

AN INVESTIGATION OF CHILDREARING PROBLEMS AND  
STRESSES AT SPECIFIC STAGES IN THE  
FIRST THREE YEARS OF LIFE

By

BETTY RUTH HOLLAND

II

Bachelor of Science

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma

Chickasha, Oklahoma

1952

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College  
of the Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
May, 1977

Thesis  
1977  
H7341  
cop. 2



AN INVESTIGATION OF CHILDREARING PROBLEMS AND  
STRESSES AT SPECIFIC STAGES IN THE  
FIRST THREE YEARS OF LIFE

Thesis Approved:

*Elaine Jorgensen*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

*Margaret Callsen*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Frances Stromberg*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Norman N. Durham*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate College

975855

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to all who have contributed to the completion of this study in so many diverse ways. A very special thank you goes to Dr. Elaine Jorgenson for her enduring patience as well as her valuable guidance and assistance under difficult circumstances.

A great debt of gratitude is owed Dr. Frances Stromberg for her knowledge and counsel in the fields of Early Childhood Education and Parent Education. Grateful acknowledgment is also made to Dr. Margaret Callsen for her assistance.

Special thanks go to Dr. Elizabeth Hillier for the time and effort contributed in the early days of this project. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to Joe Hemphill, the administration of Carl Albert Junior College and to the Head Start teachers and parents who participated in this study. Many typists have contributed to this thesis but special appreciation goes to Velda Davis for the final draft.

Finally, heartfelt appreciation is expressed to my husband, John, for his patient acceptance of many summers of work and sacrifice; to our sons David and Johnny for their tolerance, and most of all to our daughters Beth and Laurie, who have lived their entire lives under the confines of this study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Statement of Problem . . . . .	2
Significance of the Study . . . . .	3
Purposes of the Study . . . . .	5
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	6
Definition of Terms . . . . .	7
Procedure . . . . .	9
Summary . . . . .	10
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	12
Status of the Family . . . . .	12
Changing Roles of Women and Men . . . . .	13
Effect of Maternal Employment . . . . .	14
Isolation of the Nuclear Family . . . . .	15
Stress on American Families . . . . .	16
Parenthood as Crisis . . . . .	19
Prevalence of Stress Among the Population . . . . .	23
Importance of the Early Years . . . . .	25
Critical Periods of Development . . . . .	26
Parental Influences on Children . . . . .	28
Influence of the Mother Role . . . . .	30
Socio-Economic Influences . . . . .	32
Summary . . . . .	32
III. PROCEDURE . . . . .	34
Selection of the Subjects . . . . .	35
Development of the Instrument . . . . .	35
Collection of Data . . . . .	37
Analysis of Data . . . . .	37
Summary . . . . .	37
IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA . . . . .	39
Description of the Subjects . . . . .	39
Sources of Childrearing Information	
Before Having Children . . . . .	42
Sources of Information After Birth of Child . . . . .	44
Sources of Help in Caring for Children . . . . .	46
Stressful Changes or Feelings Experienced	
by Parents . . . . .	48

Chapter	Page
Comparitive Stresses of Working and Non-working Mothers . . . . .	52
Child Care and Behavior Problems . . . . .	58
Feeding Concerns as Reported by Parents . . . . .	58
Children's Sleep Problems Reported by Parents . . . . .	60
Children's Illness and Health Concerns Reported by Parents . . . . .	60
Children's Physical Care Concerns Reported by Parents . . . . .	63
Children's Behavior Problems as Reported by Parents . . . . .	63
Degree of Pleasure in Childrearing Reported by Parents . . . . .	66
Degree of Problems and Worries in Childrearing Reported by Parents . . . . .	68
Comparative Degree of Ease or Difficulty in Rearing Each Child as Reported by Parents . . . . .	69
Summary . . . . .	70
V. SUMMARY . . . . .	72
Recommendations . . . . .	74
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	77
APPENDIX . . . . .	84

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Characteristics of the Sixty-three Subjects . . . . .	40
II. Number and Per Cent of Parents' Indications of Sources of Childrearing Information Before Having Children . . . . .	43
III. Number and Per Cent of Parents' Indications of Sources of Childrearing Information at Specific Stages After Becoming a Parent . . . . .	45
IV. Number and Per Cent of Parents' Indications of Sources of Help in Caring for Children at Specific Stages . . . . .	47
V. Number and Per Cent of Parents' Indications of Stress Feelings Related to Childrearing at Specific Stages . . . . .	49
VI. Rank Order, Number and Mean Per Cent of Parents' Indications of Stress Feelings at Specific Stages as Reported by Working Mothers . . . . .	53
VII. Rank Order, Number and Mean Per Cent of Parents' Indications of Stress Feelings at Specific Stages as Reported by Non-Working Mothers . . . . .	54
VIII. Number and Per Cent of Children's Feeding Problems at Specific Stages as Reported by Parents . . . . .	59
IX. Number and Percentage of Children's Specific Sleep Problems at Specific Stages as Reported by Parents . . . . .	61
X. Number and Percentage of Children's Illness-Health Problems at Specific Stages as Reported by Parents . . . . .	62
XI. Number and Per Cent of Children's Physical Care Problems at Specific Stages as Reported by Parents . . . . .	64

Table	Page
XII. Number and Per Cent of Children's Behavior Problems at Specific Stages as Reported by Parents . . . . .	65
XIII. Degree of Pleasure in Childrearing Reported by Parents . . . . .	67
XIV. Degree of Worry or Problems in Childrearing at Specific Stages as Reported by Parents . . . . .	68
XV. Comparative Degree of Ease or Difficulty in Rearing Each Child as Reported by Parents . . . . .	70



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"The single most important thing in human cultural behavior is literally and specifically the way we bring up our children" (LeBarre, 1949, p. 3). This statement made by an anthropologist, and the following one made by a professor of human development, point to the commonly held views on the significance of the task of bringing up children. Grams (1972) states:

. . . quality parenting is the most important task confronting our society today. It is so important that we must do all we can to ensure it for every child. The big question, of course, is how! (p. 3)

Recent years have seen a heightened interest in research concerning early childhood development and parent-child relations, but Almy (1975) points out the limitations that may be found within that volume of research.

The early childhood educator soon learns that much of the research that is relevant to her field deals with limited aspects of children's functioning. Too seldom is that functioning viewed in the context of the child's total experience.

This statement is true despite the fact that the period of early childhood has, in the last decade, received unprecedented attention from both psychologists and educators. The research reports from hundreds of experimental studies and demonstration projects focusing on the development and learning of young children can probably be weighed by the ton (p. 245).

The concern for helping fathers and mothers deal more effectively with their own children has also led to a closer examination of the

family organization and the problems besetting that unit of society. The American family is feeling the effects of a time of great social and technological transition (LeMasters, 1970; Leeper, Dales, Skipper, and Witherspoon, 1974). Specific societal changes that have caused reverberations throughout America's families include increasing urbanization, mobility of families, changing roles of women, the isolation of the nuclear family, greater variation of lifestyles and patterns of living, and the impact of mass media and communication (Skolnick and Skolnick, 1971; Bronfenbrenner, 1974). These changes and others, have resulted in feelings of tension and stress among some parents.

It has been the general conclusion of a number of earlier studies concerning parent-child relationships that parental behavior is a reflection of parental beliefs and theories, or else the reflection of unconscious motives and anxieties (Skolnick and Skolnick, 1971). A cross cultural study of child rearing (Minturn and Lambert, 1964) came to radically different conclusions after ten years of study concerning American childrearing practices.

. . . the pressures impinging upon the growing child are much more . . . by-products of the horde of apparently irrelevant considerations that impinge upon the parents. These considerations of household composition, size of family, work load, etc. determine the time and energy that mothers have available to care for children. They determine the range and content of mother-child relations and the context in which these relations must take place (p. 291).

#### Statement of Problem

The effort was made in this study to examine critically several aspects of childrearing in the first three years of life as perceived by selected Head Start parents. Parental problems and stresses related to childrearing in the first three years were specifically examined to

determine problem stages and the relation of maternal employment to problems and stresses.

#### Significance of the Study

The problem for the study is significant for three reasons:

1. The increasing evidences of stress upon today's families;
2. The increasing evidence of the criticalness of the early childhood years in development.
3. The increasing awareness of the importance of the parent as the most effective change agent for helping children achieve intellectual competence.

The stresses of parenthood have been the source of a number of investigations since the advent of the LeMasters' (1957) study affirming parenthood as a crisis situation in the family life cycle. The literature, though some of the findings are in disagreement, points to the reality of stress related to parenting and childrearing (Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965; Rossi, 1968; Jacoby, 1969; Russell, 1974).

LeMasters' study was inspired by Reuben Hill's (1949) discussion and conceptualization of crisis in Families Under Stress. Many of the stressful situations and events cited by Hill more than a quarter of a century ago have been the focus of extensive writings more recently as psychiatrists and others deal with the impact of a rapidly changing technological society upon individuals of all ages (Caplan, 1966; Beck, 1973; Dohrenwend, 1973).

In response to the many and diverse evidences of stress in families today, those concerned with human development and families recognize the imperative need for help for parents. Grams (1972) states:

Considerable agreement exists that parenting in today's world is quite a different task from what it was a generation or two ago . . . . They (parents) recognize that in many respects children are treated differently from the way they were years ago. This difference is confusing, and although people don't necessarily believe such change is bad, they are uncertain just what to believe. Lacking the reassurance and self-confidence that a stable, more predictable world provided for their parents, today's child rearers frequently operate at a disadvantage, their efficiency and effectiveness reduced by the gnawing vague fear ambiguity can generate (p. 5).

As the many change-producing factors have increased anxieties and tensions, there have been increasing indications that the early childhood years are most critical in the life cycle (Fraiberg, 1959; Erikson, 1963; Bloom, 1964; Hunt, 1961; White, 1973). Grams (1972) summarized the impact of these reports by stating: "Today no one seriously questions the importance of early childhood experiences in human personality development." (p. 1) White (1973) of the Harvard Pre-School Project, has further narrowed that focus to the years between one and three years of age and makes the following bold statement: ". . . we would expect that much of the basic quality of the entire life of an individual is determined by the mother's actions during these two years." (p. 68)

The importance of the mother in the life of the infant and young child is widely documented, but recently Infant Programs using the mother as the principal agent for change in the life of the child have greatly increased this awareness. The Early Training Project at Peabody College (Gray, 1971), the Ypsilanti Project (Weikart, 1971) and the programs of Gordon (1970) are noteworthy examples of this trend.

The significance of the present study is shown by statements of various leaders in the field of early childhood education and parent education. Grams (1972) comes to the conclusion that:

. . . what is most essential is the realization that parenting is a function so vital to the survival of our society that we cannot leave it to chance. The kind of parenting a child receives is the responsibility of the entire community, and our objectives must be to make all those who wish to commit themselves to the task optimally effective (p. 8).

#### Purposes of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to determine childrearing problems and stresses experienced by parents in the first three years of a child's life and to identify the stages that were the most stressful. Specific objectives of this study were:

1. To identify sources of:
  - a. childrearing information before becoming a parent
  - b. childrearing information after becoming a parent
  - c. help or assistance in caring for children.
2. To identify the expressed opinions of parents concerning what they felt were the most prevalent childrearing problems and stresses in the first three years of a child's life.
3. To determine if differences in number and type of problems and stresses cited varied between working and non-working mothers.
4. To determine the periods or stages from birth to three years of age in which the most problems and stress reactions occurred.

5. To determine to what degree parents experienced:
  - a. pleasure and satisfaction in childrearing
  - b. problems and worries in childrearing
  - c. ease or difficulty of childrearing in relation to the number of children.

#### Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a selected group of Head Start parents in three rural Southeastern Oklahoma counties. The sample consisted of 290 parents who had a child enrolled in one of the 16 Head Start centers represented by teacher aides enrolled in the writer's Early Childhood Care courses at Carl Albert Junior College at Poteau, Oklahoma. The age of the children, three and four years of age, assured that the parents had recently experienced any problems and stresses of childrearing in the first three years of life. There were only 63 surveys completed and returned from the sample of 290 parents which was the primary limiting factor in this study.

The method used to obtain the data, the questionnaire, is characterized by Best (1970) as "the most used and most criticised data-gathering device" (p. 161). Best further concludes, for a number of cited reasons that ". . . the data obtained are often of limited validity" (p. 161).

The scope of the study was limited to problems of child rearing and stresses experienced by parents during the first three years of a child's life, the socio-economic level of the parents and the rural setting of the study.

### Definition of Terms

Early Childhood Years - is generally used in relation to children under the age of six.

Early Childhood Education - is a term more commonly used to describe programs of formal schooling for children under six years of age (McClure and Pence, quoted in Almy, 1975).

Developmental Stages - refers to segmenting the child's development into periods with characteristic concerns and ways of behaving and thinking (Almy, 1975). Stages, by themselves, are only descriptive and explain nothing, although they provide some notion of what to expect from children of those ages (Almy, 1975).

Neonatal Period - is used interchangeably with newborn period. It often refers to the first few days of life, but is used by some to encompass the first few weeks of life.

Infancy - is generally classified as the first year of life. Highberger and Schramm (1976) term it as the period ending "when most infants have learned some form of locomotion - - crawling, walking, or a combination of the two" (p. 28). This conforms to the period identified by Burton White's (1973) study in which he separates the infant from the 10-to-18 month old run-about-child.

Early Toddler - toddler is rather loosely classified as the second year of life by most authorities. For this study, the Burton White concept of from ten months, at the onset of mobility, to eighteen months, when definite characteristics of personality and behavior are evident, is classified as the Early Toddler stage.

Late Toddler - is a term that is unique to this study. For the purpose of isolating the 10-to-18 month stage as a specific period of time, the remainder of the first three years has been classified as Late Toddler.

Critical Periods - are described as sensitive periods during which certain processes are developing most rapidly. Disturbances during these periods may alter the development of these processes in critical ways (Mussen, Conger, Kagan, 1969).

Attachment - is a bond of love formed between the caregiver and the infant or young child and is usually revealed in tendencies to seek to be near the chief caregiver and to a few others. It is considered by a number of experts to be a critical process in the early life of a child (Mussen, Conger, and Kagan, 1969).

Parenthood - is referred to as the biological fact of giving birth to children (Grams, 1972).

Parenting - is the responsibility and functioning of nurturing the growing person i.e., child rearing, by both parents and by the larger community which shares in the socialization of children (Grams, 1972).

Nuclear Family - refers to the husband, wife, and their offspring.

Stress - is defined by Webster as a physical, chemical, or emotional factor to which an individual fails to make a satisfactory adaptation, and which causes physiologic tensions that may be a contributory cause of disease (1966). In this study, the general context of the word is more nearly as defined by Boyle (1974):



. . . when we speak of stress, we're talking about all kinds of situations, experiences, and relationships which impose various types of demands, requirements, expectations upon us at any given point of time and any given context (p. 93).

Crisis - an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life (Webster, 1966). As defined by Reuben Hill (1949), "A sharp or decisive change for which old patterns are inadequate . . . a crisis situation in which the usual behavior patterns are found unrewarding and new ones are called for immediately." (p. 51)

#### Procedure

The following procedure was used to complete this study:

1. the literature was reviewed concerning:
  - a. anxiety and stress in parenthood
  - b. the importance of parenting in early childhood development
  - c. current trends and philosophy in early childhood care and education for parenting
  - d. current social and economic influences on childrearing
2. An instrument was developed to secure information from a selected group of Head Start parents. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first portion consisted of questions designed to obtain background information related to several aspects of the parental role. Also included in the general information section were questions to determine the amount of training for childrearing and amount of help or people assisting in child care. The second portion of

the questionnaire dealt with identifying specific childrearing problems and stresses at specific stages during the first three years of a child's life.

3. The instrument was pre-tested in the Early Childhood classes at Carl Albert Junior College using Head Start teachers aides who had young children.
4. The instrument was revised, prepared, and distributed by mail to 290 families.
5. The data were analyzed to determine problems and stresses expressed by parents at specific stages in the first three years of their child's development. In addition to the identification of the most stressful problems and stages, sources of childrearing information, assistance in childrearing, differences in problems and stresses for working and non-working mothers, and pleasures and satisfactions experienced, were examined.
6. Following the analysis of data, a summary, conclusions, and recommendations were made as to factors that might further more effective parenting in the critical years of early childhood.

#### Summary

The significance of the study, statement of the problem, and objectives of this study have been presented in the first chapter. Chapter I also includes the limitations of the study, definition of terms, and a brief outline of the procedure for this study. A review of literature related to problems and stresses in childrearing, to

current trends in philosophy of child development and care in the early years is reported in Chapter II. Chapter III gives a more detailed procedure, followed by presentation of the analysis of data in Chapter IV. Chapter V includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Status of the Family

It has long been assumed that those societal and technological factors which are a constantly changing part of our culture have an impact on the family and its members (LeMasters, 1970). Conversely, there are those changes within and related to the family which influence the course and direction of the culture and the nation.

Bronfenbrenner (1970) discussed the status of the family in foreboding terms:

I shall be short, but not very sweet. America's families and children are in trouble. Trouble so deep and pervasive as to threaten the future of our nation. The source of the trouble is nothing less than a national neglect of children and of those primarily engaged in their care; America's parents (p. 139).

Family scholars have been seeking sources and solutions for a variety of ills that beset the family unit today. In tracing the cause of widespread alienation, fragmentation, and disorganization that have become apparent in families, they were able to identify a number of family related factors. Those factors included: a very high divorce rate, broken homes, working mothers, separation of place of work and home, poverty, passive television viewing, the demise of the extended family, spatial mobility, child neglect and abuse, and early dependence on peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Kenniston, 1975).

### Changing Roles of Women and Men

In recent years, substantial changes have taken place in family life, not the least being the increasing number of women moving away from household work and child rearing into the business or professional world. In March, 1972, the United States Department of Labor reported that 32.9 million women were working or seeking work. There were 12.7 million mothers and 4.4 million of them had children under six years of age (Women's Bureau, Pamphlet No. 16, 1973).

The traditional family roles of woman as mother and housewife and man as breadwinner have been questioned more in the last ten years than in any other period in history (Biehler, 1976). The changing composition of the woman's role was summarized by Salk (1974).

. . . the structure of the traditional family regarded . . . the female as the caretaker of children and the home. For some women this was neither challenging nor sufficiently interesting to provide satisfactions in the home (p. 185).

Biehler (1976) reports the two current opposing views of motherhood reflected in the literature today as "that of ultimate fulfillment" or "something to be avoided" (p. 81). In a discussion of the existent controversy and confusion in many women's lives today, Deckard (1975) reported:

. . . that many women would like to work part time but have been deterred by the experts, who warn them about the effects on the child of 'maternal deprivation'. Women have been told that any separation of mother and child during the child's first few years will have serious deleterious effects on the child.

The evidence supporting the notion of maternal deprivation is far from convincing (p. 71).

A number of studies indicate that the technology of the seventies have not resulted in more leisure time or shorter household work time

than in earlier periods (Roby, 1972; Walker, 1973). The following conclusion is given by Walker:

Our tendency to do more and more work each week seems to be related to the fact that families have many more goals than they used to--some achievable by doing more household work and some achievable with the extra money earned in paid outside employment.

In today's affluent world, we have expanded our goals and our reasons for doing household work to encompass more and more that we want: more acquisitions to be cared for; more rooms to clean; a bigger yard to mow and plant and prune; more clothes to care for; more foods to choose from in the market and more exotic recipes to prepare to tempt our more cosmopolitan palates (1973, p. 7).

These increasing demands brought about by changing standards and values have increased the need for women to join the labor force.

#### Effect of Maternal Employment

Of special concern in a discussion of the changing roles of women is maternal employment and its effect upon children. During the past two decades, employment has become increasingly prevalent among mothers of school age children, ages six to seventeen, in the labor force.

The greatest increase in employment has been of mothers of preschool age children with one in every three now working outside of the home (Profiles of Children, 1970; Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Ruder, 1974). This conclusion is dramatically stated by Kenniston, "For the first time in our national history, most children now have mothers who work outside the home and most of these mothers work full time" (1975, p. 7).

Bronfenbrenner (1974) further stated the reality of the problem by affirming that, "Whatever the future trend may be, the fact remains that in our society today the care of children depends overwhelmingly on women, and specifically on mothers" (p. 57). It is his assumption

that the expanding and long sought involvement of fathers in the care of children has not lessened the responsibilities of mothers as caregivers to any significant degree.

#### Isolation of the Nuclear Family

As mothers have gone to work, concurrently, the number of other adults in the family who could care for children has shown a marked decrease. Bronfenbrenner (1974, p. 53) reports, "Fifty years ago, half of the households in Massachusetts included at least one adult besides the parent: today the figure is only four per cent." In less than 25 years the number of other relatives--usually grandparents, aunts and uncles--in the single-parent family has dropped from 50 per cent to 20 per cent (Kenniston, 1975). The nuclear family is a common phenomenon, whereas until a few years ago, the extended family was the mode (Margolin, 1975; Montgomery, 1974; Skolnick, 1973). The impact of this change is reported by Parsons (1965):

In 1960, 82.7 per cent of the total population of the United States lived in nuclear family households . . . while the proportion of household members who were other kinds of relatives declined to 5.5 per cent (p. 32).

Parenthood in our society is an extremely complex and broad area of study with a network of many social, emotional and cultural factors involved. Kinship and work patterns in America make parenthood more difficult than in many traditional societies. In most cultures, and even in our own past, caring for children was carried out in the midst of the community. There were traditional ways and methods to be followed and the child's future role and social status was fairly well established (Skolnick, 1973).

In our modern society the opposite is true. There are few if any agreed upon standards and methods for childrearing and there are very few who help in the care and guidance of the child. One of the major concerns today deals with our society's failure to replace the kin and community assistance of former times by providing support to families (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Kenniston, 1974). How the strains of nuclear family living are becoming increasingly evident will be explored in the following examination of stress in America.

### Stress on American Families

Change is a fundamental principle of human existence. Although change may occur fairly constant throughout life, it is not always a steady process. Caplan (1966) related that it sometimes occurred as "a leap forward or sometimes as a devastating setback" (p. 114). As students of family life focused more and more on the difficulties inherent in the nuclear family system in America, attempts were made to comprehend the role of family and kinship patterns and to explore the sources of tension within nuclear families (Gordon, 1972). Because study of the family is so complex, much controversy and confusion has existed with many diverse opinions concerning cause and effect being presented (Skolnick, 1973).

The family as an interacting and transacting organ was the subject of much study by Hill (1949, 1965). In a discussion of some of the problems related to discovering the sources of stress in families, he described the family in the following terms:



Viewed externally, the family often appears to be a 'closed corporation'; . . . such a family performs like a closed corporation in presenting a common front of solidarity to the world, handling internal differences in private, protecting the reputation of members by keeping family secrets, and standing together under attack (1965, p. 32).

From studies that evolved following Hill's book, Families Under Stress (1949) psychiatrists were struck by indications that long range illnesses might be precipitated by a crisis either of the sudden misfortune type or by a sudden circumstance not normally considered to be ill fortune. Crisis came to be discussed in varying terms such as developmental crises (Erikson, 1959), "common" crisis (Rapoport, 1965; Caplan, 1966), or "normal" crisis (Neuhaus, 1974).

As efforts were made to discover the stuff from which crisis was made, a number of theories were developed. Erikson (1959) did extensive research on the nature of the identity crisis and concluded that these crises emerge from three types of human experience. The first type he classified was the loss or threatened loss of somebody who is important in one's life structure. Second, Erikson says that crises are apt to develop where new and threatening people or events are injected into life. The third place where Erikson found crises developing is where changes are experienced in status and role relationships. Other studies have added support to the Erikson theory (Caplan, 1964; Rapoport, 1968; Neuhaus, 1974; Holmes and Rahe, 1967).

The terminology of crisis research speaks of the "precipitating event" or the "emotionally hazardous event" or "stressful life situations" that pose "coping" tasks for individuals and groups (Parad, 1965, p. 1). One popular term that is a part of the contemporary crisis literature is "crisis intervention" which applies "to entering into the

life situation of an individual or group to alleviate the impact of a crisis--inducing stress in order to help mobilize the resources of those directly or indirectly affected" (Parad, 1965, p. 2). The most appropriate means of intervention regarding the crises in parenting has yet to be determined.

Further progress in understanding characteristics and effects of crises are reported by Rapoport (1965):

. . . various investigators have described other characteristics of the upset state. As previously mentioned, there is a rise in tension which may push toward a peak. There is also a general feeling of helplessness. In part, this may be a state of cognitive confusion wherein the individual literally does not know how to formulate and evaluate the outcome of the crisis and possibilities for problem-solving (p. 28).

This seems to describe the feelings of helplessness and inadequacy reported by many parents concerning their role.

To ensure that states of crisis or stress were not confused with mental illness, Parad and Caplan (1965) made the following explanation:

In this connection it is important to stress that conflict and unhappiness are not synonymous with mental ill health; in fact at the appropriate time and place the presence of conflict and unhappiness is a criterion of mental health. For example, . . . the anxiety and tension dealing with role transition or any demanding learning experience would be accepted by most of us as unpleasant emotions that inevitably accompany healthy ego adaptation (p. 56).

Parad and Caplan (1965) further reminded that the previous experiences in one's past life must be again dealt with as stresses occur. " . . . during the period of disorganization normally associated with crisis, old conflicts, symbolically linked with the present problems are revived" (p. 57).

One of the most significant studies related to stress in recent years was reported by Holmes and Rahe (1967) in which they identified

a rating scale for life experience changes with a given amount of stress related to each experience (Dohrenwend, 1973; Beck, 1973). This "life-events scale" was designed to measure the psychological stress that can be caused by variable changes in life circumstances. A number of studies have indicated a reasonably good correlation between life changes and onset of depression and medical problems (Holmes and Rahe, 1967).

### Parenthood as Crisis

In recent years, much of the literature, both professional and popular has explored parenthood in less than the idyllic terms which once were common. Historically, psychoanalytic theories contributed to the mystique which surrounds parenthood.

The Freudian theory saw parenthood as the realization of infantile wishes. More recently, according to Erikson's Eight Stages of Man, parenthood became a stage of normal personality development (Erikson, 1963).

Traditionally, fatherhood has been extolled as proof of manhood for men. For a woman, having children represented the crowning achievement of her life, the justification for her own existence (Skolnick, 1973).

Along with previously accepted ideas of parenthood as happy fulfillment, were a number of accepted beliefs that LeMasters (1970) related to the myth of parenthood. Some examples of these beliefs include:

- Rearing children is fun.
- Children are sweet and cute
- Children will turn out well if they have "good" parents.
- Children will improve marriage.
- Two parents are always better than one.
- All married couples should have children.

Childrearing is easier today because of modern technology (pp. 18-29).

Concerning the comparative ease of rearing children today as opposed to earlier times, Skolnick (1973) makes the following paradoxical observation that

. . . increased knowledge of pediatrics and child psychology does not necessarily make child rearing any easier. Just as improvements in household appliances have failed to reduce the housewife's working hours, but merely have raised standards of housekeeping so have child psychology and improved pediatrics raised the standards of childrearing (p. 302).

In a series of studies following the LeMasters (1957) study of parenthood as crisis, some findings were similar yet there were a number of major discrepancies among the studies. Dyer's study (1963) attempted to duplicate the LeMaster's study by investigating 32 middle class couples with the resulting conclusions very similar to those of LeMasters. In a later study, Hobbs (1965) extended his study to all social classes from lower-lower to upper-middle and confined the age of the babies to less than five months old as opposed to up to five years in the LeMaster's study. In this study, not one couple indicated that they had been greatly "bothered" by the arrival of the first child. None of the variables which Dyer had found to be associated with difficulties in assuming the parental role were confirmed in this study.

In a discussion of the difficulties of the transition to parenthood, Rossi (1968) questioned the idea of parenthood as "normal" crisis. She maintained that some parents may not "mature" in response to the strains of parenthood but instead suffer deterioration. The cultural pressure to bear children is so great that many women may

have children without any real desire to do so or without any skills for the task.

Rossi (1968) listed a number of reasons for the difficulty of transition to parenthood. A few of those cited included:

1. The abruptness of transition--with the mother shouldering the responsibility immediately after birth.
2. Paucity of preparation--neither formal nor informal preparation for parenthood is available to most young people today.
3. Lack of guidelines to successful parenthood--definitive and noncontroversial guidelines on the parental role are not available (pp. 26-39).

Jacoby (1969) in an analysis of the parenthood as crisis literature concluded that there is little doubt that most parents find the arrival of a child calls for major behavioral changes on the part of the parents, but that little more is known today than when the series of studies began in the 50's. The findings were contradictory regarding the attitude of new parents toward their role changes and Jacoby called for new research with clearer theoretical approaches, better means of measuring, larger and more representative samples, and continuing attempts to identify the structural variables.

In the most recent study of parenthood as transition, Russell (1974) focused on the positive gratifications of parenthood in addition to determining those most "bothersome." The crisis scores were found to be slight or moderate as opposed to some of the previous studies where crisis was severe. Several new variables were found to be significantly related to the ease of dealing with the first year of parenthood.

In a study of marital satisfaction over the life cycle, Rollins and Cannon (1974) found that changing from one position in the family

life cycle to another was found to precipitate stress. This "role strain" was described as stress generated within a person when he cannot comply or has difficulty complying with the expectations of a role. The prevalence of this type of stress or role strain is evidenced by many recorded expressions of frustration and inadequacies reported by mothers concerning their parental roles. Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) report one example:

. . . I spend most of my time thinking I am a perfectly lousy mother and I suppose all mothers feel that way. The thing of motherhood brings out my own inefficiencies, my own deficiencies, so terribly, that . . . the outstanding thought in my mind is that I should try to be a better mother each new day (p. 43).

Concerning the diverse and challenging aspects of their many roles, Satir (1972) empathized with parents as she proclaimed:

Parents teach in the toughest school in the world-- the school for making people. You are the board of education, the principal, the classroom teacher, and janitor, all rolled into two. You are expected to be experts on all subjects pertaining to life and living. The list keeps on growing as your family grows. . . . I regard this as the hardest, most complicated, anxiety-ridden, sweat and blood producing job in the world. It requires the ultimate in patience, common sense, commitment, humor, tact, love, wisdom, awareness, and knowledge. At the same time, it holds that possibility for the most rewarding, joyous experience of a life time (p. 197).

Regardless of the rewards or pressures, tensions and responsibilities inherent in parenthood, the irrevocability of parenthood is stated by Rossi (1971, p. 337): "We can have ex-spouses and ex-jobs but not ex-children." An important consideration to a study of stress in parenting is the extent to which stress exists in American families that might adversely affect the competence and effectiveness of parents in rearing children in their formative years.

### Prevalence of Stress Among the Population

The pressures of everyday life are affecting increasing numbers of the population. In a recent report, Stevenson (1975) declared:

Today, millions of Americans are subject to conditions which cause frequent attacks of irritation and frustration, leading to tension and anxiety, and hundreds of thousands are almost never free of this distressing condition (p. 52).

The universality of the pattern of tension was reported in parallel studies of 300 executives and 300 executives' wives in various regions of the United States (Rockower, 1964). Patterns of tensions were found to be the same but the most significant variable was found to be the age level of the respondent. From the study, Rockower (1964), p. 179) stated:

The younger women, in the thick of diapers, bottles and babysitter problems seem to be screaming for air. They obviously are in need of some time to themselves away from the demands of house and children. One young woman writes: 'I resent the constant work of a mother with absolutely no time off. Although I love the kids, (ages five, four, and three), they make me nervous--yet my husband forbids my getting a job, and I feel so trapped.'

Rockower (1964) reported women were pressured in two distinct ways: First, the pressure of too many things to do at once, the fragmentation of too many demands; and secondly, by factors relating to their husbands--his tensions, his unwillingness to communicate, his lack of responsibility for the home and his lack of time for the family. Financial pressures, even at the executive level, were the third most often mentioned stress.

Fatigue is one of the most commonly reported stress symptoms in our society (Thompson, 1961; Bartley, 1975). Contrary to previously

held notions that fatigue was basically a physiologic state, Bartley concludes "that fatigue describes a personal experience (a kind of self-evaluation) rather than a state of muscle tissue" (p. 55).

Not everyone considers stress as a negative or destructive factor. Current concern with the implications of stress in our society finds a number of widely varying opinions. Felix (1959, p. 118) view is supported by many:

A little stress does no damage. In fact a little stress often helps. Life was not meant to be pressure free. Some people seem to thrive even under pressure and enjoy meeting each day's new challenges.

Margaret Mead, supporting that viewpoint (1967, p. 38) presents what she believes to be the American perspective toward stress in the following opinion:

Two things we won't tolerate much now are too much anxiety and too much depression . . . . You have to have what is kind of a contradiction in terms . . . . We are living in a world that calls for a certain continuous, alert, apprehensiveness.

The assumption that American culture is based on change and change produces anxiety is widely accepted (Rabkin and Streumin, 1975). The apparent cycle of social and technological change which results in increased stress, which produces more tensions, frustrations, fatigue, and other symptomatic behavior on the part of individuals, creates a particular challenge for parents of young children. In effect, pressured parents, in a rapidly changing world face the need to rear their children with minimal amounts of stress reactions. The successful achievement of this task is made more urgent by the mounting evidence of the critical importance of experience in the early years.



### Importance of the Early Years

The present century has witnessed a shift to intensive early childhood research. In the affluent 1960's, concurrent with the increased Space Age needs and pressures, poverty and the accompanying educational problems became critical enough to cause national concern. The federal government took measures to attack poverty with educational programs and large scale research concerning the effectiveness and improvement of educational programs (Leeper, Dales, Skipper and Witherspoon, 1974). Recent discoveries concerning the importance of early experience on human growth and development were emphasized at the White House Conference on Children in 1970. In a Report to the President (1970, p. 230), this was further emphasized: "Psychologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, educators, nutritionists, anthropologists, and other investigators continue to document the critical significance of the first years of life."

Landmarks in the area of early learning and development were publications by Piaget (1965), Hunt (1960) and Bloom (1964). As a result of these writings and other theorists, researchers turned their attention to the early years of development. As the movement gained impetus, Almy (1975, p. 245) described the relationship of research to the increasing early childhood programs:

The politics of the time provided many psychologists the opportunity to validate certain aspects of developmental and learning theory in natural settings, such as Head Start, and more importantly in experimental programs where closer monitoring was possible.

### Critical Periods of Development

Recent research strongly suggests that there are critical or sensitive periods during which certain important physical and psychological processes are developing most rapidly. Disturbances during these periods may alter the development of these processes in very significant ways (Mussen et al., 1969). Examples of critical processes include the forming of a new relationship (Scott, 1968); the effect of disease or drugs during early pregnancy (Beadle, 1970); the development of the personality trait of trust (Erikson, 1963); the development of the attachment or love bond between mother and child (Schaffer and Emerson, 1964, Fraiberg, 1973); and the development of intellectual competence (White, 1973) during the second year of life.

Although these concepts of critical periods have been widely accepted and have had a major impact on thought regarding child development, they are not without critics. One of the most seriously debated controversies is in regard to the "nature" vs. "nurture" question of so called fixed intelligence or the feasibility of stimulating the environment to improve intellectual capacity (Almy, 1975; Kohlberg, 1968; Zigler, 1970). The proponents of the interventionist theory are followers of the theory expounded by Hunt (1961) and greatly influenced by the conclusions of Bloom's (1964) work on cognitive development in the early years. One of the most vocal opponents is Zigler (1970) who seriously questions the change in intellectual functioning but affirms the social and psychological impact that may influence results of studies.

There are a number of serious critics of the mother-child attachment bond theory as well (Rollin, 1971; Deckard, 1974). In a recent study concerning the effect of maternal employment separation on children, Wallston (1973) found that there were a number of discrepancies in the studies reviewed but findings indicated that a relationship exists between the effect of maternal employment and the variables of sex, social class, and the attitude or satisfaction of the mother working.

White's (1973) study to identify the kinds of practices in a child's first six years that would promote the ability to succeed and profit from formal education at age six was summarized by White (1974, p. 61) in the following conclusions:

Our study, . . . has convinced us of the special importance of the 10 - 18 month age range for the development of general competence. At this time of life, for most children, several extremely important developments seem to coalesce and force a test of each family's capacity to rear children.

The primary burden in most cases falls upon the mother.

The concept of critical periods has been explored from the social, emotional and intellectual standpoint. There is, as well, a great body of knowledge accumulating that physical growth, particularly from the standpoint of brain development, as well as physical factors related to obesity and other problem have their critical time of response (McWilliams, 1975). Particular attention has been given to nutrition both before and after birth in determining physical and psychological growth. Almy (1975), poses the following query: "The question of whether massive pediatric and nutritional intervention in the infancy period might have substantially altered the findings of the educational intervention is unanswered" (p. 247).

Those involved in structuring and guiding the programs which give direction to educators and parents in childrearing must decide what theories, what course of direction they will choose to follow from the many diverse options available to them. Current programs reflect one or a combination of several theories including those of Erikson (1963); Gesell (1943); Piaget (1965); or of the behaviorists; Carl Rogers and the humanists; and the Gestalt theoreticians (Almy, 1975).

### Parental Influences on Children

The past few years have seen a growing awareness of the important role played by parents in their children's social, emotional and educational development.

Great interest has been stimulated by a number of nationally recognized writers who have pointed to the home as the critical factor concerning intellectual competence and academic achievement (Gordon, 1970, White, 1973).

The Head Start movement may have given impetus to involving parents in planning school programs for their children. The more recently developed Project Home Start also places its prime emphasis on the importance of parental involvement in the early years of life through means of helping to strengthen the parents capacity for promoting their children's development (Weinberger et al., 1972).

The effects of the parent-child relationship on the development of the child is of considerable interest and although much research has been devoted to the study of the question, it still remains unanswered (LeFrancois, 1973). An extensive study of child rearing practices two decades ago (Sears, Maccoby, Levine, 1957) concluded that the

family is the most powerful socializing agent in a young child's development. Ten years later, Stolz (1967) studied families from the standpoint of determining what influences were significant in causing parents behavior patterns and responses. A number of the significant demographic characteristics found in the Stolz (1967) study included: number and age of children with size of family most significant; social position and educational background; the mother's physical condition, interests and feelings; influences from the parents childhood experiences; the influence of the spouse and especially significant were the specific characteristics and behavior of the child. In a more recent study (Thomas, Chess and Birch, 1970) conclude that not only do parents influence the child, but the child deeply influences the parents.

Although there are increasing numbers of studies with general conclusions about many aspects of parent-child relations, LeFrancois (1973, p. 72) states:

Despite the fact that research has indicated a tendency for some parental traits to result in certain characteristics in their children, the inference that children's personalities are caused by these parental traits is not warranted on the basis of the evidence. Furthermore, the results of research in this area are neither definitive nor in complete agreement with one another.

#### Influence of the Mother Role

The mothers' role in regard to emotional and personality factors has long been a matter of discussion but of late the mother's role is described in terms as "the child's first teacher--the controller and programmer of his learning experiences) (Gray, 1971, p. 127). Schaefer (1971) points to the complete revolution in the educational

process which changes the perspective from a school-teacher concept to a child-family centered perspective. He refers to "every home a learning center," and the major question as "How can we provide support for families so that they in turn can care for and educate their children" (p. 3).

This position has been further reinforced by White's (1974) study of childrearing practices in the early years. He makes the following bold statement (p. 68):

. . . that the mother's direct and indirect actions with regard to her one to three year old child, especially during the second year of life, are in our opinion, the most powerful formative factors in the development of a pre-school age child.

The strategic position of the mother in improving the educability of her young child has been the focus of much of the intervention efforts with disadvantaged families in recent years. Some of the better known projects for early stimulation of children include as well Ira Gordon's (1960) Parent Education Project led by specially trained "parent-educators" sent into the homes to instruct parents in ways of providing cognitively oriented stimulation for their children. The Early Training Project of Gray and Klaus at Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee is a sustained intervention program for preschool children of impoverished backgrounds (Gray, 1971). The Ypsilanti Project led by Weikert (1971) and his associates is much like the others but the program is derived directly from the work of Jean Piaget.

The question arises as to what type of professional action is needed in regard to helping parents acquire the understanding and skills necessary to help children grow with as few as possible disturbances. Effective economic methods for parent education programs

or other intervention methods need to be explored.

White (1975, pp. 21-22) proposes a means for carrying out a broad new approach to prepare and assist families in giving their children a solid education foundation. It includes the following processes:

1. Pre-parent education as required courses in high schools.
2. Teach everyone who missed high school courses just prior to and after the birth of baby; provide year in and out adult education programs; and an early detection and referral service to every family.
3. Continue voluntary training for parents through resource centers and home visiting programs, lending materials and toys and free babysitting for psychological relief for a few hours a week.
4. A referral service for those with special needs.
5. Remedial assistance as soon as possible for corrective needs as a result of early screening and detection.

#### Socio-Economic Influence

As a controversy continues of the feasibility or even need for intervention programs in the early years, there are those who caution the use of stereotyped terms and concepts to refer to the poor or "disadvantaged" as a homogeneous group (Almy, 1975, p. 175). She further observes:

. . . a pervasive ethnocentrism often serves to blind teachers and others to the fact that childrearing patterns in poor homes are often not inadequate but, rather, different from those in the middle-class nuclear family.

The socio-economic influence of childrearing practices has been identified in a number of studies (Sears et al., 1957; Stolz, 1967; Kohn, 1968; Tulkin and Kagan, 1972; Gecas and Nye, 1974). One of the most reported factors has been found to be the limited amount of verbal interaction between mother and child. Other evidences of childrearing

practices of the poor include the absence of reward reinforcement, inconsistency in amount of attention given child and in the method of punishing (Kohn, 1968). The poor were found to use more physical punishment and to exhibit little interest in children's schooling (Almy, 1975). More recently, studies have attempted to alter interaction processes of mothers and their children through teaching mothers basic skills for communicating and relating (Levenstein, 1971; Kogan, Gordon and Wimberger, 1972; Schienfeld, 1970).

### Summary

The review of literature regarding the stresses and problems of childrearing in the early years has led across a number of disciplines including studies of the family, human development, psychology, psychiatry, child development and parent-child relations. Societal conditions and influences upon the family, women and upon the child were explored. Particular attention was given to the nuclear family and to maternal employment.

Stress was found to be a well-documented factor in American life. The parenthood as crisis literature was examined and found to contain a number of discrepancies and limitations related to stress as a factor in parenting.

The literature indicated that the first three years of a child's life were felt to be most critical and that the influences of the parent during this period was of vital concern. Current trends and programs related to childrearing in the early years were reported.



The following chapter will explain the procedure for the development of the questionnaire and of collecting the data for the study. A brief description of the subjects and the method of selection will be given as well as some of the problems and limitations of the study.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

The major purpose of the study was to determine childrearing problems and stresses experienced by parents in the first three years of a child's life and to identify the stages that were the most stressful. Specific objectives of this study were:

1. To identify sources of:
  - a. childrearing information before becoming a parent
  - b. childrearing information after becoming a parent
  - c. help or assistance in caring for children
2. To identify the expressed opinions of parents concerning what they felt were the most prevalent childrearing problems and stresses in the first three years of a child's life.
3. To determine the periods or stages from birth to three years of age in which the most problems and stress reactions for the parents occurred.
4. To determine if differences in number and type of stresses cited varied between working and non-working mothers.
5. To determine the degree of pleasure, worry, or difficulty experienced in childrearing.

With these objectives in mind, the review of literature was made.

### Selection of the Subjects

The subjects for this study were the parents of Head Start children enrolled in 16 selected centers in three southeastern Oklahoma counties. These children are from three to five years of age; therefore, the parents would have had at least one child who had recently been through the stages of development that are the focus for this study. The centers represent 16 largely rural communities in a sparsely settled area that is officially designated as one of the poverty areas of Oklahoma. The subjects were selected by using the centers of the Head Start teachers' aides who were enrolled in the writer's Early Childhood Care classes at Carl Albert Junior College at Poteau, Oklahoma. Those 16 centers included: Wilburton, Stigler, Sandridge, Kinta, Bokoshe, Arkoma, Pocola, Cameron, Poteau, Wister, Octavia, Whitesboro, Smithville, Talihina, Canadian, and Panama. One community has a population of slightly more than five thousand; three communities have slightly more than two thousand; two communities have approximately fifteen hundred persons; and the remaining communities have five hundred or less population, with several having less than one hundred population.

### Development of the Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was developed for the purpose of investigating the parents perceptions of childrearing problems and stresses in the first three years of life. Items were included in the instrument to obtain the following information: (1) background characteristics of the subjects; (2) sources of childrearing information and training; (3) resources available to assist in childrearing; (4) stresses

and changes experienced related to childrearing; (5) childrearing problems and concerns; (6) and the parents perceptions of the degree of pleasure, worry or difficulty experienced in rearing children.

The procedure for developing the survey sections on stress and on childrearing problems involved an extensive review of the literature concerning parenthood and childrearing. In developing the section on child care problems, a listing of topics, concerns and problems reported in popular literature for parents was made (Dodson, 1970; Salk, 1972; McDearmid, et al, 1975; Schrum, 1970; Church, 1973). Previous studies of parental concerns and problems were also surveyed to identify the most prevalent problems (Auerbach, 1967; Brim, 1959; Hereford, 1964; Sears, 1957; Stolz, 1967). The problems that were related to the first three years of life were selected and categorized into general headings. A check sheet was developed and administered to two groups of parents attending parent education workshops conducted by the researcher. A total of 45 identifying their most prevalent childrearing problems and concerns. The most cited problems and those that had been written in were then condensed and grouped for brevity and clarity into the general headings reflected on the child care and behavior segment problems in the questionnaire.

The stress section of the instrument was a condensation of the items listed in the parenthood as crisis literature with the additional items from a previously developed Family Stress Survey prepared by the writer for use in parent education classes. This preliminary stress survey was given to a total of 40 mothers in parent education groups. The most cited items were incorporated into the stress instrument in the questionnaire.

The general background section of the instrument was developed to meet the objectives of the study. The instrument was then pre-tested with 10 mothers of pre-school children who were Head Start teachers' aides enrolled in Early Childhood Education classes at Carl Albert Junior College. Minor revisions for clarity and understanding were made and the materials were produced.

#### Collection of Data

The survey instrument was mailed to the 290 Head Start parents of the 16 largely rural Head Start centers of the teachers' aids in the writers Early Childhood classes at Carl Albert Junior College. Sixty-three responses or 21.7 per cent were received for this study.

#### Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages were used to describe the background characteristics of the subjects. In reporting sources of childrearing information and training, assistance in childrearing problems and concerns and the stresses and changes experienced relating to childrearing; frequency counts, percentages and means were used. In reporting the degree of pleasure, worry or difficulties involved in rearing children, only frequency counts and percentages were used.

#### Summary

The author developed an instrument to identify childrearing problems and stress at specific stages during the first three years of life. Data were also collected concerning sources of information

on childrearing and the sources of assistance in caring for children. The instrument, a questionnaire, was mailed to 290 Head Start parents with 63 (21.9%) responding. The data were analyzed through the use of percentages and frequencies.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The effort was made in this study to examine critically, several aspects of childrearing in the first three years of life as expressed by selected Head Start parents. Parental problems and stresses related to childrearing in the first three years were examined to determine problem stages. Specifically, the study sought to identify the periods or stages from birth to three years of age in which the most child-rearing problems and stress reactions for the parents occurred and to determine if the number and type of stresses cited varied between working and non-working mothers. The expressed degree of pleasure or worry experienced in childrearing was also examined. The questionnaire was mailed to 290 parents and 63 or 21.7 per cent were returned.

#### Description of the Subjects

Table I presents a description of the 63 parents who served as subjects for this study. Two fathers were respondents and the remaining 59 (96.8%) were mothers. Fifty respondents (79.3%) fell in the age range from 20 to 30 years of age. Ten respondents (15.8%) were in the age range from 30 to 40 years of age and two respondents (3.1%) were over 40 years of age. One parent did not respond in the age category.

The sample was predominantly white (90.4%) with 3.8% black and 6.3% of the respondents Indian. It was determined that 79.3% of the

homes had one parent. In determining whether homes were the basic nuclear home or included others, it was found that 77.7% of the homes had no other adults living in the homes. Of the remaining 23%, 7.9% had one other adult in the home and 14.3% had two other adults living in the home.

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIXTY-THREE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	Per Cent
Sex	Male	2	3.18
	Female	61	96.82
Age	Under 20	0	0
	20 to 30	50	79.36
	30 to 40	10	15.87
	Over 40	2	3.17
	Unknown	1	
Race	Black	2	3.17
	Indian	4	6.34
	White	57	90.47
Number of Parents	2	50	79.36
	1	13	20.63
Number of Other Adults Living in Family	0	49	77.77
	1	5	7.93
	2	9	14.28



TABLE I (Continued)

Variable	Classification	No.	Per Cent
Parental Employment			
Two-Parent Families			
	Father Only Employed	31	49.20
	Mother Only Employed	9	14.28
	Both Employed	16	25.39
One-Parent Family			
	Mother Only--Unemployed	7	11.11
Number of Children	Boys	95	58.28
	Girls	68	41.71
Size of Families	1 Child	9	
	(families)		14.28
	2 Children	28	44.44
	3 Children	13	20.63
	4 Children	6	9.52
	5 Children	7	11.11

In approximately one-half (49.2%) of the families, the father was the only one employed. In one-fourth (25.4%) of the families, both parents worked. In the nine (14.3%) families where only the mother was employed, one-third were two-parent families with the father present but unemployed, while in the remaining families, the mother was the sole parent and unemployed.

The respondents had a total of 163 children ranging in age from two and one-half months to 24 years of age. There were 95 boys (58%)

and 68 girls (42%). The greatest number of families had two children (44.4%) while 20 per cent had three children. Nine families had one child (14.3%), six families had four children (9.5%) and seven families included five children (11.1%).

### Sources of Childrearing Information

#### Before Having Children

The sources of childrearing information have been identified and discussed in several studies on childrearing (Sears, et al., 1957; Hereford, 1964; Stolz, 1967). Table II identifies the sources of childrearing information of the respondents before having children and Table III identifies the sources of childrearing information after becoming a parent.

In Table II, 26 respondents (41.3%) indicated that Reading materials were a source of information in preparation for parenthood. This is in keeping with reports in the literature concerning the prevalence of mass media as a function of parent education (Brim, 1959; Auerbach, 1967; Gordon, 1970; Arnold, 1973). The example of their parental home was cited by 24 respondents (38.1%) as the next most important source of information. Similar types of informal experiences were identified by 23 parents (36.5%) who helped rear other children and 23 who felt they had acquired knowledge by talking to other parents. The data seems to indicate that after high school there is little contact with any type of formal program or instruction in preparation for parenthood as evidenced by only six reports (6.3%) of child care courses or classes (3.1%).

TABLE II  
 NUMBER AND PER CENT OF PARENTS' INDICATIONS OF SOURCES OF  
 CHILDBEARING INFORMATION BEFORE HAVING CHILDREN

Sources of Information (N=63)	Number	*Per Cent
High School Child Care Classes	16	25.4
VoTech or Child Care Courses	4	6.3
Adult Classes	2	3.1
Read articles, books pamphlets	26	41.3
Experience in helping rear other children	23	36.5
Talked to other parents	23	36.5
The example of my father and mother and a really good home	25	38.1
Other (specify)	5	7.9
None	17	26.9

\*More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

The influence of the parental home upon the childrearing practices is not only evident indirectly through the modeling reported in Table II, (38 per cent cited the example of my mother and father), but directly through information acquired from parents (48%) reported in Table III. This finding supports Gordon's (1970) position that children are not being reared according to current knowledge and information as by principles and philosophies of previous generations.

#### Sources of Information After Birth of Child

Virtually no formal instruction was indicated by respondents after becoming parents with one parent (1.5%) indicating attending an adult or Baby Care class. The most frequently reported source of information in any stage was advice from the doctor indicated by 39 respondents (61.9%) during the newborn period. Slightly less than one-half (49.2%) cited books, magazines, or other reading materials as a source of information during the newborn stage. Thirty-three respondents identified parents and relatives as their source of information during the first two childrearing stages. When all the stages are totaled, parents and relatives were indicated most frequently as the source of information for rearing children. The data in Table III is consistent with a statement by Leeper, et al. (1974).

Although parents today are better educated than ever before, our educational system has given little time to preparation for marriage, to studies of home and family life, or to a consideration of childrearing practices. Most information of this type must be gained from one's own experience, from certain professional personnel such as the pediatrician or family doctor, and from the flood of conflicting views found in all types of popular books, magazines and newspapers (p. 3).

TABLE III

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF PARENTS' INDICATIONS OF SOURCES OF CHILDBREARING  
INFORMATION AT SPECIFIC STAGES AFTER BECOMING A PARENT

Sources of Information (N=63)	Newborn		Infant		Early Toddler		Late Toddler		*Mean %
	Birth-2 mos.		2 mos.-10 mos.		10 mos.-18 mos.		10 mos.-3 yrs.		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Doctor or Pediatrician	39	61.9	27	42.8	20	31.7	21	33.3	42.4
Books, Magazines, Pamphlets	31	49.2	30	47.6	24	38.1	27	42.8	45.2
Adult or Baby Care Classes	-		1	1.6	-		-		
Parents, Other Relatives	33	52.4	33	52.4	27	42.8	28	44.4	48.2
Neighbors, Friends	10	15.8	10	15.8	14	22.2	13	20.6	18.6
Other (Specified) Spiritual Resources	2	3.1	2	3.1	2	3.1	2	3.1	

\*Mean per cent of total number of indication of each source of

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

## Sources of Help in Caring for Children

Much of the current literature on the family refers to the isolation of the nuclear family and the breakdown of kin networks (Skolnick and Skolnick, 1971; Skolnick, 1973; Bronfenbrenner, 1972). Table IV identifies the sources of help in caring for children for the respondents in this study.

More than half (55.5%) of the families received help from grandparents during the neonatal period and grandparents continued to be the greatest source of help throughout infancy and toddlerhood (mean 43.6%). When other relatives (17.4%) are combined with grandparents (55.5%) almost three-fourths (73%) of the families received help from families during the newborn stage. If the assistance of an older sibling is included, the family resources for parental relief total 85.6 per cent in the newborn period.

Although much of the literature cites the problem of the isolated nuclear family brought about by the increasing mobility of families and other societal factors (LeMasters, 1970; Skolnick, 1973), this isolation is not apparent by the data on Table IV. The amount of support in caring for children from the other parent (the husband in this data), remains fairly constant throughout the early years with a mean of 30.1 per cent. Outside help increases with the age of the child as indicated by approximately one-fifth (19%) using Day Care or Nursery services by the age of three and 27 per cent of the respondents using hired baby sitters by this age.

TABLE IV

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF PARENTS' INDICATIONS OF SOURCES OF  
HELP IN CARING FOR CHILDREN AT SPECIFIC STAGES

Sources of Help (N=63)	Newborn		Infant		Early Toddler		Late Toddler		*Mean %
	Birth-2 mos. No.	%	2 mos.-10 mos. No.	%	10 mos.-18 mos. No.	%	10 mos.-3 yrs. No.	%	
Other Parent	19	30.1	19	30.1	17	27.0	21	33.3	30.1
Grandparent	15	55.5	27	42.8	23	36.5	25	39.7	43.6
Older Sibling	8	12.7	8	12.7	7	9.5	10	15.8	12.7
Relatives	11	17.4	10	15.8	14	22.2	10	15.8	17.8
Neighbors or Friends	6	9.5	5	7.9	6	9.5	9	14.2	10.3
Hired Baby-sitter	4	6.3	7	1.1	11	17.4	17	27.0	15.4
Day Care Nursery	3	4.7	4	6.3	6	9.5	12	19	10.0

\*Mean Per cent of total indications of each source of help.

Note: More than one item could be selected thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

## Stressful Changes or Feelings Experienced

by Parents

A number of studies have been concerned with the amount of stress or "crisis experiences" involved in parenthood, particularly, with the advent of the first child (LeMasters, 1957; Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965; Russell, 1974). In order to compare the results of this study with the most stressful experiences reported by those studies, the number of times a stressful experience was cited was totaled from all stages. The number of citations were then ranked in order. Tables V, VI, and VII all have been tallied with the listing on the tables reflecting the total number of times the particular stress was experienced during the first three years.

In examining the expressions of stressful changes or feelings experienced by parents, Table V cites 33 reports of sleep interrupted or loss of sleep (52.3%) with an equal number of parents reporting feeling edgy, nervous, or upset (52.3%) during the newborn period. This report corresponds with the data from a Parent Education follow-up study done by the Visiting Nurse Association in New York City (Mann, et al., 1961) but is not consistent with most of the findings of studies related to parenthood as crisis.

Table V reveals that when the total indications for all stages were included, money worries and adjustments (78) was the same as edgy and sleep interrupted. This "bother" was not localized in the newborn stage but was consistently a source of stress throughout the first three years. The total number of times tired, worn-out was indicated ranked it as the fourth most cited stress but again the experiences were focused in the first year of life, rather than the



TABLE V

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF PARENTS' INDICATIONS OF STRESS FEELINGS  
RELATED TO CHILDREARING AT SPECIFIC STAGES

Stress Feelings (N=63)	Newborn Birth-2 mos.		Infant 2 mos.-10 mos.		Early Toddler 10 mos.-18 mos.		Late Toddler 10 mos.-3 yrs.		Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1. Edgy, nervous, upset	33	52.3	27	42.8	11	17.4	7	11.1	78
2. Sleep interrupted, loss of sleep	33	52.3	27	42.8	11	17.4	11	11.1	78
3. Money worries, adjustments	21	33.3	19	30.1	19	30.1	19	30.1	78
4. Tired, worn-out	30	47.1	22	34.9	12	19.0	11	17.4	75
5. Constantly being needed	17	27.0	15	23.8	15	23.8	16	25.4	63
6. Husband-wife disagree- ments	12	19	13	20.6	14	22.2	14	22.2	53
7. In-laws interfering	14	22.2	13	20.6	11	17.4	12	19.0	50
8. Unable to keep up with housework	17	27.0	10	15.8	10	15.8	11	17.4	48
9. Tied down at home	15	23.8	12	19.0	11	17.4	4	6.3	42
10. Unsure of self, inadequate	11	17.4	9	14.3	9	14.3	7	11.1	36

TABLE V (Continued)

Stress Feelings (N=63)	Newborn Birth-2 mos.		Infant 2 mos.-10 mos.		Early Toddler 10 mos.-18 mos.		Late Toddler 10 mos.-3 yrs.		*Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
11. Worry about appearance, figure	17	27.0	10	15.8	3	4.7	5	7.5	35
12. Too many responsi- bilities	5	7.9	8	12.7	9	14.3	9	14.3	31
13. Upset routines, plans	10	15.8	8	12.7	6	9.5	3	4.7	27
14. Cut off from other people	6	9.5	5	7.9	4	6.3	3	4.7	18
**Totals	241		198		145		148		

\* Total times each stress was indicated in all stages.

\*\* Total number of times all stresses were cited in each stage.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

entire period of the study. The fifth ranked stress, constantly being needed, cited by 63 respondents totally, was almost the same in every stage, indicating it as a constant childrearing pressure throughout the early years of life.

In summary, this study ranked in order of their occurrence the following stressful experiences expressed by parents in Table V:

(1) Edgy, nervous, upset; (1) Sleep interrupted or loss of sleep;  
 (1) Money worries or adjustments; (4) Tired, worn-out; (5) Constantly being needed. Other important stress factors that were cited as prevalent at one stage more than another were unable to keep up with housework (27%), and worry about appearance or figure (27%) in the newborn stage. Ranking as least stressful in this study were: too many responsibilities (31 responses); upset routines, plans (27 responses), and cut off from other people (18 responses).

When totaled, the newborn stage is indicated as the most stressful with 24 stressful experiences in that stage. The citing of the newborn stage as stressful is in keeping with much of the crisis of parenthood literature (LeMasters, 1957; Dyer, 1963). There were no studies found that identified the problems and stresses of other than the infant stage with the exception of the previously cited Mann, Woodward and Joseph study (1961).

Most of the parenthood as crisis studies have involved middle-class college-educated families, with the exception of Hobbs (1968) and Russell (1974) which used a more representative cross sample of social and economic classes. In the Hobbs study the five most discriminating items for mothers were: interference from in-laws; decreased sexual responsiveness of self; physical tiredness and fatigue; feeling "edgy"

or upset; and decreased contacts with people at work. In the Russell (1974) study, the wives most frequently cited as problem areas "bothering them" the following: worry about my personal appearance; physical tiredness and fatigue; interrupted sleep and rest; worry about my loss of figure; and feeling "edgy" or emotionally upset. The Hobbs and Russell studies suggests that social class is positively related to stress during the transition to parenthood since their results were somewhat in conflict with those of the other studies. Social and economic influences have also been confirmed by Sears (1957) and Stolz (1967) studies on childrearing practices as well as by Kohn (1967) and Gecas and Nye (1974).

#### Comparitive Stresses of Working and

#### Non-Working Mothers

Table VI and Table VII report the stressful changes or feelings experienced in relation to maternal employment. The total number of stress experiences in each category were used to rank the items. In analyzing the data recorded there, one difference is noted between the working and non-working mothers for the first five ranked stresses. When all stages are considered together, money worries or adjustments ranks as the most stressful factor for working mothers (37%) Table VI, while it ranks fifth with non-working mothers (26.9%), Table VII. The only variation in stresses cited between the first five rankings in both groups are the non-working mothers include constantly being needed (cited 42 times, 27% mean) to 21 per cent mean for working mothers, Table VI. Husband-wife differences (cited 31 times) ranked fifth for working mothers and reflected a rather constant source of stress at all

TABLE VI

RANK ORDER, NUMBER AND MEAN PER CENT OF PARENTS' INDICATIONS OF STRESS FEELINGS  
AT SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY WORKING MOTHERS

Stress Feelings (N=25)	Newborn Birth-2 mos.		Infant 2 mos.-10 mos.		Early Toddler 10 mos.-18 mos.		Late Toddler 18 mos.-3 yrs.		*Mean %
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1. Money worries, adjustments	10	40	9	36	9	36	9	36	37
2. Sleep interrupted, loss of sleep	13	52	9	36	3	12	2	8	27
3. Tired, worn-out	10	40	7	28	4	16	3	12	24
4. Edgy, nervous, upset	6	24	6	24	6	24	5	20	23
5. Husband-wife disagreements	5	20	5	20	6	24	5	20	23
6. Constantly being needed	5	20	5	20	6	24	6	24	22
7. Unable to keep up with housework	8	32	3	12	4	16	4	16	19
8. Unsure of self, inadequate	5	20	4	16	5	20	4	16	18
9. Worry about appearance, figure	7	28	5	20	2	8	2	8	16
10. Tied down at home	5	20	3	12	3	12	2	8	13

TABLE VI (Continued)

Stress Feelings (N=25)	Newborn Birth-2 mos.		Infant 2 mos.-10 mos.		Early Toddler 10 mos.-18 mos.		Late Toddler 18 mos.-3 yrs.		*Mean %
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
11. Too many re- sponsibilities	2	8	3	12	3	12	4	16	12
12. In-laws interfering	3	12	3	12	3	12	3	12	12
13. Upset routines, plans	4	16	4	16	3	12	-		11
14. Cut-off from other people	2	8	2	8	1	4	1	4	6
Totals	85		65		58		50		

\* Mean per cent of total times respondents cited this stress.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing percent to total more than 100.

TABLE VII

RANK ORDER, NUMBER AND MEAN PER CENT OF PARENTS' INDICATIONS OF STRESS  
FEELINGS AT SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY NON-WORKING MOTHERS

Stress Feelings (N=38)	Newborn		Infant		Early Toddler		Late Toddler		*Mean %
	Birth-2 mos. No.	%	2 mos.-10 mos. No.	%	10 mos.-18 mos. No.	%	18 mos.-3 yrs. No.	%	
1. Tired, worn-out	20	52.6	15	39.4	8	21	8	21	33.5
2. Sleep interrupted, loss of sleep	20	52.6	18	47.3	8	21	5	13.1	33.5
3. Edgy, nervous, upset	12	31.5	14	36.8	13	34.2	10	26.3	32.2
4. Constantly being needed	12	31.5	10	26.3	9	23.6	11	28.9	28.9
5. Money worries, adjustments	11	28.9	10	26.3	10	26.3	10	26.3	27
6. In-laws interfering	11	28.9	10	26.3	8	21.0	9	23.6	25
7. Husband-wife disagreements	7	18.4	8	21	8	21	8	21.0	20.4
8. Tied down at home	10	26.3	9	23.6	8	21	2	5.2	19
9. Unable to keep up with housework	9	23.6	7	18.4	6	15.8	7	18.4	12.5
10. Worry about appearance, figure	10	26.3	5	13.1	1	2.5	3	7.9	12.5

TABLE VII (Continued)

Stress Feelings (N=38)	Newborn Birth-2 mos.		Infant 2 mos.-10 mos.		Early Toddler 10 mos.-18 mos.		Late Toddler 18 mos.-3 yrs.		*Mean %
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
11. Too many re- sponsibilities	3	7.9	5	13.1	6	15.8	5	13.1	12.5
12. Unsure of self, inadequate	6	15.8	5	13.1	4	10.5	3	7.9	11.8
13. Upset plans, routines	6	15.8	4	10.5	3	7.9	3	7.9	10.5
14. Cut-off from other people	4	10.5	3	7.9	3	7.9	2	5.2	7.9
**Totals	143		124		95		86		

\*Mean per cent of total times respondents indicated stress in all stages.

\*\* Total number of times all stresses were cited in each stage.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.



stages. It ranked seventh for non-working mothers (Table VII), but the mean per cent (20.4%) was close to that of the working mothers (23% mean).

Both working (Table VI) and non-working mothers (Table VII) were in comparative agreement concerning the newborn stage having more stressful changes and feelings experienced. The number of stresses cited decreased in both groups as the age of the child increased, with the least number identified in the 18-month to three-year age group.

Thirteen working mothers (52%) cited sleep interrupted or loss of sleep as a stress during the newborn stage. This was the same percentage indicated by non-working mothers at this stage. In-law interference ranked sixth with non-working mothers while it was tied for eleventh position for the working mothers, ranking it as one of the three least stressful factors. In the Hobbs (1968) study, in-law interference was the highest source of stress reported by the subjects. Table IV of this study indicates that in-laws are considered to be sources of help rather than anxiety since there were more than half of the respondents who identified them as a source of help. The other stress factors that relate to the Hobbs and Russell studies are tiredness, feeling edgy, and interrupted sleep. There is the least relationship between this study and the items from the Hobbs study previously mentioned: in-law relationships, worry about appearance and figure, and decreased contacts with people at work. These earlier studies may reflect middle-class concerns that are not common to the working class or lower socio-economic group of people to such a degree.

Feelings of being unsure of self, inadequate, were experienced by 18 per cent of the working mothers but indicated by only 11 per cent

of the non-working mothers. This is in contrast to other studies which report feelings of inadequacy as one of the most common findings (Sears, et al., 1957; Mann, et al., 1961).

#### Child Care and Behavior Problems

Historically, the focus of parent education has been concerned with helping parents deal with problems related to specific aspects of caring for children (Brim, 1959; Auerbach, 1967; Hereford, 1964). Many of the volumes of materials readily available to parents are focused on "how-to" care for or deal with specific aspects of childrearing (Gordon, 1970; Dodson, 1970; Schrum, 1970; Salk, 1972). The literature covers basically the same questions parents have asked doctors, psychologists or parent educators over the years. The following tables (Tables VIII through XII) reflect those parental concerns. In each table, the specific type of problem will be identified under each major heading as well as the frequency and percentage of concern and the period of development in which it was of most concern.

#### Feeding Concerns as Reported by Parents

The only feeding problem identified in Table VIII as being of importance was formulas (39.7%) in the newborn stage and 12.7 per cent in the infant stage. Relevant instruction in preparation for parenthood might deal with this source of concern. Apparently, today's simple prepared formulas and disposable bottles along with procedures that eliminate hours of sterilization have not entirely removed this as a basic concern. The concern for parents may be related to allergy factors or digestive disturbances, but information for parents might

TABLE VIII

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF CHILDREN'S FEEDING PROBLEMS AT  
SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY PARENTS

Food Problems	Newborn Birth-2 mos.		Infancy 2 mos.-10 mos.		Early Toddler 10 mos.-18 mos.		Late Toddler 18 mos.-3 yrs.		*Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Breast Feeding	7	11.1	2	3.2	0	-	0	-	9
Formulas	25	39.7	8	12.7	2	3.2	0	-	35
First Solid Foods	3	4.7	4	6.3	0	-	0	0	7
Weaning	0	-	1	1.6	3	4.7	1	1.6	5
Food Dislikes	0	-	1	1.6	5	7.9	4	6.3	10
Messiness	1	1.6	1	1.6	2	3.2	2	3.2	6
Too Little Food	0	-	3	4.7	3	4.7	6	9.5	12
**Totals	36		20		15		13		

\* Total number of times a problem was indicated at all ages.

\*\* Total number of times all problems were indicated at each specific age.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

alert them to the reality of these factors and possibly some alternatives in meeting the problems. The newborn stage was the period in which most of the feeding concerns occurred with a total of 36 indications of problems.

#### Children's Sleep Problems Reported by Parents

The major problems reported in Table IX concerning sleep were found to be of two different types. Not sleeping nights was indicated by 28 respondents, totally with 21 of those indications falling in the newborn and infant stage. Not wanting to go to bed was indicated 28 times with 24 of those indications falling in the two toddlers stages. Getting in bed with parents was a source of concern to 17 respondents in the late toddler stage. The frequency of sleep as a concern rose steadily throughout the early years with a total of 54 indications of concern in the late toddler stage.

#### Children's Illness and Health Concerns

##### Reported by Parents

Table X reflects very few indications of concern with illness or health problems. Allergies was the most cited problem with a total of 26 indications of concern with 12.7 per cent in each of the toddler stages. The parents wrote in a number of specific illnesses (16 total) with one being of particular interest. Fever with convulsions was indicated by four parents in the 10-18 month stage. Colic and teething problems had the next greatest number of indications.

TABLE IX

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDRENS' SPECIFIC SLEEP PROBLEMS  
AT SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY PARENTS

Sleep Problems	Newborn		Infancy		Early Toddler		Late Toddler		*Total No.
	Birth-2 mos. No.	%	2 mos.-10 mos. No.	%	10 mos.-18 mos. No.	%	18 mos.-3 yrs. No.	%	
Not sleeping nights	11	17.4	10	15.8	5	7.8	2	3.1	28
Naptime problems	-	-	2	3.1	6	9.5	9	14.3	17
Getting in bed with parents	-	-	-	-	3	1.7	17	27.0	20
Not wanting to go to bed	-	-	4	6.3	7	11.1	17	27.0	28
Bad dreams	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	11.1	7
Other (specified)									
Bedwetting							1	1.5	1
Fear of being alone							1	1.5	1
**Totals	11		16		21		54		

\* Total number of times a problem was indicated at all ages.

\*\* Total number of times all problems were indicated at each specific stage.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

TABLE X

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDRENS' ILLNESS-HEALTH PROBLEMS  
AT SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY PARENTS

Illness-Health Problems	Newborn		Infancy		Early Toddler		Late Toddler		*Total No.
	Birth-2 mos. No.	%	2 mos.-10 mos. No.	%	10 mos.-18 mos. No.	%	18 mos.-3 yrs. No.	%	
Prematurity	2	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Colic	3	4.7	10	15.9	-	-	-	-	13
Allergies	3	4.7	7	11.1	8	12.7	8	12.7	26
Teething	-	-	8	12.7	5	7.9	-	-	13
Shots	-	-	6	9.5	2	3.2	-	-	8
Other (specified)									
Specific Illnesses:									
Anemia	1	1.6							1
Digestive	1	1.6							1
Pneumonia					2	3.2			2
Asthma					1	1.6	1	1.6	2
Injury					1	1.6			1
Fever-Convulsions					4	6.3			4
Hepatitis					1	1.6			1
Tonsillitis			1	1.6	1	1.6	1	1.6	3
**Totals	10		32		25		10		

\* Total number of times a problem was indicated at all ages.

\*\* Total number of times all problems were indicated at each specific stage.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

Children's Physical Care Concerns Reported  
by Parents

Physical care problems were not cited by parents as being of concern in the first year of life as reflected in Table XI. Wetting or messing pants indicated by 20 respondents in the toddler stages was the most often checked problem. Eighteen parents also cited potty training as being of concern during the toddler stage. The next most indicated problem by respondents was keeping up with cited by a total of 19 parents, primarily in the toddler stages. Safety care, which is mentioned by Burton White (1973, 1975) as being of critical importance during the 10-18 month period was only cited by six parents during the entire three-year period.

Children's Behavior Problems as Reported  
by Parents

The major reflection of the data in Table XII is the change from biological concerns in the newborn stage to those of a social-emotional nature in the toddler stage. The frequency of the citations range from four in the newborn stage to 87 indications in the late toddler period. The range of behavior concerns does not focus on any one problem but four problems are cited more frequently than the others. Clinging-hanging on was indicated by 22 respondents totally with 16 citing wanting mother as a problem. These two characteristics are frequently manifestations of the development of the attachment bond (Fraiberg, 1959; Bowlby, 1969) and although annoying, quite healthy indications of normal development. Classes in parenting would be most helpful in alerting

TABLE XI

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL CARE PROBLEMS AT  
SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY PARENTS

Physical Care Problems	Newborn Birth-2 mos.		Infancy 2 mos.-10 mos.		Early Toddler 10 mos.-18 mos.		Late Toddler 18 mos.-3 yrs.		*Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Bathing	-		-		-		1	1.6	1
Play	-		-		-		-		0
Keeping up with	-		1	1.6	10	15.9	8	12.7	19
Safety Care	-		1	1.6	3	4.7	2	3.2	18
Potty Training	-		6	9.5	12	19.0	12	19.0	18
Wetting-Messing Pants	-		-		7	11.1	13	20.6	20
Other (specified)									
Wetting Bed					1	1.6	2	3.2	3
**Totals	0		8		33		38		

\* Total number of times a problem was indicated at all ages.

\*\* Total number of times all problems were indicated at each specific stage.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.



TABLE XII

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AT  
SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY PARENTS

Behavior Problems	Newborn		Infancy		Early Toddler		Late Toddler		*Total No.
	Birth-2 mos. No.	%	2 mos.-10 mos. No.	%	10 mos.-18 mos. No.	%	18 mos.-3 yrs. No.	%	
Crying	2	3.2	2	3.2	3	4.7	1	1.6	8
Clinging-hanging on	-		9	14.3	8	12.7	5	7.9	22
Wanting mother	-		3	4.7	6	9.5	7	11.1	16
Ramsacking	-		-		2	3.2	3	4.7	5
Messiness	-		-		2	3.2	3	4.7	5
Fearful	-		-		1	1.6	4	6.3	5
Thumbsucking	2	3.2	1	1.6	3	4.7	8	12.7	14
Stubbornness	-		-		7	11.1	12	19.0	19
Not Minding	-		-		5	7.9	14	22.2	19
Temper Tantrums	-		-		2	3.2	13	20.6	15
Saying No	-		-		-		9	14.3	9
Jealous	-		-		-		8	12.7	8
Other (specified)									
Nail-biting							1	1.6	1
**Totals	4		15		39		87		

\* Total number of times a problem was indicated at all ages.

\*\*Total number of times all problems were indicated at each specific stage.

Note: More than one item could be selected, thus allowing per cent to total more than 100.

parents to these normal developmental processes or to the critical periods in development.

The other two most cited problems were stubbornness (19 respondents) and not minding (19 respondents). These are commonly accepted negative stages that are considered by many authorities to be evidences of the development of fundamental personality traits (Erikson, 1963; Dodson, 1970; White, 1973; Braga, 1974).

#### Degree of Pleasure in Childrearing

##### Reported by Parents

The data in Table XIII indicates very high expressions of pleasure and satisfaction in childrearing experiences during the first three years of life, although not every parent responded in every stage. In examining the newborn stage which had been cited as the most stressful in previous tables, more than two-thirds (66.6%) of the parents expressed a great deal of pleasure in childrearing at that stage in Table XII. Some pleasure was indicated by another 23.8 per cent. For each successive stage there were increasing numbers of respondents reporting pleasure and satisfaction with the 18 month to three year age having 82.5 per cent of the respondents indicating a great deal of pleasure. There were no expressions in the very little or none category at the 18 month to three year age, yet this stage was cited as having the most sleep problems (Table IX), and the greatest number of behavior problems (Table XII).

The apparent contradiction of very high stresses and high degrees of pleasure seem to indicate no relationship between pleasures experienced in the parental role and the amount of stresses experienced. It

is also possible that it reflects some of the ambivalent feelings common to parents concerning their role. There is also some indication in the literature that respondents may often report what they feel is the right attitude or behavior, rather than their real feelings and actions.

TABLE XIII  
DEGREE OF PLEASURE IN CHILDREARING REPORTED BY PARENTS

Category	A Great Deal		Some		Very Little		Some	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Birth to 2 months	42	66.6	15	23.8	4	6.3	-	-
2 months- 10 months	47	74.6	9	14.3	2	3.1	1	1.6
10 months - 18 months	48	76.2	9	14.3	1	1.6	-	-
18 months- 3 years	52	82.5	8	12.7	-	-	-	-

Note: Not every respondent identified an item in all categories.

## Degree of Problems and Worries in Childrearing

## Reported by Parents

The data in Table XIV concerning problems and worries experienced at each stage reflects the highest degree of problems and worries in the newborn stage, with 14 respondents (22.2%) citing a great deal of worry and 11 (17.4%) reporting some worry. A total of 34 parents or more than half of the respondents, reported very few or none. The majority of the respondents classify the degree of worry in child-rearing in the some or very few columns at all stages of development.

TABLE XIV

DEGREE OF WORRY OR PROBLEMS IN CHILDREARING AT  
SPECIFIC STAGES AS REPORTED BY PARENTS

Category	A Great Deal		Some		Very Little		None	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Birth to 2 months	14	22.2	11	17.4	20	31.7	14	22.2
2 months to 10 months	10	15.9	19	30.1	25	39.6	6	9.5
10 months to 18 months	11	17.4	20	31.7	22	34.9	6	9.5
18 months to 3 years	9	14.3	23	36.5	23	36.5	4	6.3

Note: Not every respondent identified an item in every category.

Comparative Degree of Ease or Difficulty in  
Rearing Each Child as Reported by Parents

Table XV indicates the comparative degree of ease or difficulty in rearing each child as reported by the parents. The advent of parenthood or the birth of the first child is considered to be a "crisis" experience by many scholars. The findings of a number of studies has supported this theory (LeMasters, 1957; Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965). The indications in Table XII concerning the difficulties in rearing the first child are as follows: a great many difficulties-- 13.3 per cent; some difficulties--39.7 per cent; and no difficulties--11.1 per cent. In the Hobbs (1965) and Russell (1974) studies, it was concluded that the age of the child or the length of time since birth was a definite factor in the reporting by parents of crisis or great stress and difficulties.

The literature reports that each subsequent child should be easier to rear (Rossi, 1968; Mann, et al., 1961). The data in Table XV confirms this with reports of difficulties decreasing with each additional child. Familiarity with the task is cited as the basis for the difference according to the literature (Rossi, 1968). Conversely, in much of the crisis literature, it reports the cumulative effect of pressure and tensions (Holmes and Rahe, 1967) and the number of children in families has been found to be of great importance in the amount of stress or pressure parents feel in their roles (Stolz, 1967). There is apparently a relationship in how familiar child care and childrearing tasks are and the total impact on the parent and on meeting all the tasks prescribed in that role but the intensity of stress experienced in carrying out these tasks seems to be a result of other factors.

TABLE XV  
 COMPARATIVE DEGREE OF EASE OR DIFFICULTY IN REARING  
 EACH CHILD AS REPORTED BY PARENTS

Birth Order of Children	A Great Many Difficulties		Some Difficulties		Very Few Difficulties		None	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
63 First Child	9	14.3	25	39.7	22	34.9	7	11.1
54 Second Child	7	13.0	15	27.8	27	50.0	5	9.25
26 Third Child	2	7.7	10	38.5	10	38.5	2	7.7
13 Fourth Child	1	7.7	5	38.5	6	46.1	1	7.7
7 Fifth Child	1	14.3	1	14.3	2	28.6	-	-

Note: Not every respondent identified an item in every category.

#### Summary

Parental problems and stresses related to childrearing in the first three years were examined to determine problem stages and specific areas of stress. Background characteristics of the subjects were determined in relation to number in the household, employment, background of training in childrearing and sources of help in caring for children. The importance of the parental home and mass media were found to be the predominant influences in childrearing and the parents of the subjects were the principal source of help in caring for children.

The most prevalent sources of stress were determined and a comparative analysis of working mothers and non-working mothers stress feelings was made. Under general areas of child care and behavior, specific problems were determined as to the nature of the problem and the period in the first three years when it was most prevalent.

An attempt was made to determine the degree of pleasure or worry experienced by parents in rearing children in the first three years. The comparative degree of ease or difficulty in rearing children in relation to birth order was attempted. Following the analysis of the data, a summary and recommendations were written.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The major purpose of this study was to identify childrearing problems and stresses at specific stages in the first three years of life as expressed by parents. Specifically, the study sought to identify sources of childrearing information and help in caring for children; to identify the periods or stages from birth to three years of age in which the most childrearing problems and stress reactions for the parents occurred; to determine if the number and type of stresses cited varied between working and non-working mothers, and to assess the degree of pleasure or worry experienced in rearing children.

It was believed that parents are adversely affected in their parental roles by stressful life experiences as much as by the specific problems involved in caring for children. The current literature emphasizes the criticalness of the early years in the development of children as well as the impact of the parental influences on the developing child. Thus, the problem for this study was the development of an instrument to collect data concerning parental problems and stresses during the first three years of life.

The questionnaire which was developed included a section which was utilized for securing various background data and sections to obtain information concerning the following: (1) background and training in childrearing; (2) resources or help available in caring for children;



(3) stresses and changes experienced related to childrearing; (4) child care problems and concerns; and (5) degree of pleasure, worry or difficulty experienced in rearing children.

The respondents in the study were predominantly white, between the ages of 20 to 30, and were predominantly unemployed. The principal source of formal training or information before parenthood was obtained from high school classes with only one-fourth of them having access to this experience. The major source of information was gained through reading materials, the example of their own homes, and experience in helping rear children. After having children, their major source of information was their parents and the doctor. This in keeping with the findings of Stolz (1967) study and reports Leeper, et al. (1974). The primary source of assistance in childrearing was relatives with more than 75 per cent indicating help from relatives. This would indicate that the mobility pattern and isolation of the nuclear family that is characteristic of our society is not the case with this group of people.

The most often mentioned parental concerns in caring for children were feeding problems in the newborn stage and behavior problems in the late toddler stage. The most often cited stressful changes or feelings experienced by the respondents were: edgy, nervous, and upset; sleep interrupted or loss of sleep; and money worries or adjustments. The period of greatest stress was the newborn stage while the period of greatest problems was the late toddler period. This discrepancy is not clear but it may indicate that stress feelings are influenced by the amount of change required for an individual as well as the total number of impinging forces upon the parents as was

concluded in Minturn and Lambert's study (1964) of childrearing practices. This is also supported by the current body of information on stress, crisis and role strain indicating that responses are a result of many cumulative strains and pressures involved in one's role in life (Holmes, Rahe, 1967).

The degree to which parents expressed pleasure or worry related to their childrearing experiences had no observed relationship to any of the previously mentioned data. A very high degree of pleasure was experienced during the newborn stage and the amount of pleasure increased to all experiencing a great deal or some pleasure in the late toddler stage with none indicating very little or none. This does reflect the ambivalent feelings reported in much of the parenthood literature and could possibly reflect the often reported guilt experienced for attitudes and actions they experience.

#### Recommendations

There is a need for developing a concise instrument to assess the degree of stress experienced by parents in the high stress areas cited in this study. Another area for study involves the determination of the specific parental behavior and childrearing actions that result from those feelings. These findings would be valuable in planning intervention programs to assist parents in functioning more effectively.

Another question that comes to mind from the development of the study concerns the area of "role strain" as an important factor in parenting which this writer believes deserves close examination in future studies. Further study to determine if the stressful feelings at specific stages would be the same for middle or higher income

groups; for urban parents as well as the rural families in this study, would be of interest in assisting parents of various socio-economic levels and geographic locations.

It is suggested that alternative methods be explored for gathering data from lower income families. The original concept of this study of combining the questionnaire method with the administration of it in small familiar group settings led by a familiar person of their own socio-economic background may have value in obtaining responses. Follow-up interviews from some of the sample would be a worthwhile consideration. In other studies of parenting in the first three years, it would be helpful to limit the population to only those parents who have children under school age. Parents with children of school age and older, with much more childrearing experience, may affect the findings considerably, one way or another. Further limiting might include only information on the children who are currently in the three-to-five range rather than all infant and toddlers, as well.

The researcher suggests that there is an urgent need for more study and consideration to be given the identification of stress and role strain upon parents in order to begin to meet the imperative needs of helping families cope with the many diverse changes and conditions that are bringing pressures to bear on childrearing.

Brim (1959) and Mann (1961) both conclude that parent education classes dealing with specific theory and child care problems have not had a measurable effect on parents. There needs to be further exploration of what means of parent education would serve the best in helping parents cope with the expectations of their childrearing role. The home centered programs working with the mother and the child offer a

most interesting possibility but until the programs become economically feasible on a wide scale it would seem other alternative measures must be taken. It would be most interesting to determine if the early years parent education and training program as visualized by White (1975) could be tested and proven to be more economical as he contends.

In summary, the literature points to increasing numbers of changes in our society which have been found to produce greater tension and stress. The mounting body of research indicates that the critical years in child development are the early years and the home as the major determining force in how that child develops. There is increasing evidence that parents rear children not in regard to what they know or what they believe but according to how they feel. To some degree, all of these factors have been indicated in this study. It is hoped that future studies will offer some direction and solutions for helping parents function to the best of their potential in rearing their children to their optimal development.

#### A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Almy, Millie. The Early Childhood Educator at Work. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1975.
- Auerbach, Aline B. Parents Learn Through Discussion: Principles and Practices of Parent Group Education. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967.
- Bartley, S. Howard. "What Do You Mean Tired?" Today's Education (March/April, 1975), 54-55.
- Beadle, Muriel. A Child's Mind. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1970.
- Beck, Aaron T. "What To Do When You're Under Stress." U. S. News and World Report (September 23, 1973), 48-53.
- Becker, W. C. and R. C. Krug. "The Parent Attitude Research Instrument--A Research Review." Child Development, 36 (Mar/June, 1965), 329.
- Best, John W. Research in Education, 2nd Ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Biehler, Robert F. Child Development: An Introduction. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.
- Bloom, Benjamin. Stability and Change in Human Characteristics. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964.
- Bowlby, John. Attachment and Loss, Vol. I. New York: Basic Books, 1969.
- Braga, Joseph and Laurie Braga. Growing With Children. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.
- Brim, Orville G. Jr. Education for Child Rearing. New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1959.
- Boyle, John. "Helping Children Deal With Stress." Dimensions. Journal of the Southern Association of Children Under Six, 2 (June, 1974), 92-112.
- Bronfenbrenner, Urie. "The Future of the Family." in The Family in Search of a Future. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970.

- Bronfenbrenner, Urie. "The Origins of Alienation." Scientific American, 231 (August, 1974), 53-61.
- Buckland, Clare M. "Toward a Theory of Parent Education: Family Learning Centers in the Post-Industrial Society." The Family Coordinator, 21 (April, 1972), 151-161.
- Caplan, Gerald and Vivian Cadden. "The Turning Points of Life." McCalls, 94 (October, 1966), 114.
- Church, Joseph. Understanding Your Child From Birth to Three. New York: Random House, 1973.
- Deckard, Barbara. The Women's Movement. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.
- Dodson, Fitzhugh. How To Parent. Los Angeles: Nash Publishing Company, 1970.
- Dohrenwend, Barbara. "Social Status and Stressful Life-events." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 28:2, 1973, 225-235.
- Dyer, Everett D. "Parenthood as Crisis: A Re-study." Journal of Marriage and Family, 25 (May, 1963), 196-201.
- Erikson, Erik. Identity and the Life Cycle. New York: International Universities Press, 1959.
- Erikson, Erik H. Childhood and Society, 2nd Ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1963.
- Felix, Robert H. "The High Cost of Tension." Parents, 34 (October, 1959), 68.
- Fraiberg, Selma. The Magic Years. New York: Scribener and Sons, 1959.
- Fraiberg, Selma. "How a Baby Learns to Love." In Readings in Human Development '73-'74. Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1973.
- Gecas, Viktor and F. Ivan Nye. "Sex and Class Differences in Parent-Child Interaction: A Test of Kohn's Hypothesis." Journal of Marriage and Family, 34 (November, 1974), 742.
- Gesell, Arnold and Frances L. Ilg. Infant and Child in the Culture of Today. New York: Harper, 1943.
- Gordon, Ira J. "Reaching the Young Child Through Parent Education." Childhood Education, 46 (February, 1970), 5.
- Gordon, Michael. The Nuclear Family in Crisis: The Search for an Alternative. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

- Gordon, Thomas. Parent Effectiveness Training. New York: Peter H. Wyden, 1970.
- Grams, Armin. "Parenting: Concept and Process." in Parenting. Patricia Markun, ed., Washington, D.C." Association for Childhood Education International, 1972, 1-8.
- Gray, Susan W. "The Child's First Teacher." Childhood Education, 48 (December, 1971), 114.
- Hereford, Carl F. Changing Parental Attitudes Through Group Discussion. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964.
- Highberger, Ruth and Carol Schramm. Child Development for Day Care Workers. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1976.
- Hill, Reuben. Families Under Stress. New York: Harper, 1949.
- Hill, Reuben. "Generic Features of Families Under Stress." in Crisis Intervention: Selected Readings, H. Parad, ed. New York: Family Service Association of America, 1965.
- Hobbs, Daniel. "Parenthood As Crisis: A Third Study." Journal of Marriage and Family, 27 (August, 1965), 367-372.
- Holmes, Thomas and R. Rahe. "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale." Journal Psychosomatic Research, 11 (June, 1967), 212-218.
- Hunt, J. McVicker. Intelligence and Experience. New York: Ronald Press, 1961.
- Jacoby, Arthur P. "Transition to Parenthood." Journal of Marriage and Family, 31 (November, 1969), 720-27.
- Kenniston, Kenneth. "Do Americans Really Like Children?" Childhood Education, 52 (October, 1975), 6-12.
- Kogan, Kate L. and Betty N. Gordan, and Herbert Wimberger. "Teaching Mothers to Alter Interactions with Their Children: Implications for Those Who Work with Children and Parents." Childhood Education, 49 (1972).
- Kohn, Melvin H. "Social Class and Parent-Child Relationships: An Interpretation." in Readings in the Psychology of Parent-Child Relations, Gene Medinnus, ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967.
- LeBarre, Weston. "Wanted: A Pattern for Modern Man." Reprinted from Mental Hygiene, April, 1949, by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. As cited in Katherine H. Read, The Nursery School, 6th ed. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1976.

- Leeper, Sarah H., Ruth J. Dales, Doris S. Skipper, Ralph L. Witherspoon. Good Schools for Young Children, 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1974.
- LeFrancois, Guy R. Of Children--An Introduction to Child Development. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973.
- LeMasters, E. E. "Parenthood as Crisis." Marriage and Family Living, 19 (November, 1957), 352.
- LeMasters, E. E. Parents in Modern America: A Sociological Analysis. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1970.
- Levenstein, Phyllis. "Learning Through and From Mothers." Childhood Education, 48 (December, 1971).
- McClure, William P. and Audra May Pence. Early Childhood and Basic Elementary and Secondary Education: Needs, Programs, Demands, Costs. National Educational Finance Project, Special Study No. 1, Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign, 1970.
- McDearmid, Norma J., Mari A. Peterson, and James Sutherland. Loving and Learning. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.
- McWilliams, Margaret. Nutrition for the Growing Years, 2nd. ed. New York: John W. Tex and Sons, 1975.
- Mann, David, Luther E. Woodward, and Nathan Joseph. Educating Expectant Parents. New York: Visiting Nurse Service, 1961.
- Margolin, Edythe. Sociocultural Elements in Early Childhood Education. New York: Macmillan, 1974.
- Mead, Margaret. "Changing World of Living." Science Digest, 62 (September, 1967), 38-42.
- Minturn, Leigh and William Lambert. Mothers of Six Cultures: Antecedents of Childrearing. New York: John Wiley, 1964.
- Montgomery, James. "The Young, The Old, and the American Character." An address presented at the annual meeting of the North Carolina Home Economics Association, Wilmington, North Carolina, November 2, 1974.
- Mussen, Paul Henry, John J. Conger, and Jerome Kagan. Child Development and Personality. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.
- Neuhaus, Robert and Ruby Neuhaus. Family Crises. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1974.
- Parad, Howard J. Crisis Intervention: Selected Readings, Howard Parad, ed. New York: Family Service Association of America, 1965.



- Parad, Howard and Gerald Caplan. "A Framework for Studying Families in Crisis." in Crisis Intervention: Selected Readings, Howard Parad, ed. New York: Family Service Association of America, 1965.
- Parsons, Talcott. "The Normal American Family." in S. M. Farber, P. Mustacchi and R. H. L. Wilson (eds.) Man and Civilization: The Family's Search for Survival. New York: McGraw-Hill, quoted in Skolnick, Arlene. The Intimate Environment. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- Piaget, Jean. The Origins of Intelligence in Children. New York: W. W. Norton, 1965.
- Profiles of Children. White House Conference on Children, 1970. Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970.
- Rabkin, Judith, and Elmer Streumin. "Stress and Social Change." Science Digest (April, 1975), p. 20.
- Rapoport, Lydia. "The State of Crisis: Some Theoretical Considerations." in Crisis Intervention: Selected Readings, H. J. Parad, ed. New York: Family Service Association of America, 1965.
- Report to the President. White House Conference on Children, 1970. Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970.
- Roby, Pamela. "Parenting Perspectives From Other Nations." in Parenting, Patricia Markun, ed. Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1972.
- Rockover, Isabelle. "Tensions--His and Hers." McCalls (November, 1964), 92.
- Rollin, Betty. "Motherhood: Who Needs It?" in Family in Transition, Arlene and Jerome Skolnick (eds.). Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971.
- Rollins, Boyd C. and Kenneth L. Cannon. "Marital Satisfaction over the Family Life Cycle." Journal of Marriage and Family, 36 (May, 1974), 281.
- Rossi, Alice S. "Transition to Parenthood." Journal of Marriage and Family, 30 (February, 1968), 26-39.
- Russell, Candyce Smith. "Transition to Parenthood: Problems and Gratifications." Journal of Marriage and Family, 36 (May, 1974), 294-303.
- Ryder, Norman. "The Family in Developed Countries." Scientific American, 231 (September, 1974), 122-131.

- Salk, Lee. What Every Child Would Like His Parents to Know. New York: David McKay Company, 1974.
- Satir, Virginia. Peoplemaking. Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972.
- Schaefer, Earl S. "Learning From Each Other." Childhood Education (October, 1971), 3-7.
- Schienfield, D. R. "Parents' Values, Family Networks, and Family Development," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 40:3 (1970), 413-425.
- Schreiber, Flora R. and Melvin Herman. "What Stress Does." Science Digest, 59: 18-20.
- Schrum, David. Baby Care and Family Love. Norwalk, Conn.: C. R. Gibson Company, 1970.
- Schaffer, H. R. and P. E. Emerson. "The Development of Social Attachments in Infancy." Monography of the Society for Research in Child Development, 29 (Serial No. 94), 1964, pp. 67-68.
- Scott, John Paul. "Critical Periods of Social Development." In Readings in Child Development and Relationships, Russell and Mollie Smart (eds.). New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Sears, Robert R., Eleanor E. Maccoby and Harry Levin. Patterns of Child Rearing. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957.
- Skolnick, Arlene. The Intimate Environment: Exploring Marriage and the Family. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- Skolnick, Arlene S. and Jerome H. Skolnick (eds.). Family in Transition. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971.
- Stevenson, George S. "Ten Tips to Reduce Teacher Tension." Today's Education (March/April, 1975), 52-53.
- Stolz, Lois Meek. Influences on Parent Behavior. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1967.
- Thomas, Alexander, Stella Chess and Herbert G. Birch. "The Origin of Personality." Scientific American, 223 (2), 102-109.
- Thompson, Hugh O. "Why Are Half of Us So Tired?" Newsweek, 57 (June 2, 1961), 63-65.
- Tulkin, Steven R. and Jerome Kagan. "Mother-Child Interaction in the First Year of Life." In Influences on Human Development, Urie Bronfenbrenner, ed. Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press, Inc., 1972, 319.

- Walker, Kathryn E. "Household Work Time: Its Implication for Family Decisions." Journal of Home Economics (October, 1973), 7.
- Wallston, Barbara. "The Effects of Maternal Employment on Children." Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. Great Britain: Pergamon Press, 14 (1973), 81-95.
- Walters, James and Nick Stinnett. "Parent-Child Relationships: A Decade Review of Research." Journal of Marriage and Family, 33 (February, 1971), 70-111.
- Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged. Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Company, 1966.
- Weikart, David. "Learning Through Parents: Lessons for Teachers." Childhood Education, 48 (December, 1971).
- Weinberger, Betty, Carolyn Haas, Elizabeth Heller, and Ann Cole. "Teaching Parents to Reach/Teach Others" in Parenting, Patricia Markum, ed. Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1972, 65.
- White, Burton L. and Jean C. Watts. Experience and Environment, Vol. 1. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973.
- White, Burton L. "Experience and Environment: Discussion and Conclusions." in Growing With Children, by Joseph and Laurie Braga (eds). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974.
- Women's Bureau Pamphlet, No. 16, 1973. Employment Standards Administration. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Labor, 1973, 1-2.
- Yarrow, Marian Radke. "Maternal Employment and Child Rearing." Children, 8, 223-228.
- Zigler, Edward. "The Environmental Mystique." Childhood Education, 46 (1970), 1.
- Zigler, Edward. "Contemporary Concerns in Early Childhood Education." Young Children, 26 (January, 1971).

APPENDIX



- \_\_\_\_\_ Read Articles, Books, Pamphlets
- \_\_\_\_\_ Experience in helping rear other children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talked to other parents about child rearing
- \_\_\_\_\_ The example of my mother and father and a really good home
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. AFTER you became a parent, did you seek out and obtain information or advice that made a difference in how you cared for your child/children?

Identify the most important or helpful sources of information for caring for your child by placing an X in the column or columns for the ages you received information from that person, place or material.

	Birth to 2 Mos.	2 Mos. to 10 Mos.	10 Mos. to 18 Mos.	18 Mos. to 3 Yrs.
<u>Doctor or Pediatrician</u>				
<u>Books, Magazines, Pamphlets</u>				
<u>Adult or Baby Care Classes</u>				
<u>Parents, Other Relatives</u>				
<u>Neighbors, Friends</u>				
<u>Other (Specify)</u>				

11. Some parents have very few people available to help them or relieve them from the constant needs of caring for young children.

Put a check in the column for the age that you received help, relief, or assistance in caring for your child from any of the following persons or places:

Check only the sources that were of significant help.

	Birth to 2 Mos.	2 Mos. to 10 Mos.	10 Mos. to 18 Mos.	18 Mos. to 3 Yrs.
The other parent (husband or wife)				
A grandparent of the children				
An older brother/sister of the children				
Other relatives				
Neighbor or close friend				
Hired baby sitter				
Day Care or Nursery				
Other (specify)				

The remaining questions concern your feelings, concerns and experiences as a parent in caring for and dealing with your children who are now 5 years of age or under. If you have more than one child please mark answers appropriate for each child. You may have had different experiences with each.

Answer the questions as honestly as you can. This is not a test, so do not be concerned with what you think a person should do or feel but only with what you actually felt as a parent.

## 12. STRESSFUL CHANGES OR FEELINGS EXPERIENCED BY PARENTS

The many needs and demands of young children cause many parents to feel stress or anxiety at certain periods.

Indicate any change or feelings that were strong enough to really bother you by placing an X in the state or stages where you experienced those feelings.

	Birth to 2 Mos.	2 Mos. to 10 Mos.	10 Mos. to 18 Mos.	18 Mos. to 3 Yrs.
Tired, Worn-out				
Sleep interrupted or loss of sleep				
Upset routines, plans				
Worry about appearance, figure				
Edgy, nervous, upset				
Unsure of self, inadequate				
Tied down at home				
Unable to keep up with housework				
In-laws interferring				
Cut-off from other people				
Constantly being needed				
Husband-wife disagreements or differences				
Too many responsibilities				
Money worries or adjustments				
Other (specify)				



CHILD CARE AND BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

There are many new experiences and problems to deal with as a baby grows. Place an X by any major problem area by marking in the column of the ages where it was a problem.

For Example: Under Feeding concerns, you may have a check in the Newborn column because of problems with formula, and in the Early Toddler column because of difficulty getting the child to eat table foods instead of the bottle. You might then underline Formulas, and too little foods.

Check only concerns that caused you to feel worried or anxious as a parent.

	Birth to 2 Mos.	2 Mos. to 10 Mos.	10 Mos. to 18 Mos.	18 Mos. to 3 Yrs.
<b>FEEDING CONCERNS</b>				
(Underline the specific problems, if any)				
Breast feeding, Formulas, First Solid Foods, Weaning, Food dislikes, Messiness, Too little food, too much food, other _____				
<b>SLEEP CONCERNS</b>				
(Underline the specific problems, if any)				
Not sleeping nights, Naptime problems, Getting in bed with parents, Not wanting to go to bed, Bad dreams, other _____				
<b>ILLNESS, HEALTH CONCERNS</b>				
(Underline the specific problems, if any)				
Prematurity, Colic, Allergies, Teething, Shots, Other _____				

Birth      2 Mos.      10 Mos.      18 Mos.  
 to            to            to            to  
 2 Mos.      10 Mos.      18 Mos.      3 Yrs.

PHYSICAL CARE CONCERNS				
------------------------	--	--	--	--

(Underline the specific problems, if any)  
 Bathing, Play, Keeping up with, Safety Care, Potty Training, Wetting or Messing Pants,  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS				
-------------------	--	--	--	--

(Underline the specific problems, if any)  
 Crying, Cling or hanging on, Wanting mother, Ramsacking, Messiness, Fearful, Thumb-sucking, Stubbornness, Not minding, Temper Tantrums, Saying No, Jealous,  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

At what age were your children the most pleasure and satisfaction for you as a parent?

Put an X in the column that best describes the pleasure you experienced at each age.

	A Great Deal	Some	Very Little	None
<u>Birth to 2 months</u>				
<u>About 2 months to about 10 months</u>				
<u>About 10 months to about 18 months</u>				
<u>About 18 months to about 3 years</u>				

At what age did your child present the most problems or worries for you as a parent?

Put an X in the column that best describes the amount of trouble experienced at each age.

	A Great Deal	Some	Very Little	Some
<u>Birth to 2 months</u>				
<u>About 2 months to about 10 months</u>				
<u>About 10 months to about 18 months</u>				
<u>About 18 months to about 3 years</u>				

Children may vary a great deal in how easy or difficult they are to care for or handle. This refers to all the children you have had-- not just the ones under 5 years.

Rate each of your children as to how easy or difficult he or she was to care for during the first three years by placing an X for each child in the proper column.

Total number of children \_\_\_\_\_

	A Great Many Difficulties	Some Difficulties	Almost No Difficulties	No Difficulties
<u>First Child</u>				
<u>Second Child</u>				
<u>Third Child</u>				
<u>Fourth Child</u>				
<u>Fifth Child</u>				
<u>Sixth Child</u>				
<u>Seventh Child</u>				
<u>Eighth Child</u>				
<u>Ninth Child</u>				

May 18, 1976

Dear Head Start Parent:

I am a teacher of Head Start Teachers in Early Childhood Courses at Carl Albert Junior College, and am involved in research related to Parent Education at Oklahoma State University.

The early years of a child's life have been found to be very important to the total health and development of a person. Because of the great number of new experiences and challenges involved in rearing children, these years may be very difficult and stressful ones for parents.

The enclosed study of the first three years of a child's life is attempting to determine at what stage you as parents experienced the greatest number of problems and worries in caring for your children. The information you report may be used to help plan courses, workshops, or materials that will help parents to do a better job with fewer problems.

The parent who is most involved in caring for your children should fill in the information needed. Specific directions are given as to how to fill out each part. The questionnaire should be returned by May 30. It would be helpful if you would answer it today and return it in the self-addressed envelope tomorrow.

Your cooperation in this project is greatly appreciated. Your name is not required and all information will be treated confidentially. Thank you so much for your time in this effort.

Sincerely,

Betty Holland  
Early Childhood Care Instructor  
Carl Albert Junior College

VITA *2*

Betty Ruth Holland

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

**Thesis:** AN INVESTIGATION OF CHILDREARING PROBLEMS AND STRESSES AT SPECIFIC STAGES IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF LIFE

**Major Field:** Home Economics Education

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Pocasset, Oklahoma, July 31, 1931, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew G. Jackson. Married in 1955 to John F. Holland. Mother of two sons, two daughters.

**Education:** Graduated from Pocasset High School in May, 1948; received Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Home Economics, 1952, from University of Science and Arts, Chickasha, Oklahoma; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree in May, 1977, at Oklahoma State University.

**Professional Experience:** Vocational Home Economics teacher, eight years; Director-Counselor, 6-County Neighborhood Youth Corps Program, four years; college instructor in Home Economics, three years; college instructor, Early Childhood Care, three years.

**Professional Organizations:** Oklahoma Association on Children Under Six, Southern Association on Children Under Six, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Oklahoma Education Association, National Education Association, Child Development Associate Policy Council.