

**EXPRESSIVE-AFFECTIONATE BEHAVIOR OF FATHERS
TOWARD THEIR PRE-SCHOOL SONS**

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent psychological research has often dealt with the interaction of parent and child, with the focus of this research generally on the mother-child relationship. Little attention has been given to father-child interaction since child-rearing has been traditionally associated, in Western culture, with the role of the mother. Mead (1957) states that as far as she was able to ascertain, no complex society, with a written tradition, has ever expected the man of stature and education to care for an infant. She did find, however, that in very primitive societies it is not unusual to find fathers taking a good deal of care of small infants. Among some Australian aborigines, the father, after his morning hunt has been successful, will carry the young infant while the mother gathers vegetable foods.

A review of the literature on parent-child relationships by Peterson et al. (1959) over the years 1929-1956, revealed at least 169 publications dealing with relationships between mothers and their children. The information available on father-child relationships, in contrast, was encompassed in ten articles, one convention address, and one book. This relative dearth of literature on father-child relationships is echoed by Bigner (1970), in a second review of the literature, as well as several other authors (Burlingham, 1973; Eron et al., 1961; Nash, 1965; Osofsky and O'Connell, 1972; Radin, 1972). Peterson et al. attribute

the lack of literature in this area to the considerable practical difficulties in securing the cooperation of fathers. They state that it is clear that these difficulties must be overcome if the total social environment in its relationship to child development is ever to be understood.

Burlingham (1973) speaks of the failure of analysts to include the father in their writings on the early years of children's lives. He states that the important persons described are the mothers, while the fathers remain in the background. Burlingham is especially concerned about the comparative neglect of the preoedipal father, which he believes not only minimizes the role of the father, but actually distorts the infant-mother relationship by magnifying the importance of that relationship.

Nash (1965) states that child care is seen as "matricentric." He explains that the literature assumes women to have some deep psychological roots of motherliness, but that this is not the case for men and fatherhood. Instead, fatherhood is seen as more of a social obligation. The influence of this matricentrism on the psychological literature is a scant attention given to father-child interactions. Since science is regarded as "male territory," Nash further believes that it has failed to interest itself very much in children, under the assumption that interest in children is "unmasculine."

Although child-rearing and motherhood appear to have had an exclusive, long-standing association, it now appears that child-rearing is becoming incorporated, increasingly, into the role of the father. Tasch (1952) interviewed a group of 85 fathers, covering a diverse range of nationalities, education, and occupations. These fathers,

from the greater New York area, did not see their role as secondary to the mother, nor did they see support as their only major function. Rather, they saw themselves as active participants in routine daily care and also saw child-rearing as an integral part of their role as father.

Nash, in his 1965 article, talked of social changes and changes within "husbands," which he saw as affecting the area of child-rearing as well as the definition of father. He saw husbands as becoming more relaxed, less driven by the Protestant ethic and as more sharing of domestic duties as women entered the labor force. Nash's observation is that men have become disillusioned with the role of aggressive provider and that they've discovered the emptiness of life at the top. They are now finding the alternative satisfactions of life as father and find these to be greater than those of career success.

Lamb (1976) disagreed with the assumption that the mother is uniquely important in the child's life, and stated his belief that the extent of interaction between mother and child is exaggerated. In a vein similar to Nash, Lamb states that the inability to formulate definitive specifications of the father's role concerns the very definition of that role, in that it is currently being reevaluated, as are the traditional characteristics of masculinity. Lamb adds that because of the recency of these changes in the cultural definition of role-appropriate behavior, there is little one can say about the effect in children.

The situation thus appears to be a lack of research in the area of father-child relationships at a time when the definition of father is in transition. The little work that has been directed at the father-child relationship appears to have neglected the area of expression of

of affection by the father towards the son. The neglect of this particular area is probably due in part to the same traditional view of the father which has hampered research in the entire study of fathering. It may be as Nash has said of this traditional view, that fathers who show tenderness and nurturance are regarded as effeminate, and are thus a rare topic for research. It is the purpose of this study to investigate the expressive-affectionate behavior of fathers in interaction with their sons in a free-play setting.

Lamb (1976) has noted the weaknesses in the research concerning the assessment of parents' attitudes or behaviors. He states that it is indeed rare for fathers to be interviewed directly. Instead, children are asked to describe their fathers' behavior, or mothers are asked to describe their spouses and the father-child relationship. This, Lamb states, is a serious confounding, in that sources of evidence about the child, the father, and their relationship are not independent. The same methodological biases, stated by Lamb, are voiced by Osofsky and O'Connell (1972) and Eron et al. (1961). Their discussions stress the need and importance of direct assessment of fathers' behaviors. Given this, the examination of expressive-affectionate behavior, in this study, will be primarily observational. Trained judges will rate fathers' behavior, recorded on video-tape, as it is evidenced in four different dimensions: verbal output, physical contact, attention, and posture.

In regard to the expression of affection on these four dimensions reference is to those incidences where the father through his behavior, conveys love, warmth, concern, and acceptance to his son. He may do this through reinforcement of his son's behavior, through acceptance and acknowledgment of his son as a whole person or through sensitivity

to his son's needs, both explicit and implicit. The observables associated with the various dimensions parallel Biller's definition of nurturance, as stated in his 1974 book, Father Power. Biller defines nurturance as being emotionally close to the child, accepting him and helping him, but not keeping him from exploration. He states that father nurturance should feature a whole host of physical and nonphysical demonstrations of love and regard for the child. A father, according to Biller, should be able to comfortably hug and kiss the child, take him to a wide range of places, patiently demonstrate things to the child, verbally communicate to the child that he is loved and give him credit for his achievements.

Radin (1972), in a study of father-son interactions, categorized verbal phrases and behaviors, and then placed the categories into one of two large clusters labeled nurturant behaviors and restrictive behaviors. The items included in the nurturant cluster represented behaviors which involved use of reinforcement, consulting with the child, and sensitivity to his needs. All three dimensions were included inasmuch as nurturance, or warmth, is seen as responding to the child as an active, thinking, feeling, human being. In the nurturant cluster were many of the same behaviors which comprised Biller's definition of nurturance: verbal reinforcement, physical reinforcement, consulting with the child, fully responding to the explicit (stated or exhibited) needs of the child, responding to the implicit (unstated) needs of the child, communicating affection, and asking information of the child.

In a similar manner, Bronson et al. (1959) describe the variable of affection as it was utilized in their study.

In the parents' descriptions of the grandparents and in the children's reports, the respondent's perception of a quality of warmth, acceptance and love was the basis of the rating. In the judgment of the actual degree of affection shown by the parent, the rater sought behavioral manifestations over time, however subtle, which would have been sufficiently overt to be recognizable by a child (p. 145).

As stated previously, the specific behaviors comprising the various dimensions of expressive-affectionate behavior in general, will parallel Biller's definition of nurturance. At the same time, the specific behaviors are also derivations of Radin's "nurturant cluster" and the variable of affection as defined by Bronson et al. (1959). The specific behaviors and the dimensions they comprise are as listed.

Verbal Output:

- (a) expression of positive feeling in an unconditional sense; the son does not have to "earn" these expressions --they are unconditionally given; "I love you."
- (b) expression of positive feeling in a conditional sense; verbal reinforcement; "You did a real fine job, Son-- I'm proud of you."
- (c) offerings of assistance in such a way that the son maintains the alternative of refusal; "Can I be of any help?"
- (d) giving of verbal assistance because of concern for the son's needs, though the son did not seek assistance; "I think it would be best for you to . . ."
- (e) consultation, in the sense that it reflects an acknowledgment of the worth of the son's opinion; "What do you think about that, son?"

- (f) sensitivity to the son's feelings; the son's right to his own feelings is respected; "You're angry about that, aren't you?"

Physical Contact:

- (a) arm around son's shoulder
- (b) hugging
- (c) kissing
- (d) pat on the back
- (e) tousle son's hair
- (f) mock punch to arm, stomach, etc.

Attention:

- (a) appropriateness of father's responses to his son's messages, in the sense that the attentiveness of the father's listening will be indicated.

Posture:

- (a) degree of orientation of entire body toward son reflecting increased involvement and proximity
- (b) angle of trunk toward son reflecting increased involvement and proximity

The training of the judges in recognition of these behaviors was done through the use of a master video-tape, in which a father and his son, briefed by the examiner, depicted the behaviors labeled, for the purposes of this study, as expressive-affectionate.

In addition to the primary purpose of investigating the expressive-affectionate behavior of fathers, there was the secondary purpose of obtaining fathers' perceptions of their own fathers' expressive-affectionate behavior. Gardner (1943) surveyed the attitudes of fathers

toward their own fathers and found that lack of companionship and interest was resented most bitterly in 25 percent of the weak points mentioned. Several of the fathers used the very expressive phrases "too cold" and "much coldness" in regard to lack of companionship.

Kagan et al. (1961) state that most of their results essentially agree with previous findings, even though these earlier findings were based on different samples of children using different procedures. Kagan's study indicates that the child views the father as more punitive, more fear-arousing, more potent, but less nurturant than the mother. Droppleman and Schaefer (1963) administered a parent behavior inventory to 85 boys and 80 girls, ages 12-14 years. On a group of scales measuring components of love, nurturance, or affection, mothers are reported as significantly higher than fathers for both boys and girls.

In a study quite similar to the current study, Bronson et al. (1959) directed their efforts to answering four separate questions: (1) how mothers and fathers of the earlier generation are remembered by their now-adult sons and daughters--the second generation parents, (2) in what ways and to what extent these retrospective assessments relate to the roles and behaviors adopted by these parents, (3) how these parents actually do behave to their children, and (4) how their children perceive these roles and behaviors, the accuracy of their perceptions, and the nature and extent of their distortions. They considered two fundamental aspects of the parent-child relationship in addressing these questions: the giving of affection and the exercise of authority. This is important in regard to the present study, in that retrospective accounts of parenting (more specifically fathering) as well as actual

behavior were investigated with respect to expressive-affectionate behavior.

Through the use of cumulative case history material on 100 families collected in an 18-year intensive investigation of physical, mental and personality development, independent raters assessed the two main variables of the study, authority and affection. These variables were rated in all three of the following areas: (1) the parents' retrospective descriptions of their relationships with their own parents, (2) the parents' actual behavior toward their children, and (3) the parents' behavior as perceived by their own children. The ratings were of a dichotomous nature (high or low) and were made by individual raters, each of whom was familiar with the case records used in the study.

Bronson et al. (1959) found that significantly more grandmothers than grandfathers were remembered by fathers as being highly affectionate. Mothers differed from fathers in more often remembering grandfather as highly affectionate. The authors caution that it cannot be ascertained from this retrospective data whether the differences in fathers' and mothers' reports reflect actual sex differential treatment by the grandparents or represent distortions originating in either childhood or adulthood. They explain by stating that in any given generation, parental roles are determined by a number of interacting factors: a direct carry-over of learned roles from the preceding generation; a more complex and individual mediation of early familial patterns; contemporary social pressures and crises that force modification of certain existing parental roles. Although a parent's definition of his/her role is affected by his/her childhood family pattern, this transmission is

mediated both by childhood and adult perceptions of parents' behaviors and attitudes. The accuracy of these perceptions may vary extensively. A person, as a child, may autistically attribute to his/her parents, desired qualities, which in fact, are absent. When grown, and him/herself a parent, he/she may remember--and even exaggerate--these once-denied parental deficiencies. He/she may then attempt, successfully or not, to "make up" to his/her child what his/her own childhood was lacking. Whatever the sources of a person's misperceptions, they will contribute to the changes and consistencies between his/her own and his/her parents' roles in the family. The expectation that there is a good deal of consistency between the actual child-rearing practices of the parents and their descriptions of their own parents, received very little support. There was a tendency, however, for fathers to emulate their fathers in the area of affection. This would seem to be congruent with the findings of Stolz (1966). Men, more than their wives, were found to emphasize experiences with their fathers, but these tended to be practices they wished to repeat in rearing their own offspring.

The confluence of these findings is that fathers are not perceived as nurturant, or affectionate, by their children, and there appears to be no systematic relationship between parents' actual child-rearing practices and their descriptions of their own parents. However, there is a tendency for fathers to be similar to their fathers in the area of affection. Burlingham (1973) supports this in a much broader sense, based on his clinical experience.

We have found that whatever handling the father experienced from his own father, whether it has been loving, unfeeling, secure, lenient, understanding, or inconsistent, this affects his own attitude and behavior toward the child. Fathers occasionally tell that they are themselves aware of imitating

their fathers. At other times, they consciously attempt to behave differently, but may act just as their fathers did, although this is against their better judgment (p.35).

In the present study, a questionnaire was developed to assess fathers' perceptions of their own fathers. The questionnaire was comprised of statements of incidences of expressive-affectionate behavior, to which the fathers were to respond on a five-point scale, ranging from "very infrequently" to "very frequently." Two groups of fathers were selected on the basis of this questionnaire: one group of fathers who perceived their fathers as "high" in expressive-affectionate behavior, and another group of fathers who perceived their fathers as "low." Each father received a score in expressive-affectionate behavior as a result of his interaction with his son in the free-play setting. Scores were obtained from the ratings of three judges who viewed the video-tapes of father-son interaction, and rated them according to the dimensions cited earlier.

Consideration of previous findings in regard to fathers' perceptions of their own fathers, and the relationship of this to the actual child-rearing practices of the fathers, led to the following hypotheses:

1. There will be a significant correlation between a father's perception of his own father's expressed affection, as measured by questionnaire (OFEA score), and the father's expression of affection toward his own son, as measured by judges' ratings of video-taped, father-son interaction in a free-play setting (FEA score).
2. There will be a significant difference between the means, based on FEA scores, for the groups designated "HIGH OFEA" and "LOW OFEA."

3. Fathers will demonstrate significantly more verbal output than physical contact.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Twenty fathers, ranging in age from 28 to 41 years, and their three to six-year-old sons served as subjects. Five of these fathers volunteered as a result of a letter (see Appendix A) sent to every father who had a son in the specified age-range enrolled in the Oklahoma State University Child Laboratories. The remainder of the fathers were students and faculty at Oklahoma State University, and members of the Stillwater, Oklahoma community who volunteered as the result of a phone call explaining the purpose and method of the study. Fathers were asked to complete the Father-Son Questionnaire (see Appendix B) so as to determine group membership. Those who scored above 46 in "own father expressed affection" were assigned to the "high OFEA" group, while fathers who scored 46 or below, were assigned to the "low OFEA" group. Ten fathers were assigned to each group.

Equipment

Video-tapes were prepared using a Sony Videocorder Model AV-3600. A 20-minute, master video-tape was prepared using a father and son who did not participate in the study as subjects. This dyad was directed to model expressive-affectionate behavior. The setting for this master video-tape was the same playroom as used in the study. It was used in training the judges to recognize the behaviors to be scored.

Procedure

Father-son pairs reported to Psychological Services Center (located on the Oklahoma State University campus) on Saturday mornings for the video-taping sessions. Fathers were contacted earlier and given a general explanation of the experiment. They were told that it was an interactional study of child behavior and that they would be video-taped in play with their sons, in order for the experimenter to get some idea of how fathers play with their sons.

On arriving at Psychological Services Center, the father and his son were greeted and informed that they would be taken to the playroom, where they were free to play with whatever toys they chose (see Appendix C for the list of toys). They were told that they would have 20 minutes to play together, and that there would be a knock on the door signalling two minutes of play-time remaining (see Appendix D for specific instructions). After the instructions were given, they were ushered into the playroom with video-tape equipment assembled behind the one-way mirror, and an operator available. The room was set up with the same toys in the same manner for each individual taping session.

Twenty minutes of behavior was recorded on video-tape. At the end of the 20 minutes, the experimenter returned and invited the father and son to view the video-tape. As the father and son viewed the tape, the experimenter pointed out examples of behavior, which would be looked at in the study, and answered any questions. At the end of the viewing, the experimenter thanked the father and son for their cooperation. Video-tapes were then rated by three judges.

Judges

Three judges, who were in their second and third year of clinical training, were asked to view the master video-tape. Judges were trained to observe the dimensions of expressive-affectionate behavior previously listed, and were provided with a checklist (see Appendix E) to be used while viewing the master video-tape. This same checklist was used in viewing the participating father-son pairs. A scoring system consisting of one point/affectional behavior yielded a quantitative score.

Judges rated the video-tapes of the father-son pairs soon after they were made. Only behavior rated by two out of the three judges as expressive-affectionate were included in the raw data. Two out of the three judges also had to agree on the dimensional placement of the observed behavior. Interjudge reliability, based on averaging the correlations between pairs of judges, was .92.

Data Analysis

Two sets of scores were analyzed: OFEA ("own father expressed affection"), obtained from the Father-Son Questionnaire, and FEA ("father expressed affection"), obtained from judges' scorings of expressive-affectionate behavior. A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to assess the relationship between OFEA scores and FEA scores. In order to assess the difference between the means for the two groups' FEA scores, a t test was used. A t test was also used to assess the difference between the means for the verbal output and physical contact dimensions. A third t test was used to assess the difference between

the means for the communication (sum of the scores for the verbal output and attention dimension) and physical (sum of the scores for the physical contact and posture dimensions) variables.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The results of the analysis do not support hypothesis I, that a significant positive correlation exists between fathers' perceptions of their own fathers' expressed affection (OFEA score) and fathers' expressions of affection toward their own sons (FEA score). A Pearson product-moment correlation ($r = -.036$, $p < .88$) between OFEA scores and FEA scores, indicates that there is not a significant relationship between these measures. The OFEA scores and FEA scores for each subject are listed in Table I.

Hypothesis II, that there exists a significant difference between the means for the HIGH OFEA and LOW OFEA groups, was not supported. The t test used to compare the two groups' FEA scores was not significant, $t(18) = .065$, $p < .95$. Means and standard deviations for the two groups can be found in Table I.

Results of the analysis do support hypothesis III, that there exists a significant difference between the means for the verbal output and physical contact dimensions. The t test used to compare the means for the two dimensions was significant, $t(19) = 9.12$, $p < .0005$. Means and standard deviations for the behavioral dimensions comprising the total FEA scores are listed in Table II. Listed in Table III are the scores for each subject in regard to the verbal output, physical contact, attention and posture dimensions comprising the FEA scores, as well as the FEA and OFEA scores.

TABLE I
 OFEA AND FEA SCORES FOR EACH SUBJECT

Subject	OFEA	FEA
1	17	28
2	24	57
3	30	46
4	35	21
5	39	33
6	43	33
7	44	41
8	45	29
9	46	41
10	46	44
11	51	51
12	53	42
13	53	17
14	54	37
15	55	34
16	58	38
17	59	38
18	59	53
19	61	36
20	63	30

r (OFEA, FEA) = $-.036$, $p < .88$

HIGH OFEA GROUP; $\bar{X} = 37.60$, S.D. = 10.19

LOW OFEA GROUP; $\bar{X} = 37.30$, S.D. = 10.51

*HIGH = OFEA > 46, LOW = OFEA \leq 46

TABLE II
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR VERBAL OUTPUT,
PHYSICAL CONTACT, ATTENTION, AND
POSTURE DIMENSIONS

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Verbal Output	19.05	8.60
Physical Contact	1.05	1.70
Attention	9.25	3.85
Posture	8.10	2.34

TABLE III

VERBAL OUTPUT, PHYSICAL CONTACT, ATTENTION, POSTURE,
FEA, AND OFEA SCORES FOR EACH SUBJECT

Subject	Verbal Output	Physical Contact	Attention	Posture	FEA	OFEA
1	14	0	9	5	28	17
2	43	0	7	7	57	24
3	15	1	19	11	46	30
4	8	1	6	6	21	35
5	18	1	8	6	33	39
6	18	0	7	8	33	43
7	20	7	5	9	41	44
8	14	1	8	6	29	45
9	16	0	15	10	41	46
10	18	1	13	12	44	46
11	34	0	6	11	51	51
12	26	1	6	9	42	53
13	10	0	3	4	17	53
14	17	0	11	9	37	54
15	16	0	10	9	34	55
16	19	1	14	4	38	58
17	19	0	11	8	38	59
18	32	2	11	8	53	59
19	13	4	9	10	36	61
20	12	1	7	10	30	63

In looking at the means for the verbal output and physical contact dimensions, the large difference between the two is quite apparent. The difference between these two dimensions is greater than any other two dimensions. At the same time there seems to be a logical relationship between the verbal output and attention dimensions, and between the physical contact and posture dimensions. The attention dimension, which indicates a father's listening, could be seen as a more passive form of the verbal output dimension, while the two in combination would form a variable called "communication," which would be an adequate description of both dimensions. Similarly, the dimensions of physical contact and posture, which could be interpreted as an intent to touch or have physical contact, could be combined to form a variable labeled simply "physical." My interest was in combining the dimensions in such a manner to form the two new variables of communication and physical, and then analyzing the means of the two newly formed variables.

Results of the analysis indicate that there exists a significant difference between the means for the communication and physical variables. The t test used to compare the means for the two variables was significant, $t(19) = 9.37$, $p < .001$. Scores for the verbal output, attention, physical contact and posture dimensions, and the variables, physical and communication, are listed in Table IV. Means and standard deviations for the physical and communication variables are also listed in Table IV.

TABLE IV

VERBAL OUTPUT, ATTENTION, PHYSICAL CONTACT, AND POSTURE SCORES;
 SCORES, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR VARIABLES
 LABELED COMMUNICATION AND PHYSICAL

Subject	Ver. Out. + Att. = Communication			Phys. Con. + Pos. = Physical		
1	14	9	23	0	5	5
2	43	7	50	0	7	7
3	15	19	34	1	11	12
4	8	6	14	1	6	7
5	18	8	26	1	6	7
6	18	7	25	0	8	8
7	20	5	25	7	9	16
8	14	8	22	1	6	7
9	16	15	31	0	10	10
10	18	13	31	1	12	13
11	34	6	40	0	11	11
12	26	6	32	1	9	10
13	10	3	13	0	4	4
14	17	11	28	0	9	9
15	16	10	26	0	9	9
16	19	14	33	1	4	5
17	19	11	30	0	8	8
18	32	11	43	2	8	10
19	13	9	22	4	10	14
20	12	7	19	1	10	11

COMMUNICATION: $\bar{X} = 28.3$, S.D. = 9.12

PHYSICAL: $\bar{X} = 9.15$, S. D. = 3.12

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis that there would be a significant correlation between fathers' perceptions of their own fathers' expressive-affectionate behavior, and fathers' expressive-affectionate behavior toward their sons was not supported. Previous studies have also found no systematic relationship between parents' perceptions of their own parents and parents' actual child-rearing behavior. However, there was a tendency for fathers to be similar to their perceptions of their own fathers in the area of affection, when investigated in earlier studies. This tendency was not found in the present study. Fathers' perceptions of their own fathers' expressive-affectionate behavior appear to have no relationship to fathers' expressive-affectionate behavior toward their own sons.

The hypothesis that there would be a significant difference between the means for the two groups' FEA scores was also not supported. Fathers who perceived their own fathers as high in expressive-affectionate behavior, and fathers who perceived their own fathers as low in expressive-affectionate behavior, did not differ significantly in expressive-affectionate behavior toward their own sons. The means for the two groups' FEA scores were, in fact, almost identical.

The hypothesis that there would be a significant difference between the means for the verbal output and physical contact dimensions was

supported. Fathers, in interacting with their sons in free-play, made very little physical contact with their sons, but did maintain a relatively high level of verbalization with their sons.

Although it did not address a specific hypothesis, an additional t test was used to analyze the difference between the means for the two variables, communication and physical. These were the variables formed by combining the verbal output and attention dimensions, and the physical contact and posture dimensions. As the analysis showed, there was a significant difference between the means for the communication and physical variables. Fathers exhibited much more talking and listening than touching and intentions to touch.

The findings support those of Bronson et al. (1959) who found no relationship between parents' perceptions of their own parents' child-rearing practices and parents' actual child-rearing practice, for the two variables studied, authority and affection. It is important to remember that what is being dealt with are perceptions, which are subject to both childhood and adulthood distortions. Information on actual parental behavior is available only retrospectively and does not indicate the amount nor direction of distortion. It is not possible to know how the fathers of the fathers in the present study actually expressed their affection towards their sons. Discussions with the fathers in the study during the viewings of the video-tapes revealed that most of their fathers were perceived as occupying the traditional role of father as breadwinner. Descriptions of fathers' fathers during these informal discussions, often revealed fathers who were home very little, spent little time with their sons, spoke seldomly with their sons and almost never affectionately touched their sons.

The fathers in the present study, stated their desire and commitment to a different model of fathering than their fathers' had shown. Much of the time this meant that they were making a conscious effort to spend more time with their sons. They did not see their fathers as not-caring, but as fathers who exhibited their love and concern for their sons by doing things for them. Some fathers expressed how they knew their fathers loved them, even though this may have been seldom, or never, verbalized.

These discussions and the participation itself reveal that the group of fathers who did participate in the present study were definitely an interested group of fathers. In simply comparing their willingness to participate to other fathers who were not willing to do so, it could be said that this is not a typical group of fathers. These are fathers who are definitely concerned with integrating child-rearing into their father roles, and who are concerned about interacting with their sons in a way they remember their own fathers as having not done. If it were possible to obtain information about just how much their own fathers spoke with them, it is likely that the fathers in the present study speak much more with their own sons. These fathers perceive themselves as being different from their own fathers. They see themselves as more involved with their sons. It would have been interesting to have these fathers fill out the Father-Son Questionnaire as they see themselves in relation to their own sons. One could then have assessed the relationship between their perceptions of themselves and their actual behavior toward their sons.

Although the fathers in the present study are probably more verbal with their sons than their fathers were with them, the near-absence of

physical contact is very possibly a similarity. The stereotype of the traditional, masculine male nearly prohibits any type of touching between males. This appears to be operating even when the males happen to be father and son, and even when the son is only a little boy. It seems plausible that if touching between father and son does not occur at this age, when the son has not yet begun school, it will likely not occur as the son grows older and approaches manhood. It is interesting to note the much higher number of "near-touches," where the father's posture took him very close to his son, and where it seemed very difficult for the father not to reach out and touch his son. The taboo against male touching male is simply more powerful.

As was mentioned previously, the group of fathers who participated in the present study is quite likely a select group by virtue of the interest and willingness they exhibited. One father, who was obviously quite close to his son, had occupied a central role in the rearing of his children. It was he who attended a seminar on toilet-training and applied what he had learned to the toilet training of his own children. Another father spoke of the individual time he set aside for each one of his four sons. It was at these times that the two of them could get very close and talk about their feelings toward each other. This father made a definite point to tell his son "I love you," which was something his father had never done. The greatest amount of physical contact occurred with this father and his son. Many of these fathers alluded to the absence of a model in their lives, in terms of interacting with their sons, and with their children in general. They desired a different relationship with their sons, than the one they had had with their fathers, but were sometimes uncertain of how to accomplish that.

Spending more time with their sons was often seen as a positive mode to establishing a more involved relationship with their sons. Fathers, in general, are not trained to interest and entertain small children and often lack appropriate male models in this regard. Thus, although fathers may believe that spending time with their children is important, they may feel awkward and uncertain about how to interact and play with their children. It may have been these feelings of awkwardness and uncertainty, which made it so difficult to obtain fathers for the videotaping. Fathers in fact verbalized such feelings when they explained their reluctance to participate by stating that they would not know what to do in play with their sons for 20 minutes. Some offered alternatives to the free-play setting, such as gardening with their son or showing him how to fix his bicycle.

If research is to include the father, this problem of obtaining fathers for study must be overcome. It appears that interest can be generated if fathers are approached directly, rather than through their wives and children. Also, because fathers may feel awkward and uncertain about interacting with their children, especially while being viewed by others, the atmosphere should be one free of judgment and criticism, and should probably be active. Fathers are probably reminded of their imagined ineptness, in dealing with children, often enough by wives, grandmothers, and other female relatives. With the father's role apparently changing to incorporate the rearing of children, interested fathers can be found. It was the case in the present study that an interested father who is willing to participate can be a valuable resource in finding other interested fathers. The uncertainty

of being involved in the study is lessened when a father is familiar with another father who has already participated.

Methodologically, the attainment of fathers' actual behavior is a plus in regard to the present study. However, the focus of the father-son interactions was primarily on the father, while the influence of the sons on their fathers, was neglected. It was evident in viewing the video-tapes that the behavior of the son can elicit certain behaviors from the father. The behavior of the son is thus a determining factor in the father's expression of affection. Research directed at father-son interaction should include assessment of the son's behavior as it is related to the father's behavior to be studied.

The father's perceptions of themselves as different from their own fathers, in terms of interacting with their sons, were a product of the informal discussions. These perceptions should have been systematically investigated, possibly through the use of a modified form of the Father-Son Questionnaire. Further research should include fathers' perceptions of their own behavior and assess those perceptions in relation to fathers' actual behavior.

It was assumed in the present study that certain behaviors, especially those in the physical contact dimensions, would be more likely to occur between father and son, when the son was at this relatively young age. Further research could investigate this assumption, as well as expressive-affectionate behavior in general, by varying the age of the sons. Given that the research on fathers and daughters is even more scant, it would be interesting to include father-daughter interaction in these investigations.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO FATHERS

Mark Sperle
611 S. Monroe
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074
(405) 624-8208 or 624-5990

March 15, 1978

For too long the father has been a forgotten figure in the area of child-rearing. Only recently has the great importance of the father's role been fully realized. Little is known about how father-child relationships develop and especially how fathers express their feelings toward their sons. This is why I have chosen this area as my focus of study and why I am writing to you, one of a select group of fathers, as a potential contributor to this relatively unexplored area of knowledge. If you are a father who has an interest in the area of father-son relationships and who would like to learn more about your relationship with your own son, I would like to offer you the opportunity to take part in the research I will be doing.

The Father-Son Questionnaire which I am enclosing is the first step in a continuing series of research concerning fathers and sons which I will be carrying out in partial fulfillment of my Masters and Doctoral requirements in Psychology. I would greatly appreciate you completing the material and returning it to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. At this time I would like to make the point that the information you provide will be of great value to me as a researcher and will be held by me in the strictest confidence.

The next step in the series is an interaction one where you would be asked to bring your son to the playroom at the Psychological Services Center. You and your son would be given the chance to play with the toys available and would also be asked to complete a simple task. This would require about a half-hour of your time, at a time convenient for both you and your son. Through the use of video-tape you would be able to view your interaction with your son and ask questions of the researcher concerning that interaction - provisions which you will find both enjoyable and informative. Also, at some future date, a group of fathers will be meeting to discuss their experiences with seeing themselves in play with their sons and with fathering in general. You are invited to attend this meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Leone List, Director of Child Development Laboratories, who has helped me greatly by suggesting names of fathers who may be interested in this sensitive area of research. I appreciate her concern for the welfare of children and parents.

I invite any questions or comments you might have in regard to either the questionnaire or the upcoming research. I can be reached at the Psychological Services Center (ext. 5990) during the day and at 624-8208 in the evening. If I am not there to answer your call, someone will be available to take your message. I will be happy to return your call.

Mark Sperle

mp

RESEARCH INTEREST FORM

I am interested in participating in the second part of the research:

Yes _____ No _____

Because of the work schedule of many fathers and because little children are at their best in the morning, Saturday morning appears to be the best time for the second step in the research.

What time is most convenient for you and your son?

Saturday a.m.:	8:00 to 9:00	_____
	9:00 to 10:00	_____
	10:00 to 11:00	_____
	11:00 to 12:00	_____
	12:00 to 1:00	_____

If none of the above times are agreeable, what times are best for you and your son?

Monday	_____	At what time?	_____
Tuesday	_____	At what time?	_____
Wednesday	_____	At what time?	_____
Thursday	_____	At what time?	_____
Friday	_____	At what time?	_____
Sunday	_____	At what time?	_____

At what time and at what phone number is it best to contact you?

Time: _____ Phone Number: _____ (Day)
 Phone Number: _____ (Evening)

Your Name: _____ Your Son's Name: _____

APPENDIX B

FATHER-SON QUESTIONNAIRE

•

Father-Son Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to obtain some of your remembrances of the things your father did with you when you were a little boy. Give your immediate response to the items as you remember him at that time. There are no right or wrong answers.

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, MY FATHER WOULD . . .

- (1) "Let me help him with his work around the house."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	
Frequently	Very Frequently		

- (2) "Play with me."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	
Frequently	Very Frequently		

- (3) "Offer his help when I was working on something difficult."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	
Frequently	Very Frequently		

- (4) "Praise me."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	
Frequently	Very Frequently		

- (5) "Talk things over with me."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	
Frequently	Very Frequently		

- (6) "Accept my feelings even if I were angry."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	
Frequently	Very Frequently		

- (7) "Really listen to me when I spoke to him."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently	
Frequently	Very Frequently		

- (8) "Stay home alone with me."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	
- (9) "Smile at me."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	
- (10) "Spend time with me rather than with his friends."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	
- (11) "Tell me that he loved me."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	
- (12) "Lean over me or kneel down beside me when I was working or playing."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	
- (13) "Speak to me in a voice that was warm and friendly."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	
- (14) "Ask me what I thought about things."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	
- (15) "Do things for me without my having asked him."

Never	Very Infrequently	Infrequently
Frequently	Very Frequently	

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY AND MY FATHER WANTED TO SHOW HE CARED FOR ME,
HE WOULD . . .

(16) "Kiss me."

<u>Never</u>	<u>Very Infrequently</u>	<u>Infrequently</u>
<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Very Frequently</u>	

(17) "Hug me."

<u>Never</u>	<u>Very Infrequently</u>	<u>Infrequently</u>
<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Very Frequently</u>	

(18) "Tousle my hair."

<u>Never</u>	<u>Very Infrequently</u>	<u>Infrequently</u>
<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Very Frequently</u>	

(19) "Put his arm around my shoulder."

<u>Never</u>	<u>Very Infrequently</u>	<u>Infrequently</u>
<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Very Frequently</u>	

(20) "Pretend to punch me on the arm."

<u>Never</u>	<u>Very Infrequently</u>	<u>Infrequently</u>
<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Very Frequently</u>	

(21) "Pat me on the back."

<u>Never</u>	<u>Very Infrequently</u>	<u>Infrequently</u>
<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Very Frequently</u>	

Your father's age: _____; Your age: _____;

Your son's age: _____.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF TOYS IN PLAYROOM

List of Toys in Playroom

Puzzles

Building Blocks (assorted sizes)

Ball and Basket

Toy Soldiers

Dolls with Crib and Feeding Bottles

Wooden Vehicles - Airplane, Helicopter, Jeep, Truck

Telephones (2)

Puppets - Monkey, Puppy, Giraffe, Horse

Large Car (Designed to be Disassembled)

Chalkboard and Chalk

APPENDIX D

INSTRUCTIONS TO FATHER-SON PAIRS

Hello, (Father's Name) ! Hi, (Son's Name) ! I'm glad to see you fellas could make it here this morning. Thanks for taking time out to come. I know you're going to enjoy your time here. Now . . . I suppose you're wondering what's going to happen, so let me tell you.

(Father's Name) and (Son's Name) (learning towards the son), I'm going to be taking you back to the playroom in a little while. In the playroom you'll find some toys. Some of those toys will be on the floor and some will be in the "frog box" -- that's a box that looks like a frog and where we keep some of the toys when we're not playing with them. (Father's Name) and (Son's Name) (leaning towards the son) -- you can play with any of the toys on the floor or in the frog box -- or you can put together the puzzles you'll find in the shelves.

You'll have 20 minutes in the playroom and you can spend it any way the two of you want to. A couple of minutes before the 20 minutes is up, I'll knock on the door to let you know your time is almost up, and then you (looking at the father) can kind of wrap things up. Then we'll come back here (waiting room at Psychological Services Center) -- OK? -- so, now let's go back to the playroom so I can show you the toys, and then you fellas can begin playing.

APPENDIX E

SCORING CHECKLIST

<u>VERBAL OUTPUT:</u>	SEGMENT #1*	SEGMENT #2	SEGMENT #3	SEGMENT #4
Unconditional Expression of Positive Feeling				
Conditional Expression of Positive Feeling				
Offerings of Assistance				
Giving of Verbal Assistance				
Asking of Son's Opinion				
Sensitivity to Son's Feelings				
<u>PHYSICAL CONTACT:</u>				
Kissing				
Hugging				
Arm Around Son's Shoulder				
Pat on the Back				
Tousle Son's Hair				
Mock Punch to Arm				
<u>ATTENTION:</u>				
Listening Indicated by Appropriateness of Response				
<u>POSTURE:</u>				
Orienting of Entire Body Toward Son				
Angling of Trunk Toward Son				

*Segments represent five-minute intervals.

VITA ²

Mark Anthony Sperle

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: EXPRESSIVE-AFFECTIONATE BEHAVIOR OF FATHERS TOWARD THEIR
PRE-SCHOOL SONS

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