance was applied to test the significance of posttest means after correcting for the effect of the pretest. The results in Table 3 show that no significant difference was found. Therefore Hypothesis 9, stating there would be no significant difference between experimental and control group posttest means for this scale, is not rejected.

Table 3
 Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children Scale
 Analysis of Covariance

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Covariates	6.47	1	6.47	20.68
Main Effects	.82	2	.41	1.31
Explained	7.29	3	2.43	7.77
Residual	10.64	34	.31	
Total	17.93	37	.48	

Findings for the F Scale

The data from Table 4 show that no significant differences were found between pretest and posttest means on the F Scale for the parent control group and for the experimental group. However, there was a significant difference between pretest and posttest means for the parent-teacher control group. Therefore, hypotheses 4 and 6, which are concerned with no significant difference on the F Scale pretest and posttest means for the parent control group and the experimental group, are not rejected. Hypothesis 5, concerning

no significant difference on the F Scale pretest and posttest means for the parent-teacher control group, is not accepted.

Table 4
F Scale
Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores

Group	N	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	F
PC	5	104.4	39.06	112.6	36.61	5.24
PTC	20	105.5	21.90	112.4	21.18	6.71*
E	13	102.2	19.92	97.77	20.80	2.14

*p=.02

On the F Scale there was a tendency for posttest mean scores to increase for the control groups and to decrease for the experimental group. An increase in an F Scale score indicates a higher need for authority and a decrease shows less need.

Table 5 shows the results of an analysis of variance applied to test the significance of these trends. The probability level of .02 for the treatment group indicated significance. There, Hypothesis 8, stating there would be

no significant difference in the trends from pretest to posttest means for experimental and control groups for the F Scale is not accepted.

Table 5
F Scale
Analysis of Variance for Repeated Measures

Source	MS	df	F
Total	549.11	75	
Between Groups	1033.42 678.00	37 2	.64
Error (G)	1053.73	35	
Within Trials	77.55 195.81	38 1	3.15
G by T	286.69	2	4.61*
Error (T)	62.22	35	

*p=.02

Table 6 shows the results of an analysis of covariance applied to posttest means on the F Scale. The posttest mean for the experimental group was significantly different from the posttest means of the control groups. Therefore, Hypothesis 10, stating there would be no significant difference

between posttest means for experimental and control groups, is not accepted.

Table 6
F Scale
Analysis of Covariance

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Covariates	15683.29	1	15683.29	133.01
Main effects	1223.06	2	611.53	5.19*
Explained	16906.35	3	5635.45	47.80
Residual	4008.86	34	117.91	
Total	20915.21	37	565.28	

*p=.01

Summary

This research project attempted to determine if an eight week parent training group on democratic child-rearing practices would effect changes in participants' attitudes toward authority and the control of children. The F Scale was used to measure the parents' need for authority, and the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale was used to test their need to control children.

On the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale,

parents in the experimental group did show less need for control of children while parents in the two control groups showed an increased need. However, these differences did not prove statistically significant. An analysis of variance applied to test the tendency for the control groups to increase and for the experimental group to decrease showed no significant difference. An analysis of covariance applied to test the significance of posttest means after correcting for pretest effects showed no significant difference.

On the F Scale, a similar tendency for control groups to show an increase in the need for authority and the experimental group to show a decrease was noted. These differences were significant at the .08 and .02 levels for the control groups but were not significant for the experimental group.

An analysis of variance applied to test the significance of these trends between experimental and control groups for the F Scale revealed significant differences at the .02 level of confidence. The analysis of covariance applied to posttest means on the F Scale showed a significant difference between experimental and control groups at the .01 level of confidence.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was a pilot effort designed to develop a content and format for parent training sessions which focus on democratic techniques for child rearing. Subjective and objective measures were taken to determine the effectiveness of the training. Several basic assumptions guided the inquiry. These assumptions were:

1. Authoritarian needs of parent participants will become less as a result of the parent training.
2. Parent attitudes toward the control of children will become less restrictive.
3. Parents will report a positive response as to the content and format of these training sessions.

Objective evidence for participants' attitudinal change was provided by pretest and posttest use of the F Scale, a measure of authoritarian need, and the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale, a measure of the need to control children. Ten null hypotheses were devised concerning the expected significance of differences between the pretest and posttest means. Subjective evidence of the participants' positive response to the training was supplied through a consensus evaluation, using an instrument designed by the group leader and administered at the final session.

A comparison of pretest and posttest means on the F Scale showed a decrease in scores for the experimental group, indicating less need for authority, and a significant increase in scores for both control groups, indicating more need for authority. Statistical measures applied to test these trends indicated significant differences between experimental and control groups for these trends, and these differences remained when a control for the pretest effect was applied to the posttest means for all groups.

Objective data provided by the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale indicated parents in both experimental and control groups did not change in their need to control children. Test results for this scale showed similar trends to that of the F Scale in that posttest scores decreased for experimental and increased for control group parents. Statistical measures applied to test these tendencies revealed no significant differences, nor were there significant differences between experimental and control group posttest means after correcting for the pretest effects.

Parents in the experimental group responded favorably to the content and format of the training sessions as measured by a subjective evaluation administered at the last group meeting. A composite of their remarks appears in the Appendices.

Conclusions

From a summary of the data, it would appear that

participation in a parent training group designed to teach democratic child-rearing practices is of some benefit to the participants. Parents did have positive attitudes toward their participation, and they did show a slight decrease in their need for authority and their need for control over children. Though this decrease did not prove significant at the established .05 level, confidence levels of .17 on posttest means for the F Scale and .07 on posttest means for the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale were near significance.

The tendency for experimental group parents to decrease and control group parents to increase in their scores on the F Scale proved the only significant difference in this study. However, this difference is enhanced by the fact that pretest scores showed all groups to be slightly authoritarian. During the eight weeks of the parent training, participants of all groups experienced the expediencies of normal life, while parents in the experimental group had the additional opportunity to examine personal values against a base of democratic child-rearing practices. The conclusion of the training coincided with the approach of the end of school. This factor possibly affected the higher authority needs exhibited by the control groups of parents and teachers, but parents in the experimental group should have been similarly affected. These statements point out slight but real differences.

This study was supportive of those parent study groups

reported as beneficial by the participants. It did not achieve results similar to those found by other researchers (Frazier & Matthes, 1975). These authors used an Adlerian content parent study group and at the conclusion of the training reported significant differences in parent attitudes using the Attitudes Toward the Freedom of Children scale. No study was found which utilized the F Scale in conjunction with parent training. Kirscht and Dillehay (1967) cited several studies which used the F Scale to measure certain aspects of authoritarianism and family patterns. Results were varied, and the authors expressed reservations concerning the specific relevance of parental beliefs concerning authority and their ultimate expression in the child's personality. The results of the present study indicate slight evidence in favor of parental attitudes being tempered by their authoritarian needs.

Implications for Research

The relationship between parent training and its effect upon adult personality as expressed in parenting attitudes needs to be further explored.

The numerous studies cited in the review of the literature indicated researchers have found some evidence of the general benefits gained through parent training, but differing research designs, varying content, and assorted measuring devices prevent drawing definitive conclusions.

Before such conclusions can be made, research in parent education must continue in the direction suggested by

Aaronson (1975) who urged that long-term studies on the effects of parent education be developed and replicated. She further stated that an examination of the antecedents of adult behavior disorders was necessary in order to plan parenting programs that would prevent such disorders and would replace deficit models of parenting with more positive approaches.

Recommendations

The findings of this study were hampered by limitations on the research design. The small number of participants was a negative factor, as was the fact that all participants were volunteers. Generalizations cannot be inferred from these results. This study should be replicated with greater numbers and with control for other limiting factors.

This and similar studies do have implications for counselors. The enthusiastic parent participation in this training, the low absenteeism rate for group sessions, and the expressed interest in further parent training groups indicate a perceived need on the part of the school's clientele.

Appendix A

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FREEDOM OF CHILDREN

Following you will find thirty-three statements expressing different attitudes toward the question of children's rights and liberties.

Put a plus (+) if you agree with the statement.

Put a zero (0) if you disagree with the statement.

If you cannot decide about a statement, you may mark it with a question mark. This is not an examination. People differ in their opinions about what is right and wrong in this issue.

- ___1. A young child must be disciplined until he has learned not to touch those objects in his environment which he cannot handle without damaging.
- ___2. When a child's wants and those of an adult are in conflict, the child should receive the more consideration.
- ___3. Parents should feel called upon to give reasons to the young child for the restrictions imposed, only when he is capable of understanding.
- ___4. A pre-school child should never be allowed to have his own way.
- ___5. A child who is entangled in a disciplinary problem should be allowed to explain his point of view.
- ___6. A child should be restricted only when he is infringing upon the rights of others.
- ___7. Adults should give no suggestions which will influence the form of a child's play constructs.
- ___8. Play activities should never be supervised.
- ___9. Implicit obedience is always desirable.
- ___10. Leniency in restricting the liberties of a child is better than too much severity.

- ___11. A Child's whims and impulsive desires should never be humored.
- ___12. Children should be given reasons for the restrictions placed upon them.
- ___13. It is necessary to teach a child that he cannot always have his own way.
- ___14. A pre-school child should, from the time he shows any inclination to do so, be allowed to choose the dress or suit he is to wear.
- ___15. Children are being allowed too much freedom.
- ___16. The wishes of the child should usually be respected.
- ___17. I would have the child ask permission before engaging in activities that are new or strange.
- ___18. A pre-school child should be allowed freedom of action except in matters pertaining to his health and physical safety.
- ___19. A Child should be forced to obey if he does not do immediately as he is told.
- ___20. I would place no restriction on the child's activity except in times of grave danger to himself or others.
- ___21. A child should be given anything he wants to eat.
- ___22. The child should be allowed free choice in the matter of associates.
- ___23. Matters of conduct should be decided by the parent and the child together.
- ___24. A child should be required to say "please" whenever he makes a request.
- ___25. When a child's wants and those of an adult are in conflict, the adult should be given the more consideration.

- ___26. Restrictions should not be imposed when they will discourage the child's spontaneous efforts.
- ___27. A child should be taught to obey an adult unquestioningly.
- ___28. The parent should choose the group with which the child is to associate, but the child should be allowed free choice with respect to his companions within the group.
- ___29. A child should obey his parents because they are his parents.
- ___30. The parent should comply with every demand of the child.
- ___31. A child should be required to obey immediately in matters pertaining to health and physical routine.
- ___32. Children's activities, when they seem to an adult to be destructive or wasteful, should be restricted.
- ___33. A child's playthings are not his to do with as he pleases.

Appendix B

F SCALE: FORMS 45 AND 40

The following statements refer to opinions regarding a number of social groups and issues, about which some people agree and others disagree. Please mark each statement in the left-hand margin according to your agreement or disagreement as follows:

- +1: slight support, agreement
- +2: moderate support, agreement
- +3: strong support, agreement

- 1: slight opposition, disagreement
- 2: moderate opposition, disagreement
- 3: strong opposition, disagreement

- _____ 1. Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.

- _____ 2. A person who has bad manners, habits, and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people.

- _____ 3. If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.

- _____ 4. The business man and the manufacturer are much more important to society than the artist and the professor.

- _____ 5. Science has its place, but there are many important things that can never be understood by the human mind.

- _____ 6. Every person should have complete faith in some supernatural power whose decisions he obeys without question.

- _____ 7. Young people sometimes get rebellious ideas, but as they grow up they ought to get over them and settle down.

- ___8. What this country needs most, more than laws and political programs is a few courageous, tireless, devoted leaders in whom the people can put their faith.
- ___9. Nobody ever learned anything really important except through suffering.
- ___10. No sane, normal, decent person could ever think of hurting a close friend or relative.
- ___11. What the youth need most is strict discipline, rugged determination and the will to work and fight for family and country.
- ___12. An insult to our honor should always be punished.
- ___13. Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse.
- ___14. There is hardly anything lower than a person who does not feel a great love, gratitude, and respect for his parents.
- ___15. Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked, and feeble-minded people.
- ___16. Homosexuals are hardly better than criminals and ought to be severely punished.
- ___17. When a person has a problem or worry, it is best for him not to think about it, but to keep busy with more cheerful things.
- ___18. Nowadays more and more people are prying into matters that should remain personal and private.
- ___19. Some people are born with an urge to jump from high places.
- ___20. People can be divided into two distinct classes: the weak and the strong.

- ___21. Some day it will probably be shown that astrology can explain a lot of things.
- ___22. Wars and social trouble may someday be ended by an earthquake or flood that will destroy the whole world.
- ___23. No weakness or difficulty can hold us back if we have enough will power.
- ___24. Most people don't realize how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret places.
- ___25. Human nature being what it is, there will always be war and conflict.
- ___26. Familiarity breeds contempt.
- ___27. Nowadays when so many different kinds of people move around and mix together so much, a person has to protect himself especially carefully against catching an infection from them.
- ___28. The wild sex life of the old Greeks and Romans was tame compared to some of the goings-on in this country, even in places where people might least expect it.
- ___29. The true American way of life is disappearing so fast that force may be necessary to preserve it.
- ___30. The trouble with letting everybody have a say in running the government is that so many people are just naturally stupid or full of wild ideas.

Appendix C

COMPOSITE OF PARENT GROUP EVALUATION

1. What is your overall impression of the value to you of this group study?

It's been a boon to me, I wish I had been raised this way and hope to initiate these ideas in my own home
Interesting, brought to my attention parental attitudes, many of which I could not endorse

Very valuable

To give more time; thought about how the children might really feel. To talk with other parents. To give us an option

The value of this study is very informative to parents. There are some things I hesitate to agree with but overall the study was helpful if not even to make the parent aware of problems that may someday exist

It is interesting in general however I think a little common sense can solve many problems with children if they can gain respect

It has helped me have a better understanding of my children's behavior

Very informative. A real help in theory and hopefully I can use in practical situations. I've learned most importantly that I'm training the children instead of them training me.

I think the concepts were valuable and workable although lots of those things I am already making use of.

It causes one to consider his behavior toward his children and offer some alternate methods for actions he wishes to change

It has shown me that I can leave more decisions to my children (settling arguments, etc.) and how I can avoid being drawn into conflict with them.

This group has had real effect in how I'm responding to my children

Excellent--a good common sense approach--make me realize that our children are normal and so am I.

I think it is of great value

2. The following concepts were discussed during the sessions. Please comment on each as to your feelings about this concept, your use with your family, etc.

Goals of misbehavior (attention, power, revenge, inadequacy)

These are not always separate or easy to discover
 Important to consider in regard to behavior patterns
 I think most of us present were well aware of these
 prior to class
 Some seeking of attention; not much attention given
 for misbehavior
 Not all behavior should be decreed misbehavior is one
 thing that should be brought out more clearly. But
 classifying these misbehaviors makes me understand
 our children better, and able to deal with it better
 I learned to calm down and analyze the situation before
 action
 I learned that there are reasons now
 I have brought out all these behaviors at one time or
 another in my children I'm sure, but can now see
 the real harm and here again am trying to change my
 behavior
 I agree with the overall concepts and reactions however
 I do not believe that all behavior is goal oriented
 toward the parent
 I have determined that the greatest part of misbehavior
 by my children is directed toward the goal of
 attention--the older child, inadequacy
 Reinforced some concepts that I had as well as being
 informative as to how to deal with misbehavior
 Attention and power seem to be one basic goal at our
 house; I now have an understanding of how to handle
 it
 Looks good on paper--a lot of grey areas that depend
 on interpretation
 I feel if a child is acting up for attention they should
 be ignored. If the child finds out he can't
 overpower you, he will give up eventually

Use of encouragement and praise

This was a real eye-opener to me; it has made a differ-
 ence in my child's goal to please me.
 The more specific the comments, the more meaningful to
 children
 Still such a fine line
 Still use praise and can't see that this will ever change
 much; also use encouragement and feel its good, too

Very helpful although I missed this class--the reading is beneficial

We still use praise where we feel it is required or expected; a mixture of praise and encouragement is helpful

Still mixed

I have been praising, but am now using encouragement and find it working much better

I also liked this section but I felt that some of the distinctions were not clear to have an effect on a child

I used to praise--I still do; but now I know it.

Shows the difference between the two and the value of encouragement, although I feel that praise is also important

Another grey area but worth the effort

I feel you should encourage your child at all times, and praise should be administered at certain intervals

Communication skills (active listening, I messages, exploring alternatives)

I only wish I could remember to use these in each situation which arises instead of my usual automatic response

Much like PET, excellent for parents unfamiliar with these ideas

Great

Listen to what the child has to say, sometimes discuss; use I messages when possible

The use of these has to be practiced; I feel that the skills take patience from parents to be used

Am learning to listen more and use I messages

Has helped

Active listening is so important and has improved my relationship with the children already

The active listening is excellent as I perceive use of it; I still am not sure about I messages; exploring alternatives is sane and workable

Takes lots of practice and patience

This has opened communication with one of my children; I seem to be able to avoid more arguments and talk to him more

I'm trying to use all of these and they seem to be working

Something to get your teeth into; worth trying

Use of natural and logical consequences

This is the hardest for me to apply since I don't have cooperation from my spouse about allowing these consequences to occur, but where spouse is not involved I am trying it
 Good idea to consider and use
 This is helpful
 Feel it is good, up to a certain point--must stop when health and welfare are involved
 Very good advice for all parents in training children to be responsible adults
 I have always used this technique
 Very helpful
 Hard to do, but very important
 Perhaps the most sensible of all concepts presented; it takes a lot of courage
 Good; I like it
 This reinforced what we have practiced; it did not change my actions as I tended to use this already
 This seems to be a common sense thing--I'm working on it
 Common sense applied; excellent ideas
 That would depend on the problem, the consequence you would use; I think sometime the logical overpowers the natural consequence and vice versa

The family meeting

Good idea, I intend to try even though spouse may not attend
 Good idea to consider and use
 I have done this somewhat, but plan to continue and expand
 Dinner table or living room discussion--not formal--will try it
 I plan to start having a regular family meeting very soon;
 Very good ideas involved with letting children have a say in the family
 We may give it a try
 I like the idea
 Terrific idea; we're going to start immediately
 Not sure
 I'm not sure I agree but I want to try it
 It seems to be a good concept and one that we would like to work toward having
 I will try when one is older

Again, good ideas were presented; this avenue will
be explored

I feel the family meetings would be very helpful;
We haven't started them as yet

3. Were the number of sessions enough, not enough, too many?

Enough, 9; not enough, 4; too many, 1

4. Was the session length too long, too short, O.K.?

Too long, 0; too short, 2; O.K., 11; (no answer, 1)

5. How would you evaluate the leadership of the session

Excellent on all counts

Just that, only lead, let us think for ourselves, terrific

Marvelous

Very good

Leadership democratic or autocratic

Democratic, 10; autocratic, 3; (one unanswered)

Activities well paced?

Yes, 12; O.K., 1: (one unanswered)

Leaders knowledge of subject matter

Very good, very well informed, excellent, knowledgeable,
adequate-did a good job with discussions, seemed
well read, leader seemed well informed, glad the
leader had raised a family

6. Other comments

I thoroughly enjoyed it and felt I benefited. I have
tremendous respect for the leaders

I have greatly enjoyed these sessions and feel that I
have gained much

Leaders were knowledgeable and fulfilled their roles
in a very professional and personal manner

I think the leader did an expert job teaching; I enjoyed
the class immensely

I feel I can be part of a better relationship with my
child (or children) for having been here. Thanks,
over and over

Am glad I have made a point to be here; have learned
from this--not all will apply to our family

I believe some of the ideas would be good in certain
situations but not all situations would have their
solutions in the course material per se; a learning
experience with good comments from the group

Even if I got no other benefits from these sessions,
there was value in simply meeting with parents
who have similar situations and being able to talk
freely about how they handle them; it's been
therapeutic

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