

STEPGRANDPARENTING AND GRANDPARENTING:  
A PERCEPTION OF GRANDPARENTING  
BEHAVIORS AND ROLES

By

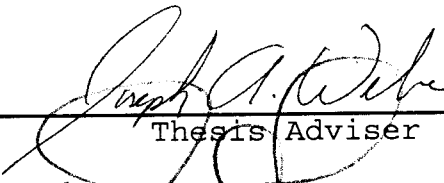
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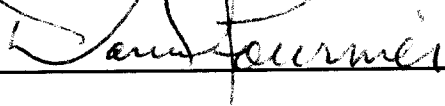
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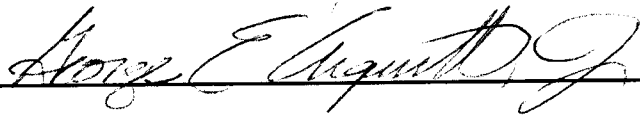
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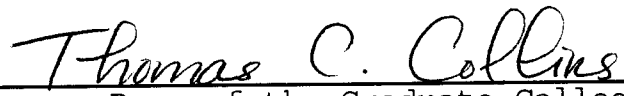
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most dramatic changes occurring in the nation today is the aging of our population. Approximately 30 million elderly persons (65 years and older) in the United States constitute more than 12% of the population. By the year 2030, the elderly are predicted to make up 21% of the population (Denton, Thiessen, & Love, 1990). One in eight individuals is now age 65 or older, and by the year 2030, it will be one in five (Schlenker, 1993). The likelihood of a young person having a living grandparent is higher than at any other time in history (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989). One recent estimate places nearly half of grandparents at less than age 60 with one-third less than age 55, and only one-fifth age 70 or older (Aldous, 1995). Never before in our past have so many humans lived long enough to become grandparents (Bengtson, 1985). In addition to the current population trends the occurrence of divorce

and remarriage has increased in society, families have been affected in many ways.

Many altered family forms have emerged, creating new relationships to be explored. One of the fastest growing family types in every advanced industrial nation has been the stepfamily (Popenoe, 1994). Approximately 60% of remarriages involve an adult with physical custody of one or more children (Trygstad & Sanders, 1989). In 1990, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 11.3% of U.S. children under age 18 lived with two parents married to each other, one of whom was their stepparent, while 21.6% lived with their mother only, 3.1% lived with their father only, 57.7% lived with both of their biological parents, and the remaining 6.3% lived with neither parent (Popenoe, 1994). If current rates of divorce and remarriage continue, as many as 35% of the children in the United States will be part of a stepfamily before they are 18 years old (Glick, 1984). It is no longer uncommon for a child to have biological grandparents, as well as stepgrandparents. However, we know little about marital and family functioning in stepfamilies with children from both parents, about the immediate or long-term impact of new children born within the stepfamily, about the

significance of grandparent relationships (Dunn & Booth, 1994).

While some research has attempted to explore the grandparent/grandchild relationship at the time of a divorce or separation in the family (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1993; Creasey, 1993; Johnson, 1988; Matthews & Sprey, 1984; Bray & Berger, 1990; Sanders & Trygstad, 1989; and Johnson & Barer, 1987) the role of the stepgrandparent has received less attention. Stepgrandparents, express many of the same benefits and concerns in their relationship with their stepgrandchildren that grandparents experience with grandchildren (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989; Bray & Berger, 1990). Stepgrandparenthood, however, involves adaption to extended family life situations that are different from the adjustment to grandparenthood in an intact family situation. The transition to stepgrandparenthood is complex (Henry, Ceglian, & Ostrander, 1993) and role expectations are unclear and very confusing. It is important for social scientist and practitioners to have a better understanding of the impact of stepgrandparents on American Society. As we move toward the 21st century we are a nation of a variety of family forms and we must be concerned about the passing

on of family values to succeeding generations.

Stepgrandparents, as well as grandparents may play a vital role in the family system.

Across historical periods there are changes in the grandparent role simply because of the remarkably different events that those who achieve the grandparent status have experienced within their own lifetimes (Bengston, 1985). Cultural stereotypes portray grandparents as warm, caring individuals who are full of wisdom and love (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). The kindly, aged, passive grandmother who rocks and knits with quiet resignation has been replaced by the active midlife juggler, arranging matrices of roles and schedules (Bengston, 1985). The woman who has small, golden-haired grandchildren is not likely to have silver hair in a bun, serve lemonade on the porch, or worry about slipping dentures and "irregularity" (Hagestad, 1985). She would more realistically be portrayed dressed in a jogging suit on her way to aerobic dancing, or in a suit coming home from work (Hagestad, 1985). Grandparents are taking on a more active role in society and the family. Grandparents often play an important role in the grandchild's social realm early in life, and it is widely believed that

grandparents continue to play an important role in the developing grandchild's social sphere throughout childhood by both direct and indirect efforts (Creasey, 1993). Thus, one must ask whether grandparents in actuality play a far more important role in the contemporary family than current research approaches have unearthed (Johnson, 1985). With the family system undergoing major changes with frequent divorce and remarriage, perhaps family researchers have been slow to recognize that grandparents are increasingly necessary as a stabilizing force in the American family (Johnson, 1985).

#### Statement of the Problem

The American family is changing. Deeply ingrained in American mythology, the nuclear family continues to be the standard against which we judge all other family types. However the narrowly defined nuclear family unit consisting of mother, father and 2.5 children, is now more broadly defined as a mother, father, and children living together. Consequently more families are fitting into the nuclear framework. Throughout the 60's, 70's, and 80's, the percentage of stepchildren under age 18 living with a

stepparent has climbed from 6.7% to 11.3% (Popenoe, 1994). The nuclear family is no longer the most acceptable family form. Stepfamilies, blended families, remarried families, combined families, reformed families, merged families, single parent families and extended families are all emerging in today's society (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).

While society has a tendency to label families in many different ways which they believe appropriate, for the purpose of this research the terms remarried family, combined family, and stepfamily are used interchangeably. With all of the changes taking place in the family, the extended family is often involved in adjustments taking place. Many times during the breakup of a family, an extended family member, such as a grandparent, provides needed support to the family. As the intact family ruptures and is replaced by either one or two one-parent families, relationships are disrupted at three distinct generation levels: grandparent, parent, and child (Kaufman, 1993).

The role of the grandparent, always somewhat ambiguous, becomes even more so when their adult children divorce (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). The support provided by extended family members, such as grandparents and stepgrandparents,

becomes increasingly important when children are involved. A grandparent may be seen as a source of stability in a changing environment. Little work has been conducted on stepgrandparents and how their place in the family network is different or similar in comparison to biological grandparents (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989). Normative expectations for the stepgrandparent/ grandchild relationship are so ambiguous that some families may not even recognize the possibility of a relationship between the two (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). The relationship between stepgrandparents and stepgrandchildren is one of the least studied close relationships in remarried families. A valuable resource may be going untapped.

#### Purpose of the Study

The stepfamily is often a complex family unit. More needs to be understood, and several areas of stepfamily relationship research have not been touched upon at all. A small literature exists on relationships between grandparents and their children's stepchildren (White, 1994). This study provides a better understanding of the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship, from the

perspective of the stepgrandparent. Insight is gained as to what differences may exist between the role of grandparent and stepgrandparent. The purpose of this study was to examine stepgrandparents perceptions of their grandparenting behaviors toward biological grandchildren in comparison to grandparenting behaviors toward stepgrandchildren. The role the grandparent plays in the lives of their grandchildren and stepgrandchildren was explored. Although it was not a direct purpose of this study, it was hoped that the grandparents interviewed gained an awareness of the importance of the grandparent role, and the increasing significance of the role of the stepgrandparent. It is also hoped that by shedding light upon by this issue, grandparents and stepgrandparents might be seen as playing a vital role in todays various family forms.

### Conceptual Framework

#### Family Developmental Theory

Intergenerational relationships, such as the grandparent/grandchild dyad, develop and change over time (Bengston, 1985). Family development is clearly concerned with explaining patterned changes over time, and hence



emphasizes dynamics (White, 1991). The developmental perspective on the family has labeled the nuclear family, as a group, with its regular patterns of expansion, transition, and contraction, in the forefront for research, theory, and practice (Mattlesich and Hill, 1987).

Over the history of the developmental framework, several researchers have attempted to outline family development through the use of stages. The stages of the family life cycle differ in length, in activity, in intensity of family interaction, and in relative difficulty of their family development tasks (Duvall, 1971). With todays various family forms traditional life cycle stages targeting the nuclear family, may exclude many families. Thus for the theory to remain a useful tool new developmental tasks must be introduced to include emerging family forms. Henry, Ceglian and Ostrander (1993) identified a specific set of stages and tasks relevant to the transition to stepgrandparenthood.

Developmental stages and tasks were identified as follows:

STAGE 1: ACCEPTING THE LOSSES

Developmental Tasks:

- \* Grieving and mourning the loss
- \* Letting go of the fantasy of "a lifelong happy marriage" between the adult-child and the adult-child's former spouse
- \* Accepting the loss of traditional grandparenthood
- \* Accepting fears about changing relationships with grandchildren
- \* Clarifying feelings about divorce and single parenting
- \* Dealing with one's own feelings of anger, resentment, sadness, or failure

#### STAGE 2: ACCEPTING THE ADULT-CHILD'S SINGLE STATUS

##### Developmental Tasks:

- \* Adjusting to increased permeability of family boundaries
- \* Accepting reorganization of the adult-child's family
- \* Acknowledging the ambiguity in family roles
- \* Increasing contact with and support for adult-child without resuming parental roles
- \* Accepting ambiguity in grandparenting roles and seeking acceptable ways to maintain relationships with grandchildren
- \* Establishing a new relationship with the adult-child's former spouse
- \* Supporting the contact of grandchildren with the adult-child's former spouse
- \* Accepting the adult-child's new social network

#### STAGE 3: ACCEPTING THE ADULT-CHILD'S ENTRANCE INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP

##### Developmental Tasks:

- \* Adapting to redefinition of the adult-child's family boundaries
- \* Acknowledge fears concerning the impact of a new relationship on all individuals involved
- \* Establishing open communication in new relationships to avoid pseudomutuality

- \* Placing the adult-child's former family into an historical perspective that allows grandchildren to have a sense of their roots and yet does not interfere with the acceptance of a new relationship
- \* Preparing to accept the potential of new family members in the adult-child's family system
- \* Acknowledging the existence of potential stepchildren and understanding their relationship with the adult-child's potential spouse
- \* Considering how potential new family members can be integrated into the extended family
- \* Providing a support system for grandchildren who fear their position in the new relationship or experience loyalty conflicts

#### STAGE 4: ESTABLISHING NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE STEPFAMILY CONTEXT

##### Developmental Tasks:

- \* Redefining family boundaries to include adult-child's new spouse and the stepgrandchildren
- \* Developing realistic expectations for stepfamily living based upon an understanding of the uniqueness of stepfamily structures
- \* Providing opportunities for developing bonds with the adult-child's new spouse and the stepgrandchildren
- \* Clarifying expectations for grandparenting and stepgrandparenting roles
- \* Restructuring family subsystems to accommodate expanded extended family systems
- \* Understanding differences in the legal relationship with grandchildren and stepgrandchildren
- \* Enhancing stepfamily integration through sharing information about family backgrounds and experiences with the adult-child's new spouse and the stepgrandchildren
- \* Establishing terminology to use when referring to persons in the complex of stepfamily relationships

### Family Systems Theory

The development of the grandparent/grandchild relationship, whether step or biological, occurs within the context of the family system. The relationship is often dictated and depends upon the context of the family system. Family systems theory is a way of looking at the world in which objects are interrelated with one another (Witchurch, 1993). When studying the family, systems theory focuses on the entire family rather than on each individual. Systems theory holds that what one family member does will have an impact on the other members. In the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship, communication is often dictated by the grandchild's adult parent. It may not be until the grandchild is an adult that most interactions and exchanges occur directly, without mediation through the middle generation (Hagestad, 1985). It is due to a remarriage of the middle generation, or adult child, that one becomes a stepgrandparent. Thus Systems theory may be a useful tool in examining the interrelationship patterns which occur within a family creating and influencing the stepgrandparent role.

Family systems theory holds the basic assumptions that: 1) general systems theory has the potential for a unifying science , 2) a system must be understood as a whole, and 3) human systems are self-reflective (Witchurch, 1993). When examining family behavior, family systems theory deals with issues such as family rules, communication, marriage, and areas of family problems such as abuse, alcoholism, and family violence. The family must be understood as a whole and cannot be comprehended by examining its individual parts in isolation from itself (Witchurch, 1993). When using family systems theory it is important to focus on the family and the processes that take place rather than the individuals and the way the family is structured. The family system often expands as a remarriage occurs and new family members are added. More people and more relationships mean there must be clear communication between members in order for the system to function smoothly (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).

#### Objectives

The following objectives have been developed for this research:

1. To explore the role of the stepgrandparent.
2. To identify differences in the perceptions of grandparenting behaviors toward grandchildren and stepgrandchildren.
3. To determine what factors impact stepgrandparenting behaviors.
4. To identify what roles and behaviors may exist for the stepgrandparent.
5. To make recommendations for further research in the area of stepgrandparenting.

#### Research Questions

1. How does the amount contact the stepgrandparent has with the stepgrandchild influence the stepgrandparents satisfaction with the relationship?
2. In what way does the age of the stepgrandchild influence the stepgrandparents perceived degree of cohesion?
3. Does the length of time as a stepgrandparent influence the importance of the relationship with the stepgrandchild?

4. Does geographical distance to the stepgrandchild, influence the amount of contact the stepgrandparent has?
5. What are accepted as appropriate roles for the stepgrandparent?
6. What are accepted as appropriate behaviors for the stepgrandparent?
7. What are common characteristics used to describe relationships of stepgrandchildren and biological grandchildren?
8. What are common activities shared between stepgrandparents and stepgrandchildren; how do these compare to activities shared with biological grandchildren?

#### Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions are utilized in this study:

Combined family - formed when an adult, with at least one child from a previous union, establishes a household with someone who has no legal ties to that child (Kaufman, 1993).

Family Cohesion - the emotional bonding and the degree of individual autonomy that family members experience (Olson, 1986).

Grandchild - the child of one's son or daughter.

Grandparent - a parent of one's father or mother.

Remarried family - one in which at least one of the adults has a child or children from a previous relationship (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).

Stepchild - a person whose parent or parents are partnered with someone who is not the child's biological or adoptive parent (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).

Stepfamily - occurs when two-biological-parent family is not equally formed or breaks up and the custodial parent mates with a new partner; a family in which at least one member of the adult couple is a stepparent (Popenoe, 1994).

Stepgrandparent/Stepgrandchild - a relationship that exists between the parents of a stepparent and the stepparent's stepchildren (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).

Stepparent - an adult whose partner has at least one child from a previous relationship (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).



### Summary

As life expectancy increases and the number of elderly continue to increase in society, more people are becoming grandparents. People are becoming grandparents at a younger age and living to an older age; thus, playing a more active role in the lives of their grandchildren. As the American family continues to change, a variety of family forms are emerging along with new relationships to be examined. A remarriage in a family can bring about uncertainty in roles and relationships. While little is known about the stepgrandparent-stepgrandchild relationship, it indeed may be a source of support and stability in a changing environment. Stepgrandparents may symbolically represent the similar qualities as does a biological grandparent, and share similar experiences. The role the stepgrandparent plays and the factors that influence the Stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship remain to be explored.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The body of empirical and theoretical literature regarding the family is extensive, while that pertaining specifically to grandparenting is growing; however, the literature examining the stepgrandparent is almost non-existent. With the increasing acknowledgement of emerging family forms, researchers are focusing on what changes are occurring within the family after a separation or divorce occur. How does separation or divorce effect relationships within the multigenerational family? Of particular concern are the dynamics and changes that occur, which directly or indirectly effect the grandparent/grandchild relationship.

A person has no input into becoming a grandparent, parents cannot choose to be grandparents any more than children can choose to be born (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

However, the bond that often forms between a grandparent and a grandchild is truly unique and special. The grandparent/grandchild relationship may provide a vital emotional attachment, especially to a child. During times of family turmoil, grandparents are emerging as a source of support. With the changes taking place in the family, the role of the grandparent is also changing. With the rich diversity and heterogeneity that exist among the contemporary population of grandparents (Bengtson, 1985), it becomes increasingly important to recognize and explore the potential significance of the grandparent/grandchild relationship.

Often the term grandparent represents a particular symbolism, yet it is unclear as to whether or not a similar symbolism applies to the term stepgrandparent. As in the grandparent relationship, stepgrandparents are usually not consulted about becoming a stepgrandparent (Trygstad & Sanders, 1989). Normative expectations defining the relationship between a stepgrandparent and a stepgrandchild do not exist. Often the family concentrates on building a bond between the stepparent and stepchild and overlooks the potential relationship between the stepgrandparent and

grandchild. The stepgrandparent often remains unclear as to how they fit into the new family system, and how to relate to the new stepgrandchild. Given the potential source of support grandparents provide, it is important to examine the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship.

### The Changing Family

While a great deal of research exists on stepfamilies, this literature review will not attempt to encompass all of it, but merely to incorporate portions that apply to this research. Families formed as a result of marriages between adults who have children from previous relationships have existed in large numbers and in most cultures throughout history. In fact, George Washington, the father of our country, was also a stepfather. Abraham Lincoln was a stepchild, and it was his stepmother, Nancy, who fostered his early interest in reading and learning. Most recently, presidents who were members of stepfamilies include Ford, Reagan, and Clinton (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).

The stepfamily has been one of the fastest growing family types in every advanced industrial nation (Popenoe, 1994). One-third of Americans are now a stepparent, a

stepchild, a stepsibling, or some other member of a stepfamily (Glick, 1989). At any one time about 10% of American children live with a stepfather and mother, and about 2% with a stepmother and father (Bachrach, 1983).

During the course of the past 25 years, divorce and remarriage has achieved prominence as a widespread social phenomenon (Kruk & Hall, 1995), yet society is still looking at the combined family in a nuclear family frame. However, that frame no longer fits; it is much too small. In a combined family, there are simply too many related people to be placed into a nuclear family frame (Kaufman, 1993).

With the nuclear family still representing the norm in our society, people are frequently unprepared for how combined family life differs from life in a nuclear family (Kaufman, 1993). Kaufman (1993) discusses several ways in which combined families are built on unique grounds:

- \* The bond between parent and child predates the bond between the couple.
- \* The hallmark of the combined family is the couple's lack of symmetrical ties to the children.
- \* Couples are often at different stages of their life cycles.
- \* All combined families are born of loss. A parent has to be missing in order for there to be room to add a new adult to a preexisting one-parent family.
- \* Not all members of a combined family share common history.

- \* Parents who remarry are more likely to choose mates from markedly different backgrounds than those they chose in their first marriages.
- \* Only the remarried parent is an insider with both her or his new spouse and old children.
- \* The stepparent in a combined family is expected to function in a role that the children's outside parent held in the children's family of origin.
- \* The addition of a stepparent does not subtract the children's outside parent.
- \* The children's outside parent retains power and influence that can penetrate combined family boundaries.
- \* There is no legal relationship between stepparent and stepchild.

Due to the uniqueness of stepfamilies, they face many diverse problems. The stepparent-stepchild relationship is perhaps the most scrutinized close relationship within remarried families. It is believed by many to be the most important relationship in predicting overall stepfamily happiness (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). While adults in stepfamilies are bound by a marriage contract, the only tie that binds stepchild and stepparent is the marriage of the child's parent to the stepparent (Kaufman, 1993). Thus, the existence of the stepparent-stepchild relationship is dependent upon the continuance of the adult marriage. Both parties may be unwilling to risk investing in a relationship, fearing it would be lost should the marriage

fail (Kaufman, 1993). This fear may very well extend into the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship.

Remarriage can also be viewed as potentially beneficial to overall family functioning. Remarriage usually increases the family income, and the addition of a new stepparent may also provide emotional and childrearing support that could be salutary for both custodial parents and stepchildren (Hetherington & Jodl, 1994). The fact that stepfamily ties are not interchangeable with biological ties does not mean that stepfamily ties are useless as sources of support (White, 1994). Strong feelings of parental love can be activated in substitute parents, including many and perhaps most stepparents (Popenoe, 1994). It is thus likely that a stepgrandparent shares similar emotions as a biological grandparent.

Despite the uneasiness and stigma, stepfamilies continue to be formed, and stepfamily members continue to struggle with unresolved issues of how best to support family members (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). During the transition into stepfamily life, some children and adolescents may seek support and comfort through relationships with other caring adults outside the immediate

family (Chapman, 1991). The source of this support and comfort maybe found in a relationship with a grandparent or stepgrandparent.

Grandparenthood is a complex phenomenon which has been understudied and often misunderstood leading to stereotyping, ignoring important variations and oversimplifying the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Tinsely & Parke, 1987). The role the grandparent plays in the multigenerational family may be more significant than recognized in the past.

#### Grandparenting roles

In most societies there seems to be something special about grandparenthood (Knipscheer, 1988). Many scholars on grandparenthood look for special terms to characterize it. Frazier (1939) talks about the "guardians of generations", Troll (1983) sees them as "watchdogs", Gutman (1985) uses the term "warden", and Hagestad (1985) calls grandparents the family "national guard". This is just one example of a mythical realities, while not explicit, is always present in the background of the family value system (Knipscheer,



1988). It is a means by which grandparents continue to influence family behavior throughout generations.

Kornhaber & Woodward (1981) found that children viewed their grandparents in a variety of roles. Grandparents are living ancestors who can liberate children from the tyrannies of the present. Taking on the role of "historian" grandparents pass on stories of "the olden days", they pass on religious values and family traditions. The grandparent is a family historian, as well as, bringing to life relatives long deceased or so distant that they exist for the child only through the grandparent's words and images (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Grandparents also emerged as fulfilling the role of "mentor." Children were not as interested in what the grandparent was doing, but in sharing the experiences with them. Grandparents teach out of the wisdom they have accumulated through a lifetime of experience (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Overall the grandparents serve as a "role model" to their grandchildren. The kind of grandparents they are will depend upon the images of grandparents they carry inside them. Grandparents are living examples of what the grandchildren expect to become (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

One way in which grandparents may affect grandchildren is by serving as a stabilizing force on the middle generation (Hagestad, 1985). Grandparents have also been discussed as a moderating force, whose presence softens the intensity of modern family life (Baranowski, 1982; Hader, 1965). They may be able to mediate between the other two generations, helping children better understand their parents. In cases such as divorce, this may help the grandchild make sense out of a changing environment.

Kornhaber & Woodward (1981) believe that the main role of today's grandparents is to rebuild the family pyramid. They are often the very pillars on which the family rests. Grandparents have to recognize that they are essential to a sturdy family regardless of how unnecessary, redundant, or impotent society may make the aged feel (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

The rapidity and scope of recent demographic changes have caught us off guard (Hagestad, 1985). We still have a tendency to associate grandparenthood with old age. Many authors have recently discussed the lack of a grandparent role. Fischer and Silverman (1982) use Roscow's (1976) term "tenuous role," a social status without clear normative

expectations attached to it; Wood (1982) calls it ambiguous. The symbolism of the grandparent role is perhaps as important and varied, as are the behaviors grandparents can be observed performing (Bengtson, 1985).

### Grandparenting styles

In a society where grandparents range in age from 30 to 110, and grandchildren range from newborns to retirees, we should not be surprised to find a wide variety of grandparenting styles (Neugarten & Weinstein, 1964). Grandparenting has often been thought of in terms of styles, such as the "fun seeker", "formal", or "distant" (Neugarten & Weinstein, 1964; Robertson, 1977). Cherlin & Furstenberg (1985) categorized grandparents as having one of five styles of grandparenting: detached, passive, supportive, authoritative, and influential. Detached grandparents are distant and remote and play little or no role in the lives of their grandchildren. Paternal grandparents may be at risk of this in divorce cases which the mother remains in custody. Passive grandparents may have regular contact with grandchildren, and are ready to offer assistance if needed; however under regular circumstances leave parenting strictly

to the parent. Grandparents who took on a more active style of grandparenting may be supportive, in that they exchange services with the grandchild, or authoritative, in which they provide advice and discipline in the grandchild's upbringing. At the extreme of active grandparents, Cherlin & Furstenberg (1985) discuss the influential style of grandparenting, in which grandparents see the grandchildren quite often and are major figures in their day-to-day lives. This style of grandparenting requires a great deal of time, energy and sometimes money. Relationships in this category were described as "extremely close or quite close" (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985).

#### Grandparenting: An Adult Perspective

Every time a child is born, a grandparent is born too (Kornhaber & Woodward, (1981). Grandparenthood, though certainly one of the oldest social roles in human experience, has suddenly become the object of scholarly attention and popular concern (Bengston, 1985). Today's persons of grandparent age are more likely to be healthy, to be relatively well off, and to have a living spouse than was the case as recently as 40 years ago (Aldous, 1987). This

in addition to the increasing life expectancy results in more grandparents taking a more active role in the lives of their grandchildren.

Kornhaber & Woodward (1981) explored what grandchildren mean to grandparents. Generally grandparents described the connection to their grandchildren as natural, triggering an instinct - especially grandmothers - to nurture the young. For many grandfathers, a grandchild represented a living confirmation of his own continuance. Like any relationship between two people, grandparents felt that attachment to a grandchild must be developed through shared time and intimate contact. Those grandparents who were not close to grandchildren felt a deep pain of disconnection. One important factor that emerged from this study, was the fact that while a biological connection to the grandchild was powerful, it did not ensure a vital connection. Four factors emerged as crucial to maintaining a vital connection with a grandchild: the critical dimensions of time and place, a commitment to family, and a sense of personal altruism (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

Weber & Hesser (in-press) emphasized the need to explore modern grandparenting issues from the perspective of

the older adult. In a sample of Elderhostel grandparents four themes emerged as the best aspects of being a grandparent: a) enjoyment, b) loving and caring, c) not being the primary caregiver, and d) family continuity. Three themes emerged as the worst aspects of being a grandparent: a) gloomy future, b) geographic distance, and c) nothing (Weber & Hesser, in-press). The researchers emphasized grandparents as an important resource for families, acting as a buffer between generations; furthermore, that grandparents do want to be involved in the lives of their grandchildren.

#### Grandparenting: A Childs' Perspective

Children also provide a unique view into the meaning of the grandparent/grandchild relationship. Kornhaber & Woodward (1981) found that when asked to draw pictures of their grandparents, there was a marked difference in the drawings from those children who had contact with their grandparents from those who had little to no contact with grandparents. Children with close contact to one or more grandparents portrayed the grandparent as large, active, and fully viewed on the page. To these children a grandparent

represented secure unconditional love, a person with whom they openly shared a variety of emotions. Children who had sporadic contact with grandparents represented the majority of children, many from divorced homes. Their drawings portrayed the grandparent as small, immobile, and lifeless. These children saw their grandparents as preoccupied with their own friends, jobs, and health. While an attachment was apparent, there was no "specialness" to the relationship. Children who had no contact with grandparents. Their drawings did not portray a person at all, but a puppet or cartoon character. These children simply wondered what it would be like to have a grandparent. They lived in a state of detachment accompanied by a dangerous emotional apathy, feeling as if a part of them was missing (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). This study provides valuable information as to the significance the grandparent/grandchild relationship holds, and the positive impact a grandparent can have on the life of a child and the emptiness a child feels without that relationship.

When examining differences between rural farm and nonfarm families on the extent and quality of relations between adolescents and their grandparents, King & Elder

(1995) found that children from farm families live closer and have more contact with grandparents. As a result, these children rated the quality of their relationship with grandparents higher.

### Grandparenting and Divorce

Family relationships beyond those of the immediate family are altered by marital divorce (Bray & Berger, 1990). Changes in family and household patterns are leading to a general decline in the frequency with which the lives of older persons are closely linked with those of younger ones (Uhlenberg, 1988). Within the context of the changing family, the grandparent/grandchild relationship has recently received growing attention.

A great deal of the literature dealing with grandparenting and divorce has focused on the role of the biological grandparent during an adult child's divorce or separation. A divorce effects the entire family system, established links are disrupted, the balance of resources within the extended family are changed, and existing bonds often require renegotiating (Matthews & Sprey, 1984).



In the great majority of cases, mothers become custodial parents after divorce, and post-divorce contact between maternal grandparents and grandchildren either increases or remains the same (Kruk & Hall, 1995). Men are typically noncustodial parents after divorce, and paternal grandparents' contact with their grandchildren is highly dependent on the level of the father's contact with his children (Kruk & Hall, 1995). In general, paternal grandparents are viewed as being at high risk for losing contact with grandchildren when the child-inlaw is the custodial mother (Kruk & Hall, 1995).

Gender has emerged as a critical factor in determining contact (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Kennedy, 1990; Kivett, 1991; Troll, 1983). Grandmothers are closer to their grandchildren than are grandfathers, especially when the middle generation is a daughter. If there is a divorce and the mother receives custody, the paternal grandparent-grandchild connection is likely to break (Aldous, 1995).

In 90% of all divorce cases, the mother usually receives custody (Creasey, 1993). Creasey (1993) found that grandchildren from divorced families indicated less satisfactory relationships with paternal grandparents when

compared to grandchildren in intact families. It was found that although granddaughter relationships with paternal grandparents seemed to weaken following a divorce, the continuation or enhancement of the grandparent relationship was evident by phone contact and actual visits.

Generally sons were found to maintain closer contact with the noncustodial father than do daughters, as a result of this extended contact, it was found that sons maintain closer relationships with paternal grandparents (Creasey, 1993). One possible explanation for this may be that unconsciously daughters tend to blame the custodial father for the divorce, which in turn threatens the quality of relationships with their paternal grandparents (Creasey, 1993). Johnson (1988) identified paternal grandparents as more likely to lose touch with the grandchildren over time. It was also found that younger grandparents are more likely to remain in contact whereas older grandparents, particularly those in poor health, have less contact (Johnson, 1988). Matthews & Sprey (1984) also found that the importance of who was the custodial parent had a bearing on the grandparent/grandchild relationship. It appeared that grandparents whose former in-law child maintained

custody of the grandchild had to work harder to maintain the relationship. Ahrons and Bowman (1982) determined that while maternal grandparents reported no change in the relationship or more contact and greater emotional closeness to their grandchildren after divorce, paternal grandparents were more likely to lose contact. As we begin to recognize the salience of grandparents in their grandchildren's lives, both before and after divorce, the necessity of actively advocating on behalf of the grandparent population, particularly those paternal grandparents who are most at-risk of contact loss, becomes clear (Kruk & Hall, 1995).

Gladstone (1988) reported that changes in contact between grandmothers and a grandchild following a separation or divorce were influenced by structural factors, specifically, geographic proximity and the custodial status of the adult child. Several researchers have (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Sprey & Matthews, 1984; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Kruk & Hall, 1995) found geographic proximity to be an influential factor in grandparent/grandchild contact. Gladstone (1988) suggests that geographic mobility, rather than geographic proximity *per se*, might be more closely related to changes in contact. He indicates that there is

a significant increase in the frequency of fact-to-face contacts between grandmothers and grandchildren following the disruption of an adult child's marriage. Telephone contact also increased significantly. Gladstone (1988) found it particularly interesting and important that support in the form of personal advice to the grandchild increased significantly following divorce, implying that in a time which must engender a great deal of uncertainty, fear, loneliness and change, a young child would particularly benefit from the comfort given by a grandparent.

Johnson and Barer (1987) explored the effects of divorce in the "kinship" network between a grandparent, adult child, and grandchild when an adult child divorces. This background research established: 1) family relationships are volunteered by each individual, 2) the family is made up of two units, the nuclear, and all other relatives. 3) the family primarily is organized by women. In response to these findings, Johnson and Barer (1987) explored the effects divorce of an adult child has on the kinship networks of the older generation. Findings indicate that families of paternal grandmothers increased the most frequently. A former daughter-in-law is most likely to

retain a relationship with her former mother in-law.

Johnson and Barer (1987) identified three reasons this may occur: 1) women generally being the manager of family ties, 2) so the grandchildren can continue to be involved with the grandparents, and 3) the competition which may occur between mother and daughter in-law for the son's affection is no longer an issue. During the actual divorce process the role the grandparent plays in the family may be redefined. In the past decade there has been a spurt of interest in grandparents because of the hope or the wish that they could perform more important functions in the American family system. Johnson (1988) attempted to identify how the status and role of grandparents were redefined during the reorganization process of their children's families. He hypothesized that grandparents become comforters and supporters for grandchildren who are affected by their parents' divorce. Johnson (1988) found that younger grandmothers (65 and under) had significantly more contact with their grandchildren, often providing emotional and financial support. This is attributed to the fact that the adult child may also be younger and need more assistance.

When divorce occurs the sense of family is cracked at its very foundations (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). The entire family system is effected. Following the adult child's separation or divorce, a grandparent may serve as a stabilizing foundation of family continuity.

#### Remarriage and Grandparenting

Recently some researchers have focused more specifically on the grandparent relationship in stepfamilies. Bray and Berger (1990) focused on the noncustodial father and paternal grandparent relationships in stepfamilies. Specifically, the researchers examined children's psychological adjustments with noncustodial fathers and paternal grandparents, when a remarriage has occurred, and the adjustments to stepfathers and their step families. It was found that children benefitted from grandparent relationships continuing with previous grandparents, as well as relationships with new step grandparents. They also indicate that the level of interparental conflict may have a bearing on these relationships. Following a divorce, the relationship between children and their resident parent often becomes

closer. Likewise, the role of the grandparent(s), may also play a vital role. The grandparent tends to step in providing support and guidance. Kennedy and Kennedy (1993) investigate the quality of grandparent/grandchild relationships and the activities shared by grandchildren and their most-close grandparent. College students evaluated statements concerning why grandchildren feel close to their grandparent on a 5 point Likert-type scale. Grandchildren from stepfamilies tended to chose a grandparent from the side of the family of the resident parent. A stepgrandparent was identified as "most-close" in only 5 cases. In general, children from step families indicated closer relationships with grandparents than children from intact or single parent families.

Sanders and Trygstad (1989) investigated the differences between stepgrandparents and grandparents with regard to the young adults perception of amount of contact, satisfaction with contact, importance of the relationship, social roles, personal roles, behaviors, and family strengths. Their findings indicate that grandchildren have much more contact with grandparents than stepgrandchildren with stepgrandparents. Even with more contact, the

satisfaction with the amount of contact was more often "less than desired" in the grandchildren than in stepgrandchildren. The grandchildren expected the grandparent to be someone to whom they go for advice, can imitate in terms of occupation, and will transfer family heritage. These expectations were not as high with stepgrandchildren. The authors felt that while their findings showed stronger relationships between grandchildren and grandparent, stepgrandchildren do value stepgrandparents (63% desire more contact) and are considering them valued members of the family unit.

#### Stepgrandparents

With the formation of the remarried family, boundaries and roles within the family become even more ambiguous. Although research has explored aspects of the stepparent/stepchild relationship, little consideration has been given to the parent(s) of the stepparent. Biological instincts are not aroused by the arrival of stepgrandchildren (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Vital connections can be difficult to achieve. A great deal of time and effort may be necessary to form a secure



stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship. Stepgrandchildren bring their own grandparents with them into the combined family created by remarriage, this may add to confusion in emotional priorities and roles (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

There are a variety of factors that influence the relationship between a stepgrandparent and stepgrandchild. Cherlin & Furstenberg (1986) found that the older the children were when their parent remarried, the less likely they were to regard their stepgrandparents as of the same importance as biological grandparents. Sanders & Trygstad (1989) found that children who became stepchildren at a younger age (10 and under) rated stepgrandparents as being more involved in social and personal roles. An additional factor regarded as important is whether or not the stepgrandchild lives full time with the grandparent's adult child. The more opportunity for contact the more likely a relationship will develop. Acceptance of the remarriage also plays a role in the stepgrandparent/ grandchild relationship (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989). If either the stepgrandparents or the stepgrandchildren are upset about or do not support the remarriage, it is less likely that a good relationship will develop between them (Ganong & Coleman,

1994). Sanders and Trygstad (1989) emphasize the potential for the stepgrandparent to play a valuable role in the family. In their research stepgrandparents emerged as a viable resource for a sizeable percentage of stepgrandchildren.

#### Summary

In the past decade there has been a growth of interest in grandparents because of the hope or the wish that they could perform more important functions in the American family system. With grandparents, grandchildren do not have to perform as they must for parents, peers, and teachers. With grandchildren, grandparents are removed from the ranks of the "Aged"; to grandchildren, close grandparents are ageless (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). The emotional attachment between grandparents and grandchildren, confers a natural form of social immunity on children that they cannot get from any other person or institution (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

While little examination has gone into the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship, there is evidence that the relationship fosters positive outcomes. The

symbolism attached to the role of the grandparent may very well extend to the stepgrandparent. Further research is needed to explore differences between stepgrandparents and grandparents and for greater understanding of stepgrandparenting in general (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to explore the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship, from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. It identifies some differences and similarities that exist between the role of grandparent and stepgrandparent. Furthermore, it examines grandparenting behaviors toward biological grandchildren in comparison to grandparenting behaviors toward stepgrandchildren. This study is unique in that it is one of the first to explore the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. It is anticipated that the results of this study will provide a better understanding of the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship.

As divorce and remarriage become more common in society, the family unit continues to change. It becomes increasingly important to explore extended family relationships and their possible significance in the

multigenerational family. The hypothesized connection between stepgrandparent and stepgrandchild in the remarried multigenerational family, and the variables effecting that relationship are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

In this study, the stepgrandparents perceived grandparenting behaviors were looked at in relation to biological grandchildren and stepgrandchildren. The relationship to the stepgrandchild was further explored by looking at social and personal dimensions, as well as cohesion.

The stepgrandparent is born as a remarriage occurs in which their adult child marries an individual with children from a previous marriage. As a remarriage takes place, the family system must incorporate new members. The remarried multigenerational family system may include: the child, biological parent, stepparent, siblings, stepsiblings, biological grandparents, and stepgrandparents. The relationship between stepgrandparent and stepgrandchild is often influenced by other members of the remarried multigenerational family. For example, the relationship between the child and the stepgrandparent may be encouraged or discouraged by the stepparents relationship with the

child, or the stepparents relationship with the stepgrandparent. This expanded family system is often complex, as illustrated in the first model (Figure 1).

The dimensions of the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship are impacted by a variety of variables, as shown in the second model (Figure 2). Age of the stepgrandchild, age of the grandparent, age of child at time of remarriage, geographic proximity, amount of contact between stepgrandparent and stepgrandchild, connection of stepgrandparent through custodial or noncustodial parent, importance of relationship to stepgrandparent, role conception, behaviors expected, satisfaction with the relationship, and family cohesion, are all important considerations when looking at the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship. The impact of these variables has been examined from the perspective of the stepgrandchild (Trygstad & Sanders, 1989). This research is unique in that it provides insight as to how these variables impact the stepgrandparent/grandparent relationship, from the perspective of the stepgrandparent.

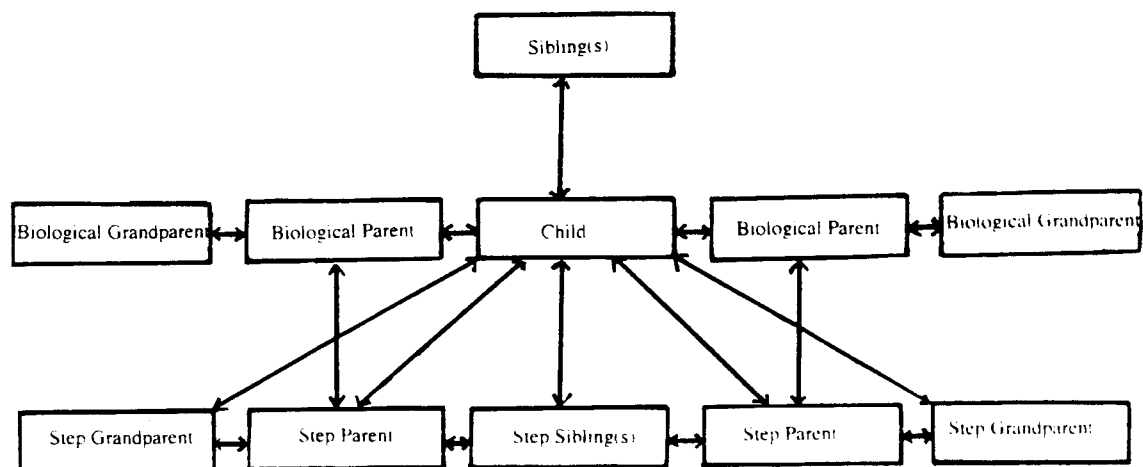


Figure 1. Model to illustrate the remarried multigenerational family system, as it connects the stepgrandparent to the stepgrandchild.

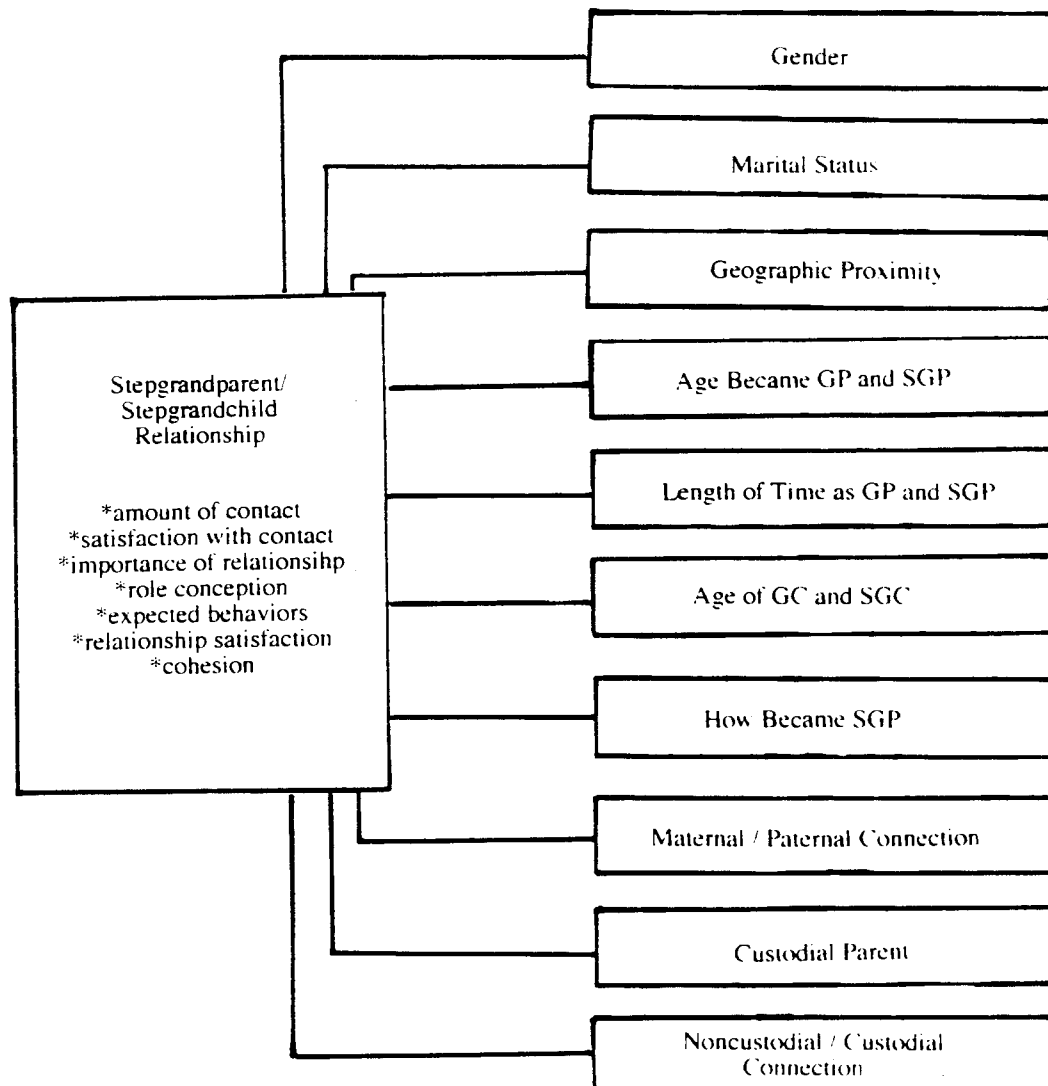


Figure 2. Model to examine the variables as they impact the stepgrandchild/grandparent relationship.



### Type of Research

This was an exploratory study of a descriptive nature, utilizing a research design that incorporates a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. Using both methods allowed the researcher to quantify data in order to permit subsequent statistical manipulation and analysis (Babbie, 1983), while qualitatively gaining insight into the actual experience of being a stepgrandparent. Qualitative research seeks to understand the multifaceted and complex nature of human experience from the perspective of subjects (Sankar & Gubrium, 1994), providing a unique viewpoint that can best be obtained through experiences and stories of the individual. One clear strength of qualitative research is its ability to detect, represent, and explicate the meaning of the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship from the viewpoint of the stepgrandparent. The quantitative portion of the research enabled the use of data to address demographic, as well as relational aspects of the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship. In combination, the use of qualitative and quantitative designs provided a unique perspective of the roles and behaviors associated with stepgrandparenting.

## Research Design

This research was designed to explore the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship; furthermore, to examine an unknown area of the extended family and provide familiarity with the stepgrandparent topic. This research was a descriptive design, attempting to factually and accurately describe the differences in how stepgrandparents perceive grandparenting behaviors toward step and biological grandchildren. Descriptive research is used to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a particular situation or area of interest (Issac & Michael, 1981). According to Best and Kahn (1986) the purpose of descriptive research is to:

1. form and test hypothesis,
2. use inductive-deductive reasoning to make generalizations,
3. describe the procedures accurately and completely in order to replicate the study and,
4. use variables that already exist and are not manipulated by experimental procedures.

A major purpose of this research was to describe grandparenting behaviors and roles in the

stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship, and determine what existing variables impact that relationship.

This study was also characterized as correlational. The purpose of correlational research is to investigate the extent to which variations in one factor correspond with variations in one or more other factors based on correlation coefficients (Issac & Michael, 1981). The correlational research design allowed for the measurement of the variables outlined in model two, as well as their interrelationships. The research was intended to show that correlations exist between the quality of the stepgrandparent/ grandchild relationship in relation to the following variables: age of the child, age of the stepgrandparent, age of the child at time of remarriage, geographic proximity, amount of contact, and if the connection is through the custodial or noncustodial parent. Measures of central tendency were used to describe the importance of the relationship to the stepgrandparent, role conception, behaviors expected, and the child's relationship with their stepparent (Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; & Trygstad & Sanders, 1989).

## Sample

This research focused on the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. Information was collected from a purposive sample of stepgrandparents. The sample for this study was obtained from Stillwater and Cushing Oklahoma. Purposive sampling was used so that the researcher could select a sample of subjects that would yield the most comprehensive and relevant understanding of stepgrandparenting (Babbie, 1983). Participants were recruited through referral from Stillwater and Cushing community residents, senior citizen centers, housing authority, Project Heart nutrition sites, and clergy. Much of the sample was generated using a snowball technique. Snowball sampling is a method through which you develop an ever-increasing set of sample observations (Babbie, 1983). Participants referred by community and clergy were asked to identify additional participants, and each of those participants were asked for further recommendations. There were no age requirements or restrictions for the participating grandparents. Grandparents and grandchildren could be either gender. Spouse's were interviewed separately and considered as two

separate participants. For the purpose of this study, the sample included only those grandparents who have both step and biological grandchildren. The stepgrandparents were asked to consider one step and one biological grandchild whom they see most often. The evaluation of the relationship that the stepgrandparent has with biological grandchildren, as well as stepgrandchildren, was the basis of this research. A purposive sample of 75 stepgrandparents was identified as participants in this study; however, due to a number of barriers, including age, length of time as a stepgrandparent, time spent with stepgrandchild, and fear of having no information to contribute, only 35 participants were included in the actual study. The barriers to participation will be discussed in greater detail in a later section. Adequate sample size was ultimately linked to the unfolding of conceptual consistency of the data and thematic pattern saturation (Rubinstein, 1994)

#### Instrumentation

In an effort to explore the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship, a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire utilized in this study was modeled after Sanders and

Trygstad (1989) research on stepgrandparents from the view of young adults. Questionnaires were given to a sample of 75 grandparents, who had biological and step grandchildren. Face and content validity were established by presenting the questionnaires used in the research to three gerontology graduate students. Graduate students were asked to independently rate each item, based on the premise that the question is clear and appears to measure what it is intended to measure.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was broken into several sections. Background information, amount of contact, evaluation of contact, importance of relationship, role conception, behaviors expected, relationship with biological grandchild and stepgrandchild, relationship with stepparent, family cohesion and short answer discussion questions. The entire questionnaire took approximately 45 minute to an hour to complete.

#### Background Information (demographic)

The first section of the questionnaire (Appendix A) included 10 background questions. The respondents were asked for the following information: gender; marital

status; geographic proximity to biological grandchild and stepgrandchild; the age he/she became a biological grandparent & stepgrandparent; length of time as grandparent & stepgrandparent; age of biological grandchild & stepgrandchild; how he/she became a stepgrandparent; if the stepgrandchild evaluated was from maternal or paternal side; the custodial parent of the stepgrandchild; and whether they are connected through the custodial or noncustodial parent.

#### Amount of contact

The amount of contact was measured on a 7-point scale originally developed by Hartshorne & Manaster (1982) for use with grandparents, and adapted by Sanders and Trygstad (1989) for use with stepgrandchildren. This scale evaluated the amount of contact ranging from, "daily" to "almost never", that the grandparent has with the step and biological grandchild in person, by letter, and by telephone.

### Evaluation of contact

The satisfaction with the amount of contact was assessed on a 5-point scale by Hartshorne and Manaster (1982). Sanders and Trygstad (1989) adapted the scale for their work with stepgrandchildren to indicate satisfaction with the amount of contact from "very satisfied" to "not satisfied."

### Importance of the relationship

The perceived importance of the relationship to the stepgrandchild was measured using a 5-point rating scale developed by Sanders and Trygstad (1989). Participants were asked to rate from "extremely important" to "extremely unimportant" their relationships with biological and stepgrandchildren.

### Role conception

Hartshorne and Manaster (1982) adapted a scale for grandchildren's role conception from a scale developed by Robertson (1977) which measured grandparent's role meaning. Sanders and Trygstad (1989) changed the term grandparent to stepgrandparent. For this research the identical questions



were asked from the view of the stepgrandparent, as opposed to stepgrandchild. This scale measured "social" and "personal" dimensions. Ten questions were used, 5 designed to measure "personal", and 5 designed to measure "social". Reliability coefficient alphas for this scale were: social scale = .68, personal scale = .83 for Hartshorne and Manaster, and social scale = .77, personal scale = .89 for Sanders and Trygstad.

#### Behaviors expected

The stepgrandparents perception of appropriate and/or expected biological grandchild and stepgrandchild behaviors was measured on a scale developed by Robertson (1976) and adapted by Sanders and Trygstad (1989) for use with stepgrandchildren. This scale required a "yes" or "no" response to questions about expressive and instrumental behaviors stepgrandchildren expect of stepgrandparents. For the purpose of this research, the stepgrandparent was asked to respond to each question as they felt were appropriate and/or expected grandparent and stepgrandparent behaviors toward biological grandchildren and stepgrandchildren.

Reliability coefficient alpha for this scale was .72 for Sanders and Trygstad.

Relationship with Biological  
Grandchildren and Stepgrandchildren

Participants were asked to rate the satisfaction with their biological grandchild and stepgrandchild on a 5-point rating scale adapted from Trygstad and Sanders (1989). Responses ranged from "very satisfied", to "very unsatisfied".

Relationship with Stepparent

Participants were asked to rate the quality of their relationship with their adult child (the stepparent) on a 5-point rating scale. Responses ranged from "very satisfied" to "very unsatisfied". Participants were also asked to rate the perceived relationship between stepgrandchild and stepgrandparent.

Family Cohesion

The amount of closeness was examined in this section. The FACES III cohesion scale was used to measure the

bonding that takes place between the grandchild and the stepgrandparent. Examining cohesion included the elements of emotional bonding, supportiveness, family boundaries, time and friends, and interest in recreation. Respondents were asked 10 questions from the scale that were adapted by the researcher for use in evaluating the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship. The amount of cohesion was then assessed using the Circumplex Model. FACES III was developed from FACES II which had been given to a national sample of 2,412 individuals. The total sample was split into two random independent samples. The reliability estimates for cohesion were .75 and .76.

#### Short answer discussion questions

The final section of the questionnaire consisted of short answer discussion questions. Participants were asked to respond to 10 questions. The first question asked the participant to list three characteristics of their relationship with the biological grandchild and three characteristics of their relationship with the stepgrandchild. The second question asked them to list three activities commonly shared with biological

grandchildren and three characteristics commonly shared with stepgrandparents. The third question was an opportunity for the participant to make closing comments and remarks. The remaining 8 questions reassess the same dimensions the subjects were asked to respond to in the above sections. The researcher was available to assist with any explanation of questions. Once explanation and direction had been given to the participants by the researcher, participants were given the option of completing the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher, or in privacy. Many respondents chose to take the questionnaire and fill it out in their home, then return it to the researcher.

#### Data Collection

Participant questionnaire's evaluating the relationship between the grandparent and their biological and step grandchildren were distributed in person by the researcher. The researcher spoke with each respondent to familiarize them with the research and share personal stories about each respondents situation. Advantages of this technique include: 1) it is personalized, 2) permits free responses, 3) is flexible and adaptable, and 4) allows

impressions of respondent's gestures, tone of voice, and home environment (Issac & Michael, 1981). Disadvantages included those participants who were contacted by phone and requested that the questionnaire be sent through the mail. A self addressed, stamped envelope was included to return the completed questionnaire.

Visits were made by the researcher to the participants home, senior center, or nutrition site in order to gather data. The gathering of data took place over a three month time span. The researcher was available to assist the participant in filling out the questionnaire. Visits were made at the time of day requested by the participant. Contacts made through community activity areas were done at the time requested by the activity director. In the case that the stepgrandmother, as well as stepgrandfather wished to participate, each was asked to respond separately so that answers were not influenced by the others presence. Each questionnaire took approximately forty-five minutes to an hour to complete. With thirty minutes allotted for completing the written questionnaire and fifteen minutes allotted for introduction, open discussion, questions, and closure.

## Data Analysis

Statistical measures for this research included frequencies, measures of central tendency, and Chi squares. Frequency distributions were obtained to gather descriptive statistics on the stepgrandparents, to determine how respondents were distributed on each variable and to provide a general profile of this sample of stepgrandparents. Mean scores were calculated to provide statistical insight as to the center of the distribution of demographic data. Chi squares were utilized to evaluate the research questions set forth in this study. Chi squares were used to determine the significance of variable relationships and to determine how certain variables fit together. Due to the small sample size, frequencies at different levels were collapsed when evaluating demographic data, amount of contact, satisfaction with contact, importance of relationship, social and personal dimensions, satisfaction with relationship, and cohesion.

## Limitations

One limitation of the researcher administered questionnaire was the tendency of the participant to answer

particular questions in order to please the researcher or mask certain issues. It is also possible that subtle biases of the researcher may overtly influence the participants response (Isaac & Michael, 1981).

Limitations also exist in the nonexperimental nature of the research. Kerlinger (1986) identifies three main weaknesses of nonexperimental research: 1) the inability to manipulate independent variables, 2) the lack of power to randomize, and 3) the risk of improper interpretation.

Unlike standard sampling in which size is driven by the desired strength of significances, qualitative sampling is driven by the desire to learn in detail about the experiences of individuals (Rubinstein, 1994). Due to the qualitative nature of this research, limitations exist in applying the results of this research to a broader population. However, because of the variety of family forms emerging in todays society, insight into the (step)grandparent relationship is helpful to family practitioners, as well as a vital resource to grandchildren.

## Barriers

Several barriers emerged throughout the research process. These barriers account for the reduced sample size. There were many stepgrandparents who fit the qualifications for the research but chose not to participate. Many respondents volunteered to complete the questionnaire and then chose not to return it to the researcher. Several patterns of reasoning emerged as explanations for choosing not to participate.

In many cases participants expressed concern that they had not been stepgrandparents long enough to properly complete the questionnaire. Many of these Stepgrandparents had become stepgrandparents over one to two years ago, however, it was often feared that they would not have any valuable information to input. The statement "I do not know enough about being a stepgrandparent yet" was used often. When further encouraged to complete the questionnaire so that their beliefs on stepgrandparenting could be expressed, many were simply uncomfortable with the topic. When the situation was reversed and a participant had only been a biological grandparent for a short time, two years or less,



the grandparent was eager to share experiences and talk about the relationship with the new grandchild.

Another barrier to participating in this research was time spent with the stepgrandchild. Those individuals that had spent little time with their stepgrandchild, expressed concern that they would be unable to complete the questions concerning the stepgrandchild. In most cases the lack of time spent with the stepgrandchild was due to geographical distance or to the fact that their connection to the stepgrandchild was through the noncustodial parent. Often these individuals did not voluntarily identify themselves as a stepgrandparent, but were referred to the researcher by someone.

Age and mental state of the stepgrandparent also emerged as a barrier to participation. Those individuals who also had several step great-grandchildren found it difficult to focus on their stepgrandchildren. They were unable to recall events that occurred when their stepgrandchild was younger, because they were more familiar with those currently occurring with their great grandchildren. Those who were suffering from some degree of dementia, were not able to separate thoughts toward

biological and step grandchildren. It was difficult for them to remember names and ages, thus they found the questionnaire to be confusing, and did not want to complete it, even with assistance from the researcher.

A final barrier was in identifying certain individuals as stepgrandparents. Those who had attained stepgrandchildren through a stepchild they had raised from a young age considered the children of their stepchild to simply be a grandchild and did not identify them as stepgrandchildren. This was also the case with grandparents who had become a stepgrandparent when the stepgrandchild was very young.

CHAPTER IV

Stepgrandparenting and Grandparenting:

A Perception of Grandparenting

Behaviors and Roles.

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between stepgrandparents and stepgrandchildren from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. Thirty-five stepgrandparents from Oklahoma completed a comprehensive questionnaire that included demographics, evaluation of contact, relationship factors, family cohesion, role conceptions and expected behaviors. The age of the stepgrandparents ranged from 40 to 90 with a mean age of 69. Respondents included both genders, 26% were male and 74% were female. Chi Squares indicated that relationship factors which made a significant difference in the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship include amount of contact, age of stepgrandchild, geographical location, and perceived importance of the relationship. Results indicated that stepgrandparents do desire a relationship with their stepgrandchildren; furthermore, that they often play the same roles and display similar behaviors as that of the biological grandparent.

## Introduction

One of the most dramatic changes occurring in the nation today is the aging of our population. One in eight individuals is now age 65 or older, and by the year 2030, it will be one in five (Schlenker, 1993). The likelihood of a young person having a living grandparent is higher than at any other time in history (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989). In addition to the current population trends the occurrence of divorce and remarriage has increased in society, families have been affected in many ways.

Many altered family forms have emerged, creating new relationships to be explored. One of the fastest growing family types in every advanced industrial nation has been the stepfamily (Popenoe, 1994). Approximately 60% of remarriages involve an adult with physical custody of one or more children (Trygstad & Sanders, 1989). If current rates of divorce and remarriage continue, as many as 35% of the children in the United States will be part of a stepfamily before they are 18 years old (Glick, 1984). It is no longer uncommon for a child to have biological grandparents, as well as stepgrandparents.

It is important for social scientist and practitioners to have a better understanding of the impact of stepgrandparents on American Society. As we move toward the 21st century we are a nation of a variety of family forms and we must be concerned about the passing on of family values to succeeding generations. Stepgrandparents, as well as grandparents may play a vital role in the family system.

The role of grandparents, always somewhat ambiguous, becomes even more so when their adult children divorce (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). The support provided by extended family members, such as grandparents and stepgrandparents, becomes increasingly important when children are involved. A grandparent may be seen as a source of stability in a changing environment. Little work has been conducted on stepgrandparents and how their place in the family network is different or similar in comparison to biological grandparents (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989). Normative expectations for the stepgrandparent/ grandchild relationship are so ambiguous that some families may not even recognize the possibility of a relationship between the two (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). The relationship between stepgrandparents and stepgrandchildren is one of the least

studied in remarried families. A valuable resource may be going untapped.

This study provides a better understanding of the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship, from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. Insight is provided as to what differences may exist between the role of grandparent and stepgrandparent. The purpose of this study was to examine stepgrandparents perceptions of their grandparenting behaviors toward biological grandchildren in comparison to grandparenting behaviors toward stepgrandchildren. The role the grandparent plays in the lives of their stepgrandchildren was also examined.

#### Relevant Literature

There has been little examination into the role of the stepgrandparent. This research is unique in that it is one of the first to look at the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. Related research has focused on grandparenting or stepfamilies and a while some researchers have looked at the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship, it has been from the perspective of the stepgrandchild.

### The Changing Family

Families formed as a result of marriages between adults who have children from previous relationships have existed in large numbers and in most cultures throughout history. In fact, George Washington, the father of our country, was also a stepfather. Abraham Lincoln was a stepchild, and it was his stepmother, Nancy, who fostered his early interest in reading and learning. Most recently, presidents who were members of stepfamilies include Ford, Reagan, and Clinton (Ganong & Coleman, 1994).

The stepfamily has been one of the fastest growing family types in every advanced industrial nation (Popenoe, 1994). One-third of Americans are now a stepparent, a stepchild, a stepsibling, or some other member of a stepfamily (Glick, 1989). At any one time about 10% of American children live with a stepfather and mother, and about 2% with a stepmother and father (Bachrach, 1983).

Due to the uniqueness of stepfamilies, they face many diverse problems. The stepparent-stepchild relationship is perhaps the most scrutinized close relationship within remarried families. It is believed by many to be the most important relationship in predicting overall stepfamily



happiness (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). While adults in stepfamilies are bound by a marriage contract, the only tie that binds stepchild and stepparent is the marriage of the child's parent to the stepparent (Kaufman, 1993). Thus, the existence of the stepparent-stepchild relationship is dependent upon the continuance of the adult marriage. Both parties may be unwilling to risk investing in a relationship, fearing it would be lost should the marriage fail (Kaufman, 1993). This fear may very well extend into the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship.

Remarriage can also be viewed as potentially beneficial to overall family functioning. Remarriage usually increases the family income, and the addition of a new stepparent may also provide emotional and childrearing support that could be salutary for both custodial parents and stepchildren (Hetherington & Jodl, 1994). The fact that stepfamily ties are not interchangeable with biological ties does not mean that stepfamily ties are useless as sources of support (White, 1994). Strong feelings of parental love can be activated in substitute parents, including many and perhaps most stepparents (Popenoe, 1994). It is thus likely that a

stepgrandparent shares similar emotions as a biological grandparent.

### Grandparenting roles

In most societies there seems to be something special about grandparenthood (Knipscheer, 1988). Many scholars on grandparenthood look for special terms to characterize the grandparent role. Frazier (1939) talks about the "guardians of generations", Troll (1983) sees them as "watchdogs", Gutman (1985) uses the term "warden", and Hagestad (1985) calls grandparents the family "national guard".

One way in which grandparents may affect grandchildren is by serving as a stabilizing force on the middle generation (Hagestad, 1985). Grandparents have also been discussed as a moderating force, whose presence softens the intensity of modern family life (Baranowski, 1982; Hader, 1965). They may be able to mediate between the other two generations, helping children better understand their parents. In cases such as divorce, this may help the grandchild make sense out of a changing environment.

Kornhaber & Woodward (1981) believe that the main role of today's grandparents is to rebuild the family pyramid.

They are often the very pillars on which the family rests. Grandparents have to recognize that they are essential to a sturdy family regardless of how unnecessary, redundant, or impotent society may make the aged feel (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

The rapidity and scope of recent demographic changes have caught us off guard (Hagestad, 1985). We still have a tendency to associate grandparenthood with old age. Many authors have recently discussed the lack of a grandparent role. Fischer and Silverman (1982) use Roscow's (1976) term "tenuous role," a social status without clear normative expectations attached to it; Wood (1982) calls it ambiguous. The symbolism of the grandparent role is perhaps as important and varied, as are the behaviors grandparents can be observed performing (Bengtson, 1985).

#### Grandparenting: An Adult Perspective

Every time a child is born, a grandparent is born too (Kornhaber & Woodward, (1981). Today's persons of grandparent age are more likely to be healthy, to be relatively well off, and to have a living spouse (Aldous, 1987). This, in addition to the increasing life expectancy,

results in more grandparents taking a more active role in the lives of their grandchildren.

Kornhaber & Woodward (1981) explored what grandchildren mean to grandparents. Like any relationship between two people, grandparents felt that attachment to a grandchild must be developed through shared time and intimate contact. Those grandparents who were not close to grandchildren felt a deep pain of disconnection. One important factor that emerged from this study, was the fact that while a biological connection to the grandchild was powerful, it did not ensure a vital connection. Four factors emerged as crucial to maintaining a vital connection with a grandchild: the critical dimensions of time and place, a commitment to family, and a sense of personal altruism (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

Weber & Hesser (in-press) emphasized the need to explore modern grandparenting issues from the perspective of the older adult. In a sample of Elderhostel grandparents four themes emerged as the best aspects of being a grandparent: a) enjoyment, b) loving and caring, c) not being the primary caregiver, and d) family continuity.

### Grandparenting: A Childs' Perspective

Children also provide a unique view into the meaning of the grandparent/grandchild relationship. Kornhaber & Woodward (1981) found that to children with close contact to one or more grandparents, a grandparent represented secure unconditional love, a person with whom they openly shared a variety of emotions. Children who had sporadic contact with grandparents saw their grandparents as preoccupied with their own friends, jobs, and health. While an attachment was apparent, there was no "specialness" to the relationship. This study provides valuable information as to the significance the grandparent/grandchild relationship holds, and the positive impact a grandparent can have on the life of a child and the emptiness a child feels without that relationship.

### Grandparenting and Divorce

Family relationships beyond those of the immediate family are altered by marital divorce (Bray & Berger, 1990). Changes in family and household patterns are leading to a general decline in the frequency with which the lives of older persons are closely linked with those of younger ones

(Uhlenberg, 1988). Within the context of the changing family, the grandparent/grandchild relationship has recently received growing attention.

A divorce effects the entire family system, established links are disrupted, the balance of resources within the extended family are changed, and existing bonds often require renegotiating (Matthews & Sprey, 1984). In the great majority of cases, mothers become custodial parents after divorce, and post-divorce contact between maternal grandparents and grandchildren either increases or remains the same (Kruk & Hall, 1995). Men are typically noncustodial parents after divorce, and paternal grandparents' contact with their grandchildren is highly dependent on the level of the father's contact with his children (Kruk & Hall, 1995). In general, paternal grandparents are viewed as being at high risk for losing contact with grandchildren when the child-inlaw is the custodial mother (Kruk & Hall, 1995).

Johnson (1988) identified paternal grandparents as more likely to lose touch with the grandchildren over time. It was also found that younger grandparents are more likely to remain in contact whereas older grandparents, particularly

those in poor health, have less contact (Johnson, 1988). Matthews & Sprey (1984) also found that the importance of who was the custodial parent had a bearing on the grandparent/grandchild relationship. It appeared that grandparents whose former in-law child maintained custody of the grandchild had to work harder to maintain the relationship. Ahrons and Bowman (1982) determined that while maternal grandparents reported no change in the relationship or more contact and greater emotional closeness to their grandchildren after divorce, paternal grandparents were more likely to lose contact. As we begin to recognize the salience of grandparents in their grandchildren's lives, both before and after divorce, the necessity of actively advocating on behalf of the grandparent population, particularly those paternal grandparents who are most at-risk of contact loss, becomes clear (Kruk & Hall, 1995).

Gladstone (1988) reported that changes in contact between grandmothers and a grandchild following a separation or divorce were influenced by structural factors, specifically, geographic proximity and the custodial status of the adult child. Several researchers have (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Sprey & Matthews, 1984; Rossi & Rossi,

1990; Kruk & Hall, 1995) found geographic proximity to be an influential factor in grandparent/grandchild contact.

Gladstone (1988) suggests that geographic mobility, rather than geographic proximity, might be more closely related to changes in contact. He indicates that there is a significant increase in the frequency of fact-to-face contacts between grandmothers and grandchildren following the disruption of an adult child's marriage. Telephone contact also increased significantly. Gladstone (1988) found it particularly interesting and important that support in the form of personal advice to the grandchild increased significantly following divorce, implying that in a time which must engender a great deal of uncertainty, fear, loneliness and change, a young child would particularly benefit from the comfort given by a grandparent.

During the actual divorce process the role the grandparent plays in the family may be redefined. In the past decade there has been a spurt of interest in grandparents because of the hope or the wish that they could perform more important functions in the American family system. Johnson (1988) attempted to identify how the status and role of grandparents were redefined during the



reorganization process of their children's families. He hypothesized that grandparents become comforters and supporters for grandchildren who are affected by their parents' divorce. Johnson (1988) found that younger grandmothers (65 and under) had significantly more contact with their grandchildren, often providing emotional and financial support. This is attributed to the fact that the adult child may also be younger and need more assistance.

When divorce occurs the sense of family is cracked at its very foundations (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). The entire family system is effected. Following the adult child's separation or divorce, a grandparent may serve as a stabilizing foundation of family continuity.

#### Remarriage and Grandparenting

Recently some researchers have focused more specifically on the grandparent relationship in stepfamilies. Bray and Berger (1990) focused on the noncustodial father and paternal grandparent relationships in stepfamilies. Specifically, the researchers examined children's psychological adjustments with noncustodial fathers and paternal grandparents, when a remarriage has

occurred, and the adjustments to stepfathers and their step families. It was found that children benefitted from grandparent relationships continuing with previous grandparents, as well as relationships with new step grandparents. They also indicate that the level of interparental conflict may have a bearing on these relationships. Following a divorce, the relationship between children and their resident parent often becomes closer. Likewise, the role of the grandparent(s), may also play a vital role. The grandparent tends to step in providing support and guidance. Kennedy and Kennedy (1993) investigate the quality of grandparent/grandchild relationships and the activities shared by grandchildren and their most-close grandparent. College students evaluated statements concerning why grandchildren feel close to their grandparent on a 5 point Likert-type scale. Grandchildren from stepfamilies tended to chose a grandparent from the side of the family of the resident parent. A step grandparent was identified as "most-close" in only five cases. In general, children from stepfamilies indicated closer relationships with grandparents than children from intact or single parent families.

Sanders and Trygstad (1989) investigated the differences between stepgrandparents and grandparents with regard to the young adults perception of amount of contact, satisfaction with contact, importance of the relationship, social roles, personal roles, behaviors, and family strengths. Their findings indicate that grandchildren have much more contact with grandparents than stepgrandchildren with stepgrandparents. Even with more contact, the satisfaction with the amount of contact was more often "less than desired" in the grandchildren than in stepgrandchildren. The grandchildren expected the grandparent to be someone to whom they go for advice, can imitate in terms of occupation, and will transfer family heritage. These expectations were not as high with stepgrandchildren. The authors felt that while their findings showed stronger relationships between grandchildren and grandparent, stepgrandchildren do value stepgrandparents (63% desire more contact) and are considering them valued members of the family unit.

### Stepgrandparents

With the formation of the remarried family, boundaries and roles within the family become even more ambiguous. Although research has explored aspects of the stepparent/stepchild relationship, little consideration has been given to the parent(s) of the stepparent. Biological instincts are not aroused by the arrival of stepgrandchildren (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Vital connections can be difficult to achieve. A great deal of time and effort may be necessary to form a secure stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship. Stepgrandchildren bring their own grandparents with them into the combined family created by remarriage, this may add to confusion in emotional priorities and roles (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981).

There are a variety of factors that influence the relationship between a stepgrandparent and stepgrandchild. Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) found that the older the children were when their parent remarried, the less likely they were to regard their stepgrandparents as of the same importance as biological grandparents. Sanders and Trygstad (1989) found that children who became stepchildren at a younger age (10 and under) rated stepgrandparents as being

more involved in social and personal roles. An additional factor regarded as important is whether or not the stepgrandchild lives full time with the grandparent's adult child. The more opportunity for contact the more likely a relationship will develop. Acceptance of the remarriage also plays a role in the stepgrandparent/ grandchild relationship (Sanders & Trygstad, 1989). If either the stepgrandparents or the stepgrandchildren are upset about or do not support the remarriage, it is less likely that a good relationship will develop between them (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). Sanders and Trygstad (1989) emphasize the potential for the stepgrandparent to play a valuable role in the family. In their research, stepgrandparents emerged as a viable resource for a sizeable percentage of stepgrandchildren.

#### Research Questions

1. How does the amount contact the stepgrandparent has with the stepgrandchild influence the stepgrandparents satisfaction with the relationship?

2. In what way does the age of the stepgrandchild influence the stepgrandparents perceived degree of cohesion?
3. Does the length of time as a stepgrandparent influence the importance of the relationship with the stepgrandchild?
4. Does geographical distance to the stepgrandchild, influence the amount of contact the stepgrandparent has?
5. What are accepted as appropriate roles for the stepgrandparent?
6. What are accepted as appropriate behaviors for the stepgrandparent?
7. What are common characteristics used to describe relationships of stepgrandchildren and biological grandchildren?
8. What are common activities shared between stepgrandparents and stepgrandchildren; how do these compare to activities shared with biological grandchildren?

## Methodology

This study was designed to explore the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship, from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. It identifies what differences and similarities exist between the role of grandparent and stepgrandparent. Furthermore, it examines grandparenting behaviors toward biological grandchildren in comparison to grandparenting behaviors toward stepgrandchildren. This study is unique in that it is one of the first to explore the stepgrandparent/ grandchild relationship from the perspective of the stepgrandparent.

### Sample Selection and Characteristics

The sample for this survey was obtained from Oklahoma. A purposive sample of 75 stepgrandparents were identified as potential participants in this study; however, due to a number of barriers, including age, length of time as a stepgrandparent, time spent with stepgrandchild, and fear of having no information to contribute, only 35 participants were included in the actual study. The barriers to participation will be discussed in greater detail in a later section. Purposive sampling was used so that the researcher

could select a sample of subjects that would yield the most comprehensive understanding of stepgrandparenting (Babbie, 1983). Participants were recruited from the Stillwater and Cushing areas through referral from community residents, senior citizen centers, housing authority, Project Heart nutrition sites, and clergy. Much of the sample was generated using a snowball technique. There were no age requirements or restrictions for the participating grandparents. Respondents ranged in age from 40 to 90, with a mean age of 69. There were no gender restrictions, 77% of the participants were female and 23% were male. The only requirement for participation was that each grandparent had at least one biological grandchild and at least one stepgrandchild.

#### Instrumentation

In an effort to explore the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship, a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire utilized in this study was modeled after Sanders and Trygstad (1989) research on stepgrandparents from the view of young adults.



The questionnaire was broken into nine sections. These included: background information, amount of contact, evaluation of contact, importance of relationship, role conception, behaviors expected, relationship with biological grandchild and stepgrandchild, relationship with stepparent, family cohesion and short answer discussion questions. Reliability is given for all sections of the instrument which had it reported. Sample reliability was not done for this research due to the small sample size.

*Background Information (demographic)*

The first section of the questionnaire (Appendix A) included 10 background questions. The respondents were asked for the following information: gender; marital status; geographic proximity to biological grandchild and stepgrandchild; the age he/she became a biological grandparent & stepgrandparent; length of time as grandparent & stepgrandparent; age of biological grandchild & stepgrandchild; how he/she became a stepgrandparent; if the stepgrandchild evaluated was from maternal or paternal side; the custodial parent of the stepgrandchild; and whether they are connected through the custodial or noncustodial parent.

*Amount of contact*

The amount of contact was measured on a 7-point scale originally developed by Hartshorne & Manaster (1982) for use with grandparents, and adapted by Sanders and Trygstad (1989) for use with stepgrandchildren. This scale evaluated the amount of contact ranging from, "daily" to "almost never", that the grandparent has with the step and biological grandchild in person, by letter, and by telephone.

*Evaluation of contact*

The satisfaction with the amount of contact was assessed on a 5-point scale by Hartshorne and Manaster (1982). Sanders and Trygstad (1989) adapted the scale for their work with stepgrandchildren to indicate satisfaction with the amount of contact from "very satisfied" to "not satisfied."

*Importance of the relationship*

The perceived importance of the relationship to the stepgrandchild was measured using a 5-point rating scale developed by Sanders and Trygstad (1989). Participants were asked to rate from "extremely important" to "extremely

unimportant" their relationships with biological and stepgrandchildren.

#### *Role conception*

Hartshorne and Manaster (1982) adapted a scale for grandchildren's role conception from a scale developed by Robertson (1977) which measured grandparent's role meaning. Sanders and Trygstad (1989) changed the term grandparent to stepgrandparent. For this research the identical questions were asked from the view of the stepgrandparent, as opposed to stepgrandchild. This scale measured "social" and "personal" dimensions. Ten questions were used, five designed to measure "personal", and five designed to measure "social". Reliability coefficient alphas for this scale were: social = .68, personal scale = .89 for Hartshorne and Manaster, and social scale = .77, personal scale = .89 for Sanders and Trygstad.

#### *Behaviors expected*

The stepgrandparents perception of appropriate and/or expected biological grandchild and stepgrandchild behaviors was measured on a scale developed by Robertson (1976) and adapted by Sanders and Trygstad (1989) for use with

stepgrandchildren. This scale required a "yes" or "no" response to questions about expressive and instrumental behaviors stepgrandchildren expect of stepgrandparents. For the purpose of this research, the stepgrandparent was asked to respond to each as they felt they were appropriate and/or expected grandparent and stepgrandparent behaviors toward biological grandchildren and stepgrandchildren. Reliability coefficient alpha for this scale was .72 for Sanders and Trygstad.

*Relationship with Biological*

*Grandchildren and Stepgrandchildren*

Participants were asked to rate the satisfaction with their relationship to biological grandchild and stepgrandchild on a 5-point rating scale adapted from Trygstad and Sanders (1989). Responses ranged from "very satisfied", to "very unsatisfied". In this section participants were also asked to rate the perceived relationship between stepgrandchild and stepgrandparent. Sanders and Trygstad reported no validity or reliability information for this scale.

### *Family Cohesion*

The amount of closeness was examined in this section. The FACES III cohesion scale was used to measure the bonding that takes place between the grandchild and the stepgrandparent. Examining cohesion included the elements of emotional bonding, supportiveness, family boundaries, time and friends, and interest in recreation. Respondents were asked 10 questions from the scale that have been adapted for use in the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship. The amount of cohesion was then assessed using the Circumplex Model. FACES III was developed from FACES II which had been given to a national sample of 2,412 individuals. The total sample was split into two random independent samples. The reliability estimates for cohesion were .75 and .76.

### *Short answer discussion questions*

The final section of the questionnaire consisted of short answer discussion questions. Participants were asked to respond to 10 questions. The first question asked the participant to list three characteristics of their relationship with the biological grandchild and three characteristics of their relationship with the

stepgrandchild. The second question asked them to list three activities commonly shared with biological grandchildren and three characteristics commonly shared with stepgrandparents. The third question was an opportunity for the participant to make closing comments and remarks. The remaining eight questions reassess the same dimensions the subjects were asked to respond to in the above sections.

## Findings

### Descriptive Characteristics

The descriptive characteristics of the stepgrandparent are presented in Table I. The respondents for this study ranged in age from 40 to 90, with a mean age of 69. Respondents from both genders were included, with 23% being male and 77% female. Sixty-three (63) percent of the stepgrandparents were married, 23% were single and 14% were widowed. The grandparents mean living distance from biological grandchildren was 198 miles and from stepgrandchildren was 296 miles.

The mean age the respondent became a grandparent, was 48 years for biological and 58 years for step. The majority of the respondents had been biological grandparents for a

mean of 22 years while having been stepgrandparents for only 12 years. The mean age for both the biological grandchild, as well as stepgrandchild was 20 years. The mean age at which the stepgrandchild entered the relationship was 11.

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Insert Table I about here

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Fifty-one percent of the participants became a stepgrandparent through the marriage of an adult child, and 49% through the remarriage of an adult child. Sixty (60) percent of the stepgrandchildren were from the paternal side and 40% were from the maternal side. In 54% of the cases, the mother was the custodial parent and in 46% the father. The connection to the stepgrandchild was through the custodial parent 69% of the time and the noncustodial parent 31% of the time.

Evaluation of contact

The amount of contact was measured with the biological grandchild and the stepgrandchild. Contact was reported as frequent with the biological grandchild by 73% of the respondents, and 57% reported frequent contact with their stepgrandchild. A breakdown of contact can be seen in Table II.

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Insert Table II about here

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Eighty (80) percent of the grandparents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their contact to the biological grandchild, and 76% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their contact to the stepgrandchild. The amount of contact was shown to be significant in three findings. The more the grandparent reported seeing their biological grandchild, the higher their satisfaction was with the amount of contact ( $\chi^2 = 4.466$ ,  $df = 1$ ,



$p < .05$ ), as well as the higher the satisfaction with the relationship (chi square = 4.646,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Likewise, the more the grandparent saw the stepgrandchild, the higher the satisfaction was with the amount of contact (chi square = 4.074,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The amount of contact between grandparent and stepgrandchild was shown to increase when the grandparent lived within 60 miles of the stepgrandchild (chi square = 5.402,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

#### Importance of the Relationship

Respondents in this study rated their relationship to the biological grandchild as more important than the relationship to the stepgrandchild. One hundred (100) percent of the grandparents rated their relationship to their biological grandchild as important or extremely important, while only 66% rated their relationship to their stepgrandchild as important or extremely important. How the grandparent ranked the importance of their relationship to his/her stepgrandchild was shown to be a significant variable in all of the personal role conceptions and two of the social role conception. The more important the relationship was rated the stronger the agreement that:

stepgrandchildren should be included in family activities (chi square = 4.066, df = 1,  $p < .05$ ), holidays should be spent with the stepgrandchild (chi square = 5.106, df = 1,  $p < .05$ ), there is so much I can learn from my stepgrandchild (chi square = 8.498, df = 1,  $p < .05$ ), I have an emotional attachment to my stepgrandchild (chi square = 5.411, df = 1,  $p < .05$ ), I feel it is important to have a personal relationship with my stepgrandchild (chi square = 5.3358, df = 1,  $p < .05$ ), and my stepgrandchild will be sad when I am dead (chi square = 10.522, df = 1,  $p < .05$ ).

#### Role Conception

Role conception was evaluated along social and a personal dimensions. Respondents were asked to respond to eight statements. Grandparents responded with stronger agreement to the social level than the personal level. The highest percentage of agreement (100%) was on the question that stated, "I feel my stepgrandchild should give me respect." A breakdown of questions in the social and personal dimensions is given in Table III.

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Insert Table III about here

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### Behaviors Expected

Appropriate or expected stepgrandparent behaviors were evaluated by responding "yes" or "no" to six different statements about stepgrandparents. The highest percentage (79%) of "yes" responses were given to the statement, "A stepgrandparent is someone who provides emotional support to their stepgrandchild". The highest percentage (73%) of "no" responses were given to the statement, "A stepgrandparent is someone who provides financial support to their stepgrandchild." A breakdown of questions and responses is provided in Table IV.

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Insert Table IV about here

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Relationship with biological grandchild  
and stepgrandchild

Ninety-four (94) percent of the grandparents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their relationship to their biological grandchild, 71% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their relationship to their stepgrandchild. Respondents were also asked to rate the satisfaction of their stepgrandchild's relationship to his/her stepparent. Seventy (70) percent of the sample perceived the relationship to be satisfied or very satisfied. The higher the perceived satisfaction between stepgrandchild and stepparent, the higher the stepgrandparent ranked the importance of the relationship (chi square = 4.948, df =1 ,  $p < .05$ ).

Family Cohesion

Cohesion scores were evaluated using the Circumplex Model. Responses in this section were totaled for a perceived cohesion score. Cohesion scores for this sample ranged from 9 to 50, with a mean score of 29. Cohesion scores are plotted on the Circumplex model, shown in Figure 1. There are four levels to the cohesion dimension of the

circumplex model: disengaged, separated, connected, and enmeshed.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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Cohesion scores were influenced by the age of the child when he/she became a stepgrandchild. Cohesion scores were higher for those respondents whose stepgrandchild was age 10 or below at the start of the relationship (chi square = 3.998, df = 1,  $p < .05$ ).

#### Characteristics

Each respondent was asked to list three characteristics describing their relationship to their biological grandchild and their relationship to their stepgrandchild. The top five characteristics for biological grandchildren were as follows: loving(16), respectful(11), sharing(10), caring(7) and helpful(7). There were 105 responses altogether, 5 were

negative, 15 were left blank and the remaining 85 were positive. The top five characteristics for stepgrandchildren were as follows: respectful(10), loving(9), friendly(9), helpful(9) and sharing(9). There were 105 responses altogether, of these 10 were negative, 19 were left blank and the remaining 76 were positive. A more detailed breakdown of characteristics can be seen in the following graph.

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Insert Graph 1 about here

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### Activities

Each respondent was asked to list three activities shared in their relationship to their biological grandchild and three shared in their relationship to their stepgrandchild. The top five activities for biological grandchildren were as follows: playing games(12), going on outings(12), watching TV and movies(10), sporting events(9) and reading(9). There were 105 responses altogether, of

these 15 were left blank. The top five activities for stepgrandchildren were as follows: family get together(8), eating(7), going on outings(7), watching TV and movies(7) and visiting(7). There were 105 responses altogether, of these 18 were left blank and 13 responded that no activities were shared. A more detailed breakdown of activities can be seen in the following graph.

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Insert Graph 2 about here

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#### Limitations

Several limitations affect the results of this study. One limitation, of the researcher administered questionnaire, was the tendency of the participant to answer particular questions in order to please the researcher or mask certain issues.

A second limitation existed in the nonexperimental nature of the research. Kerlinger (1986) identifies three

main weaknesses of nonexperimental research: 1) the inability to manipulate independent variables, 2) the lack of power to randomize, and 3) the risk of improper interpretation.

When interpreting the data in this research, limitations exist in determining significance between variables. Because of the small sample size, chi square results should be interpreted carefully with emphasis placed on identifying trends as opposed to strong statistical significance.

Due to the qualitative nature of this research, as well as the small sample size, the results can only be applied to this study. However, because of the variety of family forms emerging in today's society, insight into the (step)grandparent relationship is helpful to family practitioners, as well as a vital resource to grandchildren.

#### Barriers

Several barriers emerged throughout the research process. These barriers account for the reduced sample size. There were many stepgrandparents who fit the qualifications for the research but chose not to



participate. Many respondents volunteered to complete the questionnaire and then chose not to return it to the researcher. Several patterns of reasoning emerged as explanations for choosing not to participate.

In many cases participants expressed concern that they had not been stepgrandparents long enough to properly complete the questionnaire. Many of these Stepgrandparents had become stepgrandparents over one to two years ago, however, it was often feared that they would not have any valuable information to input. The statement "I do not know enough about being a stepgrandparent yet" was used often. When further encouraged to complete the questionnaire so that their beliefs on stepgrandparenting could be expressed, many were simply uncomfortable with the topic. When the situation was reversed and a participant had only been a biological grandparent for a short time, two years or less, the grandparent was eager to share experiences and talk about the relationship with the new grandchild.

Another barrier to participating in this research was time spent with the stepgrandchild. Those individuals that had spent little time with their stepgrandchild, expressed concern that they would be unable to complete the questions

concerning the stepgrandchild. In most cases the lack of time spent with the stepgrandchild was due to geographical distance or to the fact that their connection to the stepgrandchild was through the noncustodial parent. Often these individuals did not voluntarily identify themselves as a stepgrandparent, but were referred to the researcher by someone.

Age and mental state of the stepgrandparent also emerged as a barrier to participation. Those individuals who also had several step great-grandchildren found it difficult to focus on their stepgrandchildren. They were unable to recall events that occurred when their stepgrandchild was younger, because they were more familiar with those currently occurring with their great grandchildren. Those who were suffering from some degree of dementia, were not able to separate thoughts toward biological and step grandchildren. It was difficult for them to remember names and ages, thus they found the questionnaire to be confusing, and did not want to complete it, even with assistance from the researcher.

A final barrier was in identifying certain individuals as stepgrandparents. Those who had attained

stepgrandchildren through a stepchild they had raised from a young age considered the children of their stepchild to simply be a grandchild and did not identify them as stepgrandchildren. This was also the case with grandparents who had become a stepgrandparent when the stepgrandchild was very young.

### Discussion

This study is one of the first to explore the stepgrandchild/stepgrandparent relationship from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. It is but a preliminary study to help provide insight into the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship, and begin to identify issues and trends that may exist.

The results of this study provide strong evidence for the uniqueness of the stepgrandchild/stepgrandparent relationship. Not only does research show that a relationship does exist, but that stepgrandparents are performing many of the same roles and behaviors as biological grandparents.

Several things emerged that seem to influence the relationship. The variable that was shown to have the most

impact on the role the stepgrandparent played, was how important it was to them to have a relationship with their stepgrandchild. Those who placed a high importance on the relationship, played a more active role. Geographical distance also seemed to make a difference, those who lived closer to their stepgrandchild were able to maintain closer contact. Age was another factor that had an impact on the relationship. Those with younger stepgrandchildren found it easier to form a close relationship, while those with teenage stepgrandchildren felt like it became more difficult. It is encouraging that the majority of stepgrandparents in this study had a good relationship with their stepgrandchild and those that did not, desired to have one. It was often the case that the stepgrandchild was the one who did not desire contact.

Throughout this research many respondents emphasized how important it was to love and accept their stepgrandchild, in order to maintain a close family. While many of the grandparents felt like they had a stronger tie to their biological grandchild, they tried not to let it show. The main reason given for feeling closer to the biological grandchild, was not a biological tie, but that

the relationship had existed longer. Those who had been involved since the birth, or a very young age, of the stepgrandchild's life, reported little to no differences between biological and step grandchild.

It is interesting to compare the findings of this research to that done by Sanders and Trygstad (1989). In their investigation, they reported that children who became stepgrandchildren at a younger age rated stepgrandparents as being more active in social and personal roles. Likewise, stepgrandparents also reported a more active role when stepgrandchildren were younger. Both studies found that the more opportunity for contact the more likely the relationship would develop. In their research with stepgrandchildren, Sanders and Trygstad (1989) found that acceptance of the remarriage influenced the development of a good relationship. While acceptance of a remarriage or custodial arrangement did not emerge as an important factor with stepgrandparents, the perceived relationship between stepgrandchild and stepparent was relevant.

Sanders and Trygstad (1989) emphasized the potential for the stepgrandparent to play a valuable role in the family, and indeed this research provides additional support

for the potential importance of the role played by the stepgrandparent. In addition, it emphasizes the sense of love and joy that a stepgrandchild can bring into the life of the stepgrandparent.

It is important to continue research on the stepgrandchild/stepgrandparent relationship. The following recommendations are made for future research.

(1) Studies using a larger sample size are needed to generate results that carry a stronger statistical significance and may be generalizable to larger populations.

(2) Studies investigating the stepgrandchild/stepgrandparent relationship should include both the stepgrandchild and the stepgrandparent, so that both can provide insight into the relationship.

(3) Including more stepgrandfathers in the sample will allow the researcher to identify possible gender differences in stepgrandparenting roles and behaviors.

(4) When looking at family cohesion, include the ideal responses so that information can be gained as to the direction the stepgrandparent would like to see the relationship go.

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## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

This study is one of the first to explore the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship from the perspective of the stepgrandparent. It is but a preliminary study to help provide insight into the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship, and begin to identify issues and trends that may exist.

The results of this study provide strong evidence for the uniqueness of the stepgrandchild/stepgrandparent relationship. Not only does research show that a relationship does exist, but that stepgrandparents are performing many of the same roles and behaviors as biological grandparents.

Several things emerged that seem to influence the relationship. The variable that was shown to have the most impact on the role the stepgrandparent played, was how

important it was to them to have a relationship with their stepgrandchild. Those who placed a high importance on the relationship, played a more active role in the personal and social life of their stepgrandchild. They put time and energy into the development and maintenance of the relationship. Furthermore, those who perceived a good relationship between their adult child and the stepgrandchild saw their relationship to the stepgrandchild as more important. Geographical distance also seemed to make a difference, those who lived closer to there stepgrandchild were able to maintain closer contact, thus increasing their satisfaction with contact. The more the stepgrandparent was able to spend time with the stepgrandchild the more the relationship had a chance to grow. Age was another factor that had an impact on the relationship. Those with younger stepgrandchildren found it easier to form a close relationship, while those with teenage stepgrandchildren felt like it became more difficult. When the child entered the relationship at a younger age, they seemed to have more interest in the formation of a close relationship, where a teenager seemed to be preoccupied with their own friends and sometimes

foster more negative feelings about the remarriage of a parent.

The characteristics used to describe relationships to stepgrandchildren were similar to those of biological grandchildren. Many of the respondents used the same terms to describe both relationships. A variety of activities were shared with stepgrandchildren and biological grandchildren. Those shared with stepgrandchildren tended to be more socially based, such as family get togethers and outings, while those shared with biological included more personal, such as playing games and reading.

#### Conclusion

It is encouraging that the majority of stepgrandparents in this study reported a good relationship with their stepgrandchild or desired to have one. Many of the stepgrandparents expressed that they would like to have a closer relationship to their stepgrandchild, but did not feel that the stepgrandchild was willing to put effort into the relationship. In some cases the stepgrandchild maintained close ties to their biological grandparents,

which seemed to deter the new stepgrandparent from pursuing a closer relationship.

Throughout this research many respondents emphasized how important it was to love and accept their stepgrandchild, in order to maintain a close family. While many of the grandparents felt like they had a stronger tie to their biological grandchild, they tried not to let it show. The main reason given for feeling closer to the biological grandchild, was not a biological tie, but that the relationship had existed longer. Those who had been involved since the birth, or a very young age, of the stepgrandchild's life, reported little to no differences between biological and stepgrandchild.

Although it can not be denied that there is a biological tie which binds grandparent to grandchild, the emotional tie that binds a grandparent to any child, must not be ignored. Throughout this study it was apparent that it was an emotional tie that connected stepgrandparent to stepgrandchild. The occurrence of a remarriage formed the relationship and a sense of family togetherness seemed to strengthen it. Once the relationship had formed and emotional bonding occurred, it made little difference



whether the grandchild was step or biological. The difference existed in the degree of bonding that took place. With a biological grandchild the emotional bond formed naturally, creating a close relationship, while with the stepgrandchild more effort went into the development of an emotional bond, and once formed it strengthened over time.

The participants in this research provided valuable information and insight into the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship; however, those who decided not to complete the questionnaire also contribute valuable insight into a different aspect of the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship. It is important to recognize the reasons respondents chose not to participate. Many individuals felt that they would have nothing to contribute, based on the fact that they had not spent much time around their stepgrandchild, or had just become a stepgrandparent. In many cases the individual did not identify themselves as a stepgrandparent, but was referred by someone else. It was interesting that an individual might have been a stepgrandparent for two years, yet claimed that they did not know anything about being a stepgrandparent; while, that same individual may have been a biological grandparent for

two months, and want to share everything. While the stepfamily is not uncommon, there still seemed to be a reluctance to talk about it. Many had not even thought of a "stepgrandparent" in terms of playing a role in the family.

It is interesting to compare the findings of this research to that done by Sanders and Trygstad (1989). In their investigation, they reported that children who became stepgrandchildren at a younger age rated stepgrandparents as being more active in social and personal roles. Likewise, stepgrandparents also reported a more active role when stepgrandchildren were younger. Both studies found that the more opportunity for contact the more likely the relationship would develop. In their research with stepgrandchildren, Sanders and Trygstad (1989) found that acceptance of the remarriage influenced the development of a good relationship. While acceptance of a remarriage or custodial arrangement did not emerge as an important factor with stepgrandparents, the perceived relationship between stepgrandchild and stepparent was relevant.

Sanders and Trygstad (1989) emphasized the potential for the stepgrandparent to play a valuable role in the family, and indeed this research provides additional support

for the potential importance of the role played by the stepgrandparent. In addition, it emphasizes the sense of love and joy that a stepgrandchild can bring into the life of the stepgrandparent.

#### Future Research

This research provides strong implications for the role of the stepgrandparent in the remarried family. Findings indicate that the symbolism attached to the role of the grandparent, in many cases, extends to the stepgrandparent. Indeed it is important for family practitioners to recognize the potential of the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship. The stepgrandparent can provide stability, as well as love and support. It is hoped that in the future researchers as well as family practitioners can address some of the barriers and fears of the stepgrandparent, and help to provide more role recognition and definition. It is vital to continue exploration and research on the stepgrandchild/stepgrandparent relationship. The following recommendations are made for future research.

- (1) Studies using a larger sample size are needed to generate results that carry a stronger statistical significance and may be generalizable to larger populations.
- (2) Studies investigating the stepgrandchild/stepgrandparent relationship should include both the stepgrandchild and the stepgrandparent, so that both can provide insight into the relationship.
- (3) Including more stepgrandfathers in the sample will allow the researcher to identify possible gender differences in stepgrandparenting roles and behaviors.
- (4) When looking at family cohesion, include the ideal responses so that information can be gained as to the direction the stepgrandparent would like to see the relationship go.

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF (STEP) GRANDPARENTS

Categories	N	Caregivers %	Mean
<b>Gender:</b>			
Grandmother	27	77%	
Grandfather	08	23	
<b>Marital Status:</b>			
Married	22	63%	
Single/Widowed	13	37	
<b>Miles From Biological GC:</b>			198
0-60	22	63%	
61-120	05	14	
121-180	02	06	
181-240	00	00	
over 240	06	17	
<b>Miles From Step GC:</b>			296
0-61	17	48%	
61-120	08	23	
121-180	00	00	
181-240	01	03	
over 240	09	26	
<b>Age Became Biological GP:</b>			48
30-40	03	09%	
41-50	19	54	
51-60	11	31	
61-70	02	06	
over 70	00	00	
<b>Age Became Step GP:</b>			58
30-40	03	09%	
41-50	06	17	
51-60	11	31	
61-70	09	26	
over 70	06	17	

TABLE I (Continued)

Categories	N	Caregivers %	Mean
Years as Biological GP:			22
0-5	05	14%	
6-10	02	06	
11-15	04	11	
16-20	06	17	
over 20	18	52	
Years as Step GP:			12
0-5	15	43%	
6-10	06	17	
11-15	05	14	
16-20	02	06	
over 20	07	20	
Age of Biological GC:			20
0-10	07	20%	
11-20	11	31	
21-30	11	31	
31-40	03	09	
41-50	03	09	
Age of Step GC:			20
0-10	04	11%	
11-20	15	43	
21-30	10	29	
31-40	03	09	
41-50	03	09	
Age Became Step GC:			11
0-5	11	32%	
6-10	11	32	
11-15	00	00	
16-20	08	22	
over 20	05	14	

TABLE II  
EVALUATION OF CONTACT

Type of Contact	Frequent (N) %	Infrequent (N) %
Visits:		
Biological GC	(32) 91%	(03) 09%
Step GC	(27) 78	(08) 22
Letters:		
Biological GC	(15) 43%	(20) 57%
Step GC	(13) 37	(22) 63
Phone Conversations:		
Biological GC	(30) 87%	(05) 13%
Step GC	(20) 57	(15) 43

\* Responses were collapsed into the following categories:

Frequent = daily, once/week, and several/year; Infrequent = once/year, less than once/year, almost never, and not applicable

TABLE III  
 ROLE CONCEPTION ALONG "SOCIAL" AND "PERSONAL" DIMENSIONS

Statement	Agree (N) %	Disagree (N) %
 "Social"		
I feel I should do what is proper around my *sgc.	(31) 88%	(04) 12%
I feel I should include my sgc in family activities.	(33) 94%	(02) 06%
I feel I should spend the the holidays with my sgc.	(18) 52%	(17) 48%
I feel that my sgc should give me respect.	(35) 100%	(00) 00%
 "Personal"		
There is so much I can learn from my sgc.	(23) 66%	(12) 34%
I have an emotional attachment to my sgc.	(21) 65%	(14) 35%
I feel it is important to have a personal relationship with my sgc.	(28) 80%	(12) 20%
I feel that my sgc will be sad when I am dead.	(24) 68%	(11) 32%
 *sgc = stepgrandchild		



TABLE IV  
 APPROPRIATE OR EXPECTED STEPGRANDPARENT BEHAVIORS

Statement	Yes (N) %	No (N) %
A Stepgrandparent is someone who:		
Gives gifts of money	(13) 37%	(22) 63%
Takes stepgrandchild places	(20) 57	(15) 43
Gives advice	(17) 49	(18) 51
Provides emotional support	(27) 79	(07) 21
Provides financial support	(09) 26	(25) 74
Acts as a liaison	(10) 27	(24) 73

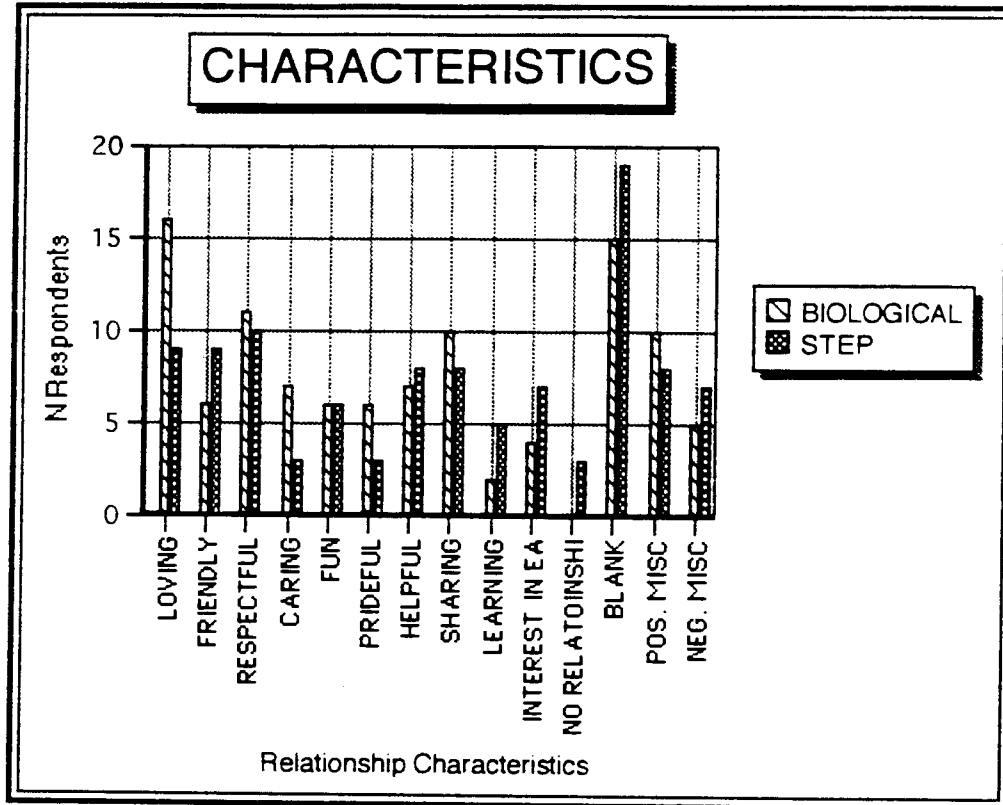
FIGURE I  
COHESION SCORES

	Disengaged	Separated	Connected	Enmeshed
	10	35	40	45
				50
N(2)	(18)	(10)	(4)	(1)

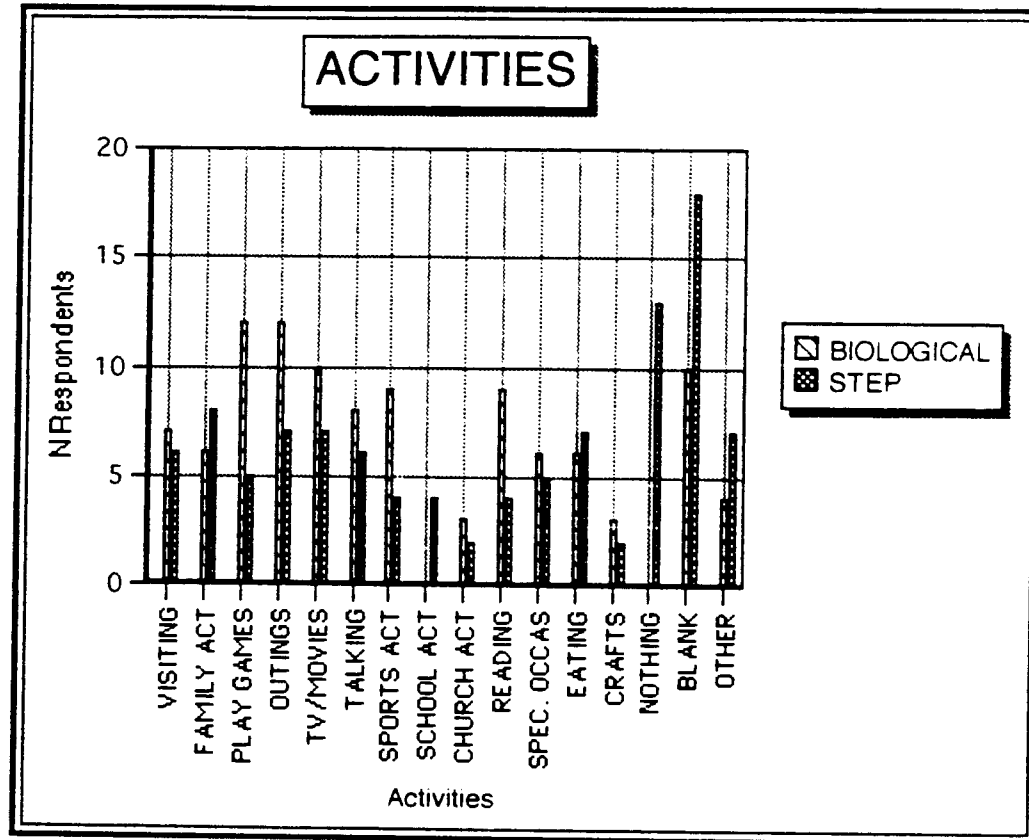
COHESION SCORE	FREQUENCY
09 - - - - -	(02)
12 - - - - -	(02)
13 - - - - -	(01)
15 - - - - -	(02)
22 - - - - -	(03)
23 - - - - -	(01)
24 - - - - -	(01)
28 - - - - -	(01)
29 - - - - -	(01)
30 - - - - -	(02)
31 - - - - -	(01)
32 - - - - -	(02)
33 - - - - -	(01)
35 - - - - -	(04)
36 - - - - -	(01)
37 - - - - -	(02)
38 - - - - -	(03)
40 - - - - -	(01)
41 - - - - -	(01)
44 - - - - -	(02)
50 - - - - -	(01)

\* A computed score of 9 was found as a result of a 0 score inserted for a blank. The assignment of a 0 was based on other responses in the questionnaire.

GRAPH I  
RELATIONSHIP CHARACTERISTICS



GRAPH II  
ACTIVITIES



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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE



## RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

Title: Stepgrandparenting and Grandparenting: A Perception of Grandparenting Behaviors and Roles.

Investigator: Amy L. Brunk

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in questionnaire about 45 minutes in length in which I will answer questions about concerning myself, my grandchildren and stepgrandchildren, and my relationship with them. Some of the questions may be about relationships in my family; thus tapping into personal feelings and emotions.

I understand that all the information I give will be held strictly confidential. I also understand that none of the information will be used for any other purpose than this research project. I realize that I may withdraw at any time. My participation in this project will pose no risk to me.

I may contact Amy Brunk at telephone number: 624-7315.

I may also contact : University Research Services  
001 Life Sciences East  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, OK 74078;  
Telephone: (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy L. Brunk, Investigator

Stepgrandparenting and Grandparenting:

A Perception of Grandparenting

Behaviors and Roles

Questionnaire

## Section I

This section of the questionnaire will ask basic background information about you, your grandchildren, and your stepgrandchildren. For the purpose of completing this questionnaire, please select the **one** biological grandchild and **one** stepgrandchild you see most often. Please check the appropriate box, or briefly respond to the question asked. All information given is held confidential. There will be no identifying names or numbers to identify you with your form.

- 1) Are you a:  
[  ] grandmother  
[  ] grandfather
  
- 2 Are you:  
[  ] married  
[  ] single
  
- 3) How many miles do you live from your:  
\_\_\_\_\_ biological grandchild?  
\_\_\_\_\_ stepgrandchild?
  
- 4) How old were you when you became:  
\_\_\_\_\_ a biological grandparent?  
\_\_\_\_\_ a stepgrandparent?
  
- 5) How long have you been:  
\_\_\_\_\_ a biological grandparent  
\_\_\_\_\_ a stepgrandparent
  
- 6) What is the age of your:  
\_\_\_\_\_ biological grandchild  
\_\_\_\_\_ stepgrandchild

- 7) Did you become a stepgrandparent through:  
[ ] marriage of an adult child  
[ ] remarriage of an adult child
- 8) Is your stepgrandchild from:  
[ ] maternal side  
[ ] paternal side
- 9) Is the custodial parent of your stepgrandchild:  
[ ] mother  
[ ] father
- 10) Are you connected to your stepgrandchild through:  
[ ] custodial parent  
[ ] noncustodial parent
- 

## Section II

The purpose of this section is to measure the amount of contact you have with your biological grandchild and your stepgrandchild. Furthermore, to evaluate your satisfaction with this contact. Please respond to the following items by placing the number that best represents your response in the blank beside each item.

- 1= daily
- 2= once/week
- 3= several/year
- 4= once a year
- 5= less than once/year
- 6= almost never
- 7= not applicable

- 11) \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you see your biological grandchild?
- 12) \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you see your stepgrandchild?
- 13) \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you have contact with your biological grandchild through letters?
- 14) \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you have contact with your stepgrandchild through letters?

15) \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you have contact with your biological grandchild through phone conversations?

16) \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you have contact with your stepgrandchild through phone conversations?

Please respond to the following items by placing the number on the scale that best represents your response in the blank beside each item.

1      2      3      4      5  
1= very satisfied  
5= not satisfied

17) \_\_\_\_\_ How satisfied are you with the amount of contact you have with your biological grandchild?

18) \_\_\_\_\_ How satisfied are you with the amount of contact you have with your stepgrandchild?

---

### Section III

The purpose of this section is to measure the importance of your relationship with your biological grandchild and stepgrandchild.

Please respond to the following items by placing the number on the scale that best represents your response in the blank beside each item.

1      2      3      4      5  
1= extremely important  
5= extremely unimportant

19) \_\_\_\_\_ How important to you is your relationship with your biological grandchild?

20) \_\_\_\_\_ How important to you is your relationship with your stepgrandchild?

---

## Section IV

The purpose of this section is to measure role conception along "social" and "personal" dimensions.

Please respond to the following items by placing the number on the scale that best represents your response in the blank beside each item.

1      2      3      4      5  
1= strongly agree  
5= strongly disagree

## "social"

21) \_\_\_\_\_ I feel I should do what is proper around my stepgrandchild so that he/she will not think less of me.

22) \_\_\_\_\_ I feel I should include my stepgrandchild in family activities.

23) \_\_\_\_\_ I feel that I should spend the holidays with my stepgrandchild.

24) \_\_\_\_\_ I feel that my stepgrandchild should give me respect.

Please respond to the following items by placing the number on the scale that best represents your response in the blank beside each item.

1      2      3      4      5  
1= strongly agree  
5= strongly disagree

## "personal"

25) \_\_\_\_\_ There is so much I can learn from my stepgrandchild as an individual.

26) \_\_\_\_\_ I have an emotional attachment to my stepgrandchild.

27) \_\_\_\_\_ I feel it is important to have a personal relationship with my stepgrandchild.

28) \_\_\_\_\_ I feel that my stepgrandchild will be sad when I am dead.

---

#### Section V

This section is designed to measure perceptions of appropriate and/or expected stepgrandparent behavior.

Please respond to the following items by circling Y (yes) or N (no).

- |   |   |     |  |
|---|---|-----|--|
| Y | N | 29) | A stepgrandparent is someone who gives gifts of money.                                 |
| Y | N | 30) | A stepgrandparent is someone who takes their stepgrandchild places.                    |
| Y | N | 31) | A stepgrandparent is someone who gives advice to their stepgrandchild.                 |
| Y | N | 32) | A stepgrandparent is someone who provides emotional support to their stepgrandchild.   |
| Y | N | 33) | A stepgrandchild acts as a liaison between their adult child and their stepgrandchild. |
| Y | N | 34) | A stepgrandparent is someone who provides financial support to their stepgrandchild.   |
-

## Section VI

This section is to evaluate your satisfaction with your relationship, as well as your perception of your stepgrandchild's relationship with your adult child.

Please respond to the following items by placing the number that best represents your response in the blank beside each item.

1      2      3      4      5  
 1= very satisfied  
 5= very unsatisfied

35) \_\_\_\_\_ How satisfied are you with your relationship to your biological grandchild?

36) \_\_\_\_\_ How satisfied are you with your relationship to your stepgrandchild?

37) \_\_\_\_\_ How do you perceive your stepgrandchild's relationship to his/her stepparent?

---

## Section VII

This section is to measure the amount of cohesion in the stepgrandparent/grandchild relationship.

Please respond to the following items by placing the number that best represents your response in the blank beside each item.

1 = almost never  
 2 = once in awhile  
 3 = sometimes  
 4 = frequently  
 5 = almost always

38) \_\_\_\_\_ Stepgrandchildren ask stepgrandparents for help.

39) \_\_\_\_\_ We approve of each others friends.

40) \_\_\_\_\_ We like to do things with just each other.

41) \_\_\_\_\_ We feel closer to each other than to other people outside the family.



- 42) \_\_\_\_\_ We like to spend free time with each other.  
43) \_\_\_\_\_ We feel very close to each other.  
44) \_\_\_\_\_ When our family gets together for activities we are both present.  
45) \_\_\_\_\_ We can easily think of things to do together.  
46) \_\_\_\_\_ We consult each other on our decisions.  
47) \_\_\_\_\_ Togetherness is important to us.
- 

### Section VIII

This section is designed to gain additional information about your relationship with your biological grandchild in comparison to your stepgrandchild.

- 48) List three characteristics of your relationship with:

A: your biological grandchild

1)

2)

3)

B: your stepgrandchild

1)

2)

3)

- 49) List three activities commonly shared with:

A: your biological grandchild

1)

2)

3)

B: your stepgrandchild

1)

2)

3)

---

## Section IX

This section is to provide additional information relevant to the stepgrandparent/ stepgrandchild relationship. Please respond briefly to the following questions.

- 50) How many stepgrandchildren do you have total?  
Please list the names and ages of all of your stepgrandchildren.
- 51) Why or Why don't you feel that it is important to maintain contact with your stepgrandchild?

52) Do you feel that it is important to have a relationship with your stepgrandchild? Why or why not?

53) What do you feel is your most important role as a stepgrandparent?

54) What do you feel is appropriate behavior for a stepgrandparent?

55) Are you satisfied with the relationship you have with your stepgrandchild?

56) How close do you feel to your stepgrandchild? Has it always been that way?

57) Do you feel differently toward your biological grandchild and your stepgrandchild?

- 58) Please take this space to make any additional comments that may provide insight into the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship.

.

\*This is the end of the questionnaire.  
Thank you for your help!\*

APPENDIX B

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

## Research Question One

How does the amount contact the stepgrandparent has with the stepgrandchild influence the stepgrandparents satisfaction with the relationship?

Stepgrandparents were asked to respond to three questions assessing the amount of contact they maintain with their stepgrandchild. When asked how often they saw their stepgrandchild, 17% responded daily, 34% once/week, 40% several/year, 3% once a year, and 6% less than once a year. When asked how often contact was made through letters, 3% responded daily, 34% several/year, 6% once a year, 3% less than once a year, 26% almost never, and 29% not applicable. When asked how often contact was made through phone conversations, 3% responded daily, 11% once/week, 43% several/year, 3% once a year, 26% almost never, and 14% not applicable. Because of the small sample size responses were collapsed to frequent (daily, once/week, several/year) and infrequent (once a year, less than once/year, almost never, not applicable). Respondents were asked to rate how



satisfied they were with their relationship to their stepgrandchild. Fifty-six (56) percent reported being very satisfied, 15% satisfied, 17% moderate satisfaction, 6% unsatisfied, 6% very unsatisfied. Responses were then collapsed into two categories, satisfied (very satisfied, satisfied) and unsatisfied (moderate satisfaction, unsatisfied, very unsatisfied). A chi square analysis was done crossing each of the types of contact with relationship satisfaction. Significance was not found for any of the items. The results of the chi square analysis are as follows: in person contact X relationship satisfaction ( $p=0.144$ ), contact through letters X relationship satisfaction ( $p=0.158$ ), and contact through phone X relationship satisfaction ( $p=0.150$ ). Significance was found as in person contact increased, satisfaction with the amount of contact increased ( $p=0.044$ ).

While statistical significance was not shown between amount of contact and relationship satisfaction, it was implied many times in open ended responses. Many of the stepgrandparents felt closer to their stepgrandchild as they spent more time around them, thus increasing their relationship satisfaction.

## Research Question Two

In what way does the age of the stepgrandchild influence the stepgrandparents perceived degree of cohesion?

Stepgrandparents were asked to respond to 10 items from FACES III, measuring cohesion. Responses from all 10 questions were compiled into perceived cohesion score. Scores for this sample ranged from 9 to 50, with a mean score of 29. Cohesion scores were divided at the mean and collapsed into high and low categories. Respondents were asked how long they had been a stepgrandparent as well as the current age of the stepgrandchild, the age the child became a stepgrandchild was then calculated. Current age was collapsed and divided into younger (0-20) and older (20-50). Age became stepgrandchild was collapsed into younger (0-10) and older (11-44). Chi square analysis was done crossing cohesion scores X current age, and cohesion scores X age became. Significance was not found when looking at the current age of the stepgrandchild ( $p=0.072$ ). It was shown that those who became a stepgrandparent when the child was age 10 and younger experienced higher cohesion scores ( $p=0.046$ ).

### Research Question Three

Does the length of time as a stepgrandparent influence the importance of the relationship with the stepgrandchild?

Stepgrandparents in this sample were asked how long they had been a stepgrandparent. Responses were then collapsed into two categories, 0-10 years (60%) and 11-40 years (40%). Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of their relationship to stepgrandchild. Responses were collapsed into two categories important (66%) and unimportant (34%). The middle response on a 5-point likert scale was included in the unsatisfied grouping. Chi square analysis was done crossing length of time as a stepgrandparent X importance of relationship, and statistical significance was not shown ( $p=0.561$ ). While statistical significance was not found, evidence to support a relationship between length of time as a stepgrandparent and importance of relationship was shown through open ended responses. Many of the stepgrandparents stated that the reason they felt differently toward their biological and step grandchild was solely because they had know the biological grandchild longer than the stepgrandchild.

## Research Question Four

Does geographical distance to the stepgrandchild, influence the amount of contact the stepgrandparent has?

Respondents were asked how many miles they resided from their stepgrandchild. Responses were then collapsed into 0-60 (48%) and 61 and above (52%). Stepgrandparents were asked to respond to three questions regarding contact with their stepgrandchild. Responses were collapsed to frequent (daily, once/week, several/year) and infrequent (once a year, less than once/year, almost never, not applicable). When asked how often they saw their stepgrandchild, 81% responded frequent and 9% infrequent. When asked how often contact was made through letters, 37% responded frequent and 63% infrequent. When asked how often contact was made through phone conversations, 57% responded frequent and 43% infrequent. A chi square analysis was done crossing geographical distance X amount of contact. It was found that the closer the stepgrandparent lived to their stepgrandchild, the more frequently the stepgrandparent saw the stepgrandchild ( $p=0.020$ ).

## Research Question Five

What are accepted as appropriate roles for the stepgrandparent?

Role conception was evaluated along social and a personal dimensions. Respondents were asked to respond to eight statements. Grandparents responded with stronger agreement to the social level than the personal level. The highest percentage of agreement (100%) was on the question that stated "I feel my stepgrandchild should give me respect." A breakdown of questions in the social and personal dimensions is given in Table III.

---

Insert Table III

---

Stepgrandparents were also asked to discuss what they felt their most important role was as a stepgrandparent. A breakdown of responses can be seen in the discussion of short answer question 53 (Appendix C).

## Research Question Six

What are accepted as appropriate behaviors for the stepgrandparent?

Appropriate or expected stepgrandparent behaviors were evaluated by responding "yes" or "no" to six different statements about stepgrandparents. The highest percentage (79%) of "yes" responses were given to the statement "A stepgrandparent is someone who provides emotional support to their stepgrandchild". The highest percentage (73%) of "no" responses were given to the statement "A stepgrandchild acts as a liaison between their adult child and their stepgrandchild." A breakdown of questions and responses is provided in Table IV.

---

Insert Table IV

---

Stepgrandparents were also asked to discuss what they felt was appropriate behavior for a stepgrandparent. A breakdown of responses can be seen in the discussion of short answer question 54 (Appendix C).

## Research Question Seven

What are common characteristics used to describe relationships of biological grandchildren and stepgrandchildren?

Each respondent was asked to list three characteristics describing their relationship to their biological grandchild and three describing their relationship to their stepgrandchild. Respondents answers were then placed into categories. The top five characteristics for biological grandchildren were as follows: loving(16), respectful(11), sharing(10), caring(7) and helpful(7). There were 105 responses altogether, of these 5 were negative, 15 were left blank and the remaining 85 were positive. The top five characteristics for stepgrandchildren were as follows: respectful(10), loving(9), friendly(9), helpful(9) and sharing(9). There were 105 responses altogether, of these 10 were negative, 19 were left blank and the remaining 76 were positive. A more detailed breakdown of characteristics can be seen in the following graph.

---

Insert Graph 1

---

## Research Question Eight

What are common activities shared in relationships with biological grandchildren and stepgrandchildren?

Each respondent was asked to list three activities shared in their relationship to their biological grandchild and three shared in their relationship to their stepgrandchild. Respondents answers were then placed into categories. The top five activities for biological grandchildren were as follows: playing games(12), going on outings(12), watching TV and movies(10), sporting events(9) and reading(9). There were 105 responses altogether, of these 15 were left blank. The top five activities for stepgrandchildren were as follows: family get together(8), eating(7), going on outings(7), watching TV and movies(7) and visiting(7). There were 105 responses altogether, of these 18 were left blank and 13 responded that no activities were shared. A more detailed breakdown of activities can be seen in the following graph.

---

Insert Graph 2

---



APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

## Short Answer Question Fifty

How many stepgrandchildren do you have total?

Please list the names and ages of all or your stepgrandchildren.

Respondents number of stepgrandchildren ranged from 1 to 16. The mean number of stepgrandchildren was 3.6. The break down of data is shown in the following frequency distribution.

<u>N of respondents</u>	<u>frequency</u>
01 - - - - -	07
02 - - - - -	13
03 - - - - -	06
04 - - - - -	01
05 - - - - -	00
06 - - - - -	01
07 - - - - -	00
08 - - - - -	00
09 - - - - -	00
10 - - - - -	02
11 - - - - -	01
12 - - - - -	00
13 - - - - -	00
14 - - - - -	00
15 - - - - -	00
16 - - - - -	01

## Short Answer Question Fifty-one

Why or why don't you feel that it is important to maintain contact with your stepgrandchild?

Out of 35 total respondents, 80% responded to this question. 68% of the respondents felt it was important to maintain contact while 32% of the respondents did not feel it was possible given their situation. When asked why they felt it was important to maintain contact two reasons were given. Of those who felt it was important to maintain contact 78% stated that it was important to maintain a good family ties, the remaining 22% stated that it was important because all children need to feel loved. Of those who felt it was not possible to maintain contact with their stepgrandchild, two main reasons were stated. About 50% expressed that geographical distance did not permit contact, while the other 50% felt that the stepgrandchild did not need them, or desire any form of contact with them. Many of those who did not maintain close contact, were dissatisfied with the relationship and wished it could be different.

## Short Answer Question Fifty-two

Do you feel it is important to have a relationship with yourstepgrandchild? Why or why not?

Out of 35 total respondents, 78% responded to this question. 93% of the responses were positive, stating that it was important to have a relationship to their stepgrandchild. The other 7%, felt that stepgrandchild did not wish to have a relationship. Of those who felt it was important to have a relationship, a variety of reasons why were given. Some of the reasons more commonly stated were as follows: family togetherness, because I love him/her, he/she needs me, to help develop values, and to keep informed as to what is going on in the world. Those who felt it was important to have a good relationship with their stepgrandchild, but did not feel they had one, desired a closer relationship to the stepgrandchild, but often felt their efforts were not appreciated. Several respondents emphasized that in todays world, the support of extended family was vital to all grandchildren.

## Short Answer Question Fifty-three

What do you feel is your most important role as a stepgrandparent?

Out of 35 total respondents, 86% responded to this question. Only 7% of the respondents felt that they had no role in the life of their stepgrandchild. The remaining 93% listed a variety of roles they felt were important. Many of the stepgrandparents stated the importance of treating all grandchildren the same, regardless of the biological connection. The breakdown of roles is given below.

<u>Stepgrandparent role</u>	<u>frequency</u>
To be loving and caring - - - - -	11
Let them know I am here if needed - - - - -	04
Show interest in their life - - - - -	04
Be a friend - - - - -	02
Be a good role model - - - - -	02
Be a good grandparent - - - - -	02
Make the stepgrandchild feel welcome - - - - -	02
Offer encouragement and support - - - - -	01

## Short Answer Question Fifty-four

What do you feel is appropriate behavior for a stepgrandparent?

Out of 35 total respondents, 86% responded to this question. Only 1 person (3%) stated that they had no idea what appropriate behavior would be. The remaining 97% stated a variety of behaviors. The majority of the stepgrandparents emphasized being one's own self and in doing that, being the best person you could through a variety of behaviors. Those who felt it was important to be a friend, stated that because the stepgrandchild had biological grandparents, their behavior should reflect that of a friend as instead of another grandparent. A breakdown of behaviors is given below.

<u>Stepgrandparent Behavior</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Be one's very best self - - - - -	08
Showing interest and respect - - - - -	05
Be Loving to them - - - - -	06
Be there for them - - - - -	03
Be a grandparent - - - - -	03
Nurturing adult friend - - - - -	02
Keep in touch - - - - -	01
Have fun - - - - -	01

## Short Answer Question Fifty-five

Are you satisfied with the relationship you have with your stepgrandchild?

Out of 35 respondents, 83% responded to this question. 79% of the stepgrandparents reported that they were satisfied with their relationship to the stepgrandchild, while 21% indicated that they were not satisfied. Those who were not satisfied, expressed that they would like the relationship to be better, and many stated that with each visit it was improving. Many stepgrandparents who were satisfied with the relationship wished that the stepgrandchild had entered their life earlier, and desired more frequent contact. Many of stepgrandparents communicated that they felt a great deal of love for their stepgrandchild. A few of the stepgrandparents expressed concern that the love they gave was not valued by the stepgrandchild, this seemed to be the response in situations which the stepgrandchild remained close to his/her biological grandparent.

## Short Answer Question Fifty-six

How close do you feel to your stepgrandchild? Has it always been that way?

Out of 35 total respondents, 80% responded to this question. When asked how close the stepgrandparent felt to the stepgrandchild, 61% stated they felt close, and 39% stated that they did not feel close. Those who felt close to their stepgrandchild reported that they had always felt close to the stepgrandchild, but that over the years they had grown closer. Those who did not feel close to their stepgrandchild offered more of an explanation. Many of the respondents did not feel they had known the stepgrandchild long enough to form a close relationship, but felt that it was growing. Others simply did not have a relationship to the stepgrandchild and did not believe that the stepgrandchild desired a relationship. A couple of stepgrandparents felt that the closeness of the relationship depended greatly on the child's age. When the stepgrandchild entered the relationship as a teenager, it became more difficult than at a younger age.



## Short Answer Question Fifty-seven

Do you feel differently toward your biological grandchild and your stepgrandchild?

Out of 35 total respondents, 89% responded to this question. 79% of the stepgrandparents did report feeling differently toward their biological grandchild and their stepgrandchild. Of these respondents, all but one reported that they felt closer toward their biological grandchild. The one reported that she felt closer to her stepgrandchild. 21% of the stepgrandparents indicated that they felt the same about their biological and step grandchildren. Many reasons were provided as to why the stepgrandparent felt closer to their biological grandchild. The majority of these reasons focused on the fact that the tie that binds the biological grandchild had been developing since birth, more of their growing up had been shared. Others expressed that it was only natural to feel that the biological grandchild was more a part of them. Many of the stepgrandparents stated that although they felt there was a difference they tried very hard not to show it in their actions.

## Short Answer Question Fifty-eight

Please take this space to make any additional comments that may provide insight into the stepgrandparent/stepgrandchild relationship.

There were many comments made in this section; however one stands out as capturing the feelings expressed by many of the stepgrandparents in this study.

"If we would stop and remember when we were young and who we remember that helped us with the important things in life - love, responsibility, and self confidence in one's ability to succeed; just being a biological parent or grandparent does not mean that you are going to really be a parent or grandparent. It is like being a wife or a husband. You first have to want it and then you work at it, no matter what it takes, you love the child God brings into your life and teach it the things that are important - love and giving and wisdom. Bonding is so important and a child, any child, who knows he belongs and knows he is loved unconditionally will succeed no matter what."

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 04-22-96

IRB#: HE-96-057

**Proposal Title:** STEPGRANDPARENTING AND GRANDPARENTING: A  
PERCEPTION OF GRANDPARENTING BEHAVIORS AND ROLES

**Principal Investigator(s):** Joe Weber, Amy Brunk

**Reviewed and Processed as:** Exempt

**Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):** Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
AT NEXT MEETING.

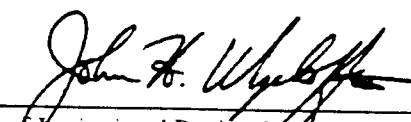
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A  
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD  
APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR  
APPROVAL.

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Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval  
are as follows:

Signature:

  
Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: April 30, 1996

VITA

Amy Lynn (Brunk) Pugh

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: STEPGRANDPARENTING AND GRANDPARENTING: A  
PERCEPTION OF GRANDPARENTING BEHAVIORS AND ROLES

Major Field: Family Relations And Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Springfield, Illinois, June 19,  
1972, the daughter of Robert G. Brunk and Kendra  
K. Medley.

Education: Graduated from Putnam City North High  
School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in May, 1990;  
received Bachelor of Science Degree in Family  
Relations and Child Development/Gerontology from  
Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma  
in May, 1994; completed requirements for the  
Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State  
University in December, 1996.

Professional Experience: Graduate Assistant,  
Department of Human Environmental  
Science/Cooperative Extension, in conjunction with  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Tulsa, Oklahoma  
State University, September, 1994 to June, 1996.