

EDUCATION FOR PARENTHOOD: TOPICS PREFERRED

BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem

The parent-child relationship is of great significance in the lives of both parent and child, but particularly in the life of the child. The educational system of the United States has only lately begun to recognize and act upon its obligation to prepare today's young people for their lives as parents (Marland, 1973).

"Parenting has to do with the full range of activities and concerns and all of the knowledge and skills that being a parent entails and that many young Americans know very little about" (Marland, 1973, pg. 3). As Marland (1973) reports, he has been deeply saddened by the serious physical and mental consequences visited on children whose misfortune it was to be born to parents who lacked even a rudimentary understanding of the emotional, nutritional, and early learning needs of the young. This condition is by no means limited to the economically disadvantaged.

According to Kruger (1973), in 1968, approximately one of every ten 17-year-old girls in the United States was a mother. For nearly 14 percent of the estimated 210,000 school-age girls under the age of 18 who gave birth in 1971, the baby born that year was not their first. Recent statistics suggest that six out of ten of these mothers were married by the time their child was born, and that, married or not,

the majority of all school-aged mothers kept their child. School-age parenthood then, involves the formation of young families under "high-risk" conditions that often result from or include inadequate understanding of and preparation for parenthood responsibilities. One consequence is the national divorce rate for those who married in their teens, which is three to four times higher than that of any other age group (Kruger, 1973). Another consequence of serious concern is the impact this "high-risk" family situation will have on the children.

In response to the recognition of the need to instruct teenagers in the techniques and responsibilities of motherhood and fatherhood, the Office of Child Development and the Office of Education have established a joint Education for Parenthood program. The Office of Child Development awarded a grant to the Education Development Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, to prepare a comprehensive one-year curriculum on child development for boys and girls in grades 7 to 12. This course called "Exploring Childhood" combines classroom instruction and practical experience working with young children. It was tested in 200 public schools in 44 states during the 1973-74 school year (Rosoff, 1973). In addition, the Office of Education and the Office of Child Development have made a survey of other parenthood education curricula and materials now being used by schools and will publish two reports describing these programs, to help public and private schools plan parenthood education courses.

Education for parenthood seems to be of wide, current interest. In the January, 1975, issue of "Forecast for Home Economics," an overview of the new federal priority program, Education for Parenthood, and an interview with W. Stanley Kruger, Special Projects Director of



the Office of Education, was presented. The editors of "Forecast for Home Economics" invited reader comments on issues presented in this article. Some statements which summarize responses received were presented in the March, 1975, issue.

In the February, 1974, Journal of Home Economics, Lorraine H. Westerberg describes a home economics child development program in which a child development laboratory has proved to be successful in a Maryland high school. Ferguson (1974) describes in the March, 1974, Journal of Home Economics, a child development program implemented in a junior high school in Missouri.

Knowledge of students' opinions is very important in making a course relevant and one which will attract, involve, and benefit the students. As Cohen (1973, p. 28) says:

To provide education for young men and women that will make a difference in the way they lead their lives, we must respect what is really on their minds now, and not intrude what others--with the perspective of the adult generation--believe they ought to be thinking and planning.

It is the purpose of this study to determine topics related to parenthood in the order of importance which high school family living students (junior and senior boys and girls) feel are of greatest need to them.

#### Purpose of Study

The general purpose of this study is to identify the order of importance of selected topics related to education for parenthood as reported by high school family living students and to determine the order of importance of the same selected topics as reported by home economics teachers.

The specific purposes of this study will be to:

1. Develop a list of eight topics related to parenthood education and to develop an instrument for measuring the rank order of these selected topics.
2. Examine the hypotheses that ordering of importance of selected topics is independent of:
  - (a) Position (teacher - student) of respondent
  - (b) Sex of respondent
  - (c) Age of respondent
  - (d) Size of family living program
  - (e) Marital status of respondent
  - (f) Number of children of respondent
3. Identify the order of ranking of the selected topics by the total group.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Concern for school-age pregnant girls has evolved into a movement for social change. Nelson (1973) points out that in the 1960's the focus of concern was on the unmarried adolescent mother. As more information on needs was gathered, the concern widened to include programs for married as well as unmarried adolescents and their infants. This in turn led to the expanded interest which today takes in the young father, the extended family, and the whole complex network of relationships involved in adolescent parenting.

Through funds granted by the Office of Child Development, the Consortium on Early Childbearing and Childrearing conducted an extensive literature search to pull together the most recent and relevant research in the areas of infant development, infant education and intervention, day care, child-rearing practices, and adolescent parenting. The literature search revealed very little about adolescent parenting practices. Charles Gershenson, former director of the division of research and evaluation in the Children's Bureau, acknowledged the lack of research literature available on adolescent parenting and noted that the knowledge and experience of program people are far ahead of research efforts (Nelson, 1973). The research literature concerning topics on education for parenthood is quite limited. After a search, only a few partially related studies and articles were found.

Schwartz (1969) in a study of unmarried adolescent fathers found only two of eleven fathers to exhibit a relatively mature sense of responsibility toward the child. The 11 illustrative case histories of adolescents from working class background appear to support the conclusion that their sexual delinquency is only one manifestation of an essentially delinquent or maladaptive orientation stemming from psychic damage inflicted within the family circle from earliest childhood on.

Research by Schaefer (1970) showing relationship of parent behavior and family environment to the child's development indicates the need for programs to influence patterns of parental behavior. Schaefer states that family-centered programs designed to increase the adequacy of family education throughout the period of child development are desirable.

A study of family life education was carried out by Crosby (1971) to determine if attitudes held by adolescents, especially toward themselves and toward their families, could be changed in a positive direction as a result of participation in a one semester course in family life education. The results of the study suggest that an adolescent's feelings about himself can be improved, thus contributing to increased self-acceptance and a more positive self-image. While the statistical data did not support the hypothesis regarding a positive change in the adolescent's attitude toward his family, the questionnaire pointed to increasing degrees of familial acceptance and understanding.

Breiner (1972) proposes that sex education defined as information about the family unit, the sexes, and the development of organisms

should be included in the whole educational process, from the age of five through high school. If this were done, much anxiety and misunderstanding in later adult life could be avoided.

DeLissovoy (1973) studied child-rearing attitudes and practices of mothers and fathers who married while still in high school and found that the young parents were not familiar with developmental norms. Parents' conceptions of child development often govern their reactions to their child. Consequently, their lack of knowledge contributed to their impatience with their children and to their sometimes cruel treatment of them.

In response to the general question, "What do young people need to know to enable them to become effective parents?", the Office of Education and the Office of Child Development's analysis of exemplary programs indicates that the following 14 topics are important:

- (1) Biological factors of human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment
- (2) Pregnancy and childbirth and prenatal and post-natal care for mothers, including the influences of maternal nutrition
- (3) Prenatal development of the child
- (4) Infant care, emphasizing nutrition, health, protection and safety of children
- (5) Child growth and development (physical; perceptual and cognitive; and personal and social development)
- (6) Individual differences in children
- (7) The handicapped child, including such topics as prevention of handicaps and working with handicapped children
- (8) Creative activities for children, including study of play, developmental toys, art, music and dance
- (9) Family structure and functions, including the influence of family environment on child behavior
- (10) Parental roles and responsibilities
- (11) Family planning and population growth
- (12) Community resources to aid in parenting
- (13) Child care arrangements
- (14) Skills required for effective work with children, including learning by observation and counseling and tutoring the young child (Kruger, 1973, p. 6, 7).

Not all programs give attention to each of these topics, of course,

nor is each topic given equal emphasis when included in a given curriculum.

The Office of Education has taken many of the operations of the schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, as a basic pattern since these schools have been pioneering in the parenthood education concept for a number of years. Stapleton (1973) reports students' comments about the course at high schools in Maryland: A runner on the track team at Rockville High School says his experience in child development class has taught him to tolerate his little sister. He states: "In fact, I understand everyone better, including myself. If you think about it, most people are like kids. Kids are easier to understand because they're not as inhibited" (p. 2).

At Gaithersburg High School, a football player agrees: "Children accept each other for what they are. They're open to everyone in the group. It's the most satisfying course I've ever taken. Somehow the kids have given me a father role in the class. That's a big responsibility to live up to!" (Stapleton, 1973, p. 2).

Ambrosino (1973) did a follow-up study on differences that a child care program in a Massachusetts high school has made in the lives of former students. She interviewed several former students and found that the young mothers felt that the course gave them a background for dealing with their own children more objectively. Several respondents mentioned increased self-awareness as a value of the course. In general, most of the respondents considered the course of lasting value to them.

Cohen (1973) stresses that the last role that most adolescents consciously wish to assume, and one that is among the least develop-

mentally suitable for them, is the parental role. Adolescents who are not parents do not need a program that implicitly or explicitly only prepares them for a role they may not choose. They do need educational opportunities that help them with their feelings, concerns, and impulses that dominate their lives at the moment. Cohen feels that the value of education for parenthood for teenagers lies mainly in the fact that it can meet one of the adolescent's current developmental needs: to understand and to be of help to others. Young men and women who work with young children will learn much that is relevant to their own lives. The concepts of psychology, sociology, group dynamics, and child development that they will naturally acquire through work and study in quality preschool programs will provide them with a way of understanding their own impulses and feelings.

Stogner (1973) describes a research project aimed at evaluating the effects of introducing young men of high school age into preschool day care. It was found that both the children and the high school boys benefit. Research data indicated that most of the male teachers became more masculine, more internally controlled, and more independent as a result of their teaching experience. The children who had male teachers moved slightly closer to the appropriate sexual preferences.

The following is a sample of the parenting programs in Oklahoma in which the State and County Health Departments have participated in planning and/or implementing. The project "Education for Parenting and Child Development: A Training Program for Developing Teacher Competencies" was the cooperative venture of three state agencies: The School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma, The Guidance Center Division of the Oklahoma State Department of Health, and the

Home Economics Division of the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education. The project began June 1, 1973, and was completed June 30, 1974. Twenty-four vocational home economics teachers from various geographic areas of the state participated in this two-phase training program consisting of an intensive four week training session at the Institute of Child Development, University of Oklahoma, followed by a field training experience that included the implementation of a parent education program in each trainee's community. Project results reflect increased curriculum emphasis in the areas of child development and parent education in both the high school classes and adult education programs of project participants and increased competency and confidence in implementation of these. Evaluation data indicate a need for additional training for all home economics teachers in the areas of child development and parent education (Depersio, 1975).

As Cohen (1973) points out, most people do become parents. When they do, a high school course about parenthood may prove its value. As a result of the course, young parents may be sensitive to the central importance of parents in a child's life, to individual differences among children, and to the broad range of nutritional, medical, and psychological conditions that must be satisfied for a child to develop to his full potential. They will know that there are places to turn for personal help, that there are clinics and other local resources for prenatal and infant care, and that there are agencies, such as the Office of Child Development that offer publications. They will also have learned, hopefully, to look for such guidance early during pregnancy, or even before.



### Summary

In summary the review of literature indicates:

- 1) A small percentage of unmarried adolescent fathers exhibited a relatively mature sense of responsibility toward the child.
- 2) There is a need for programs to influence patterns of parental behavior.
- 3) An adolescent's feelings about himself can be improved as a result of family life education.
- 4) Young parents are not familiar with norms in child development.
- 5) Fourteen topics in education for parenthood are important.
- 6) Former students felt that a child care course gave them background for dealing with their own children more objectively.
- 7) Education for parenthood can meet some of the adolescent's current developmental needs--to help them understand their own impulses and feelings.
- 8) When young men of high school age are introduced into pre-schools, both children and high school boys benefit.
- 9) There is increased curriculum interest in the areas of child development and parent education.
- 10) There is a need for additional training for home economics teachers in the areas of child development and parent education.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This study was conducted during the spring semester, 1975. The 332 students who served as subjects were enrolled in high school home economics family living classes in Oklahoma. A family living class is defined as being composed of junior and senior boys and girls and usually emphasizes the study of human relationships as a part of the year's curriculum.

A list of high schools in Oklahoma which had family living classes was obtained from the Oklahoma State Supervisor of Home Economics Education. This list provided the address of the school, the name of the teacher, and the number of boys and girls in each class. The schools were grouped into four geographical districts: northwest, west, southwest, and southeast.

#### Selection of Subjects

There was a total of 75 schools listed in the four Oklahoma districts provided by the Oklahoma State Supervisor of Home Economics Education. Letters explaining the study and a sample questionnaire were mailed to the 75 teachers. A post card which requested a response as to whether or not the teacher desired to participate in the study was enclosed with each letter. The subjects were selected from the

classes of those who returned the post card stating that they wished to participate in the study. Thirty-five teachers stated that they would participate in the study. The 35 schools were divided into two categories: small family living programs - those having fewer than 50 students in family living classes, and large family living programs - those having 50 or more students in family living classes in the school.

From the "small program" category, three schools which had approximately equal numbers of boys and girls were selected from each of the larger districts (northwest and southwest). Likewise, two schools were selected from the smaller districts (west and southeast). Three schools from the "large program" category which had approximately equal numbers of boys and girls were selected from three different districts (southeast, southwest, and northwest).

#### Description of Subjects

The subjects for this study were 332 junior and senior boys and girls enrolled in home economics family living classes in 13 Oklahoma high schools during the spring of 1975 and 13 teachers of the classes. The variables considered in this study were: position (student or teacher), sex, age, size of program, marital status, and number of children. Tables I, II, and III present descriptions of the subjects in relation to these variables. Table I presents a description of the subjects by age and sex. The age range for the students was 16 to 19 with 204 students being 16 or 17 years of age. There were 189 female and 143 male students, and the 13 teachers were female. In Table II a description of the subjects according to size of family living program and sex may be found. There were 161 subjects who came from schools

which had more than 50 family living students, 80 males and 81 females. In the schools which had fewer than 50 family living students, responses were obtained from 171 subjects, 63 males and 108 females.

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS BY AGE AND SEX

	Age		Teacher (N=13)	Total
	Students (N=332)			
	16-17	18 and over		
Sex				
Male	78	65	0	143
Female	126	63	13	202
Total	204	128	13	345

TABLE II  
DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS BY SIZE OF PROGRAM AND SEX

		Size of Program		
		Large	Small	
Students	Male	80	63	143
	Female	81	108	189
Teachers	(F)	3	10	13

Table III presents a description of the subjects by marital status and whether or not the subject has children. Of the 13 teachers eight were married and six had children. Among the students, ten reported being married and eight reported having children, including six of the eight having children who listed themselves as single.

TABLE III  
DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS BY MARITAL STATUS AND CHILDREN

	<u>Has child or children</u>		<u>No child or children</u>	
	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher
Married	2	5	8	3
Not married	6	1	316	4
Total	8	6	324	7

#### Development of Instrument and Collection of Data

An instrument was developed by the investigator for obtaining reactions of the subjects to selected topics related to education for parenthood. The instrument is entitled The Education for Parenthood Inventory (EPI). The first section of the instrument (EPI) is designed to obtain the following background information: (a) position - student or teacher, (b) sex, (c) age, (d) estimated size of residential area, (e) marital status, (f) number of children, and (g) socio-economic status. The second section of the EPI is a paired comparisons

questionnaire based on the topics identified as important in education for parenthood by a federal project analyzing exemplary programs (Kruger, 1973). This instrument is a forced-choice questionnaire in which eight topics are presented in pairs--each topic being paired with each other topic. The respondent must indicate a preference from each pair.

An analysis of exemplary secondary school programs by the U.S. Office of Education and the U.S. Office of Child Development (Kruger, 1973) indicated that 14 topics were important in the development of curricula for education for parenthood. It was felt that limiting the number of items was crucial if high school students were to cooperate in responding. An arbitrary decision was made to use eight of the topics which had been identified by the federal project. In order to narrow the list of 14 topics to eight topics to be used in the instrument, the list of 14 topics was presented to 16 family life educators who were asked to indicate the eight which they felt would be most important for high school boys and girls in a family living course in which a goal for the course is educating the students for parenthood. Each of the family life educators is employed by Oklahoma State University and has worked in the area of home economics education or family relations and child development. The eight topics which received the greatest number of selections were chosen for the instrument. They are:

- (1) Biological factors of human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment
- (2) Pregnancy and childbirth and prenatal and post-natal care for mothers, including the influences of maternal nutrition
- (3) Prenatal development of the child

- (4) Infant care, emphasizing nutrition, health, protection and safety of children
- (5) Child growth and development (physical, intellectual, social, and emotional)
- (6) Family structure and functions, including the influence of family environment on child behavior
- (7) Roles and responsibilities of parents, including guidance and discipline, child nutrition, child health and safety, and development of daily living skills
- (8) Family planning and population growth

A copy of the EPI may be found in Appendix B. The questionnaires and a letter containing instructions were mailed to the home economics teachers who had been selected from those who responded to the initial inquiry. The teachers distributed the questionnaires to their students during a regularly scheduled family living class and then returned them by mail to the investigator.

#### Analysis of Data

Each category on the face sheet of the questionnaire was numbered so that computer cards could be punched from them. Due to inadequacy of responses to the item requesting description of occupation, it was decided to omit this category from the analysis of the responses.

The hypotheses were tested by Kendall's Coefficient of Agreement Test.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The major purpose of this study was to identify the topics which a selected group of high school students in Oklahoma felt would be of most importance in a course focusing on education for parenthood. Teachers and students in 13 schools in Oklahoma responded to the questionnaire. A total of 332 students and 13 teachers served as subjects. The hypotheses in this study were tested by using Kendall's Coefficient of Agreement.

#### Analysis of Responses to Education for Parenthood Inventory

Hypothesis I A. There is no agreement on order of importance of selected topics among the respondents according to position (teacher or student). Analysis of the data suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected at the  $p=.01$  level. Therefore, it is concluded that the teachers and the students do not disagree significantly, or do hold similar views to a significant degree regarding the order of ranking of the importance of the eight topics related to education for parenthood.

Hypothesis I B. There is no agreement on order of importance of selected topics among the respondents according to sex. Analysis of the data suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected at the



$p \ll .001$  level. Therefore, it is concluded that the boys and girls hold similar views since they do not disagree significantly in the order of ranking of the importance of the eight topics.

Hypothesis I C. There is no agreement on order of importance of selected topics among the respondents according to age. Analysis of the data suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected at the  $p < .001$  level. Therefore, it is concluded that the younger students and the older students also hold similar views since they do not differ significantly in the order of ranking of the importance of the eight topics.

Hypothesis I D. There is no agreement on order of importance of selected topics among the respondents according to size of family living program (number of students in the classes). Analysis of the data suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected at the  $p \ll .001$  level. Therefore, it is concluded that the views of the students from the small family living programs are similar to the views of the students from the large family living programs.

Hypothesis I E. There is no agreement on order of importance of selected topics among the respondents according to marital status. Analysis of the data suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected at a level somewhere between .001 and .005 ( $.001 < p < .005$ ). Therefore, it is concluded that the single subjects do not differ significantly from the married subjects concerning the order of ranking of the importance of the eight topics.

Hypothesis I F. There is no agreement on order of importance of selected topics among the respondents according to number of children. Analysis of the data suggests that the null hypothesis cannot be

rejected at the  $p > .10$  level. There were only 14 subjects who had children compared with 331 subjects who did not have children. Therefore, a general conclusion cannot be drawn due to the small number of subjects.

A comparison on residential area was not made. Since a comparison was made of size of family living program, it did not seem necessary to make a residential area comparison.

A third major purpose of this study was to identify the order of ranking of the selected topics by the total group. The responses of all the subjects were grouped together, and the following ranking resulted:

- 1) Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers, including the influences of maternal nutrition
- 2) Roles and responsibilities of parents, including guidance and discipline, child nutrition, child health and safety, and development of daily living skills
- 3) Child growth and development (physical, intellectual, social, emotional, including development of a positive self-image)
- 4) Infant care, emphasizing nutrition, health, protection and safety of children
- 5) Prenatal development (from conception to birth) of the child
- 6) Biological factors of human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment
- 7) Family planning and population growth
- 8) Family structure (constitution or make-up) and functions (purposes), including the influence of family environment on child behavior

In order to determine the strength of agreement among the total group of subjects, the null hypothesis that there is no significant agreement among the total group of subjects as to the rank order of the topics was tested by Kendall's Coefficient of Agreement. The results gave a Chi Square value of 773.37 with 28 degrees of freedom, allowing for the rejection of the null hypothesis,  $p \ll .005$ . Therefore, there was a significant degree of agreement among the total group of subjects concerning the order of ranking of the importance of the eight topics,

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The results suggest that there was statistically significant agreement among the respondents as to order of importance of selected topics in education for parenthood. This implies that for this group of subjects, the values held by students and teachers in this area are similar.

More specifically, in comparing the responses of teachers and students, the null hypothesis of no agreement could be rejected at the  $p=.01$  level. It might be assumed that teachers would have a more mature perspective than would students, and that more variation would be found among the student responses, but this assumption was found to be untrue in this study.

The null hypothesis of no agreement between the responses of boys and girls could be rejected at  $p\ll.001$  level. Many people feel that teenage boys' opinions might differ markedly from those of girls; however, this was not found to be so.

The comparison of responses of younger subjects with older subjects indicates that the null hypothesis of no agreement could be rejected at  $p\ll.001$  level. It is believed that the younger students would be in a state of establishing their set of values and, therefore, would respond differently from the supposedly more mature students whose values are better established. However, this was found not to

be true.

The null hypothesis for no agreement between the responses of subjects from large family living classes (urban areas) and those from small family living classes (rural areas) could be rejected at  $p < .001$  level. Many people believe that persons from a rural area have more traditional points of view, whereas persons from an urban area have more liberal points of view, although the results of this study show there is no difference in preferences between these two groups of subjects. One may question whether rural and urban youth do differ in this particular field or whether the students who attended school in the larger towns still reflected the rural orientation of the population of the state of Oklahoma.

In comparing the responses of single subjects and married subjects, the null hypothesis of no agreement could be rejected at  $.001 < p < .005$  level. It might be assumed that a married person would be thinking more about parenthood and would have a better developed set of values than would a single person. However, the results of this study show there is no difference in preferences between these two groups of subjects.

The null hypothesis of no agreement between the responses of subjects who have children and those who do not have children could not be rejected at the  $p > .10$  level. There were eight students who had children compared with 324 students who did not have children. Therefore, this is not a valid comparison from which conclusions may be drawn.

The significant degree of agreement found between students' and teachers' preferences was not expected. Since the teachers and

students hold such similar views, this set of responses might be useful as a guide to teachers who are developing units of study in a family living program. The instrument might also be used as a tool to determine specific class interests and to help plan teaching and learning experiences.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

As a result of this study, the writer presents the following suggestions for further investigation:

- (1) A larger sample of home economics teachers be used to insure a more valid assessment of the attitudes of teachers.
- (2) A similar study be made in another state in order to determine if there is a typical value pattern for students and teachers related to geographical region.
- (3) The instrument be further refined to improve its usefulness.

#### Summary

The purposes of this study were to explore the differences in values concerning topics in education for parenthood, to develop a list of eight topics in education for parenthood for subjects to rank, and to develop an instrument for measuring the order of importance of selected topics.

The subjects for this study were 332 junior and senior boys and girls enrolled in home economics family living classes in 13 Oklahoma high schools during the spring of 1975 and 13 teachers of the classes. There were 189 female and 143 male students.

The instrument used was a forced-choice questionnaire developed

by the investigator from topics which the U.S. Office of Education and the U.S. Office of Child Development's analysis of exemplary programs indicated were important in the development of curricula for education for parenthood. The instrument is entitled The Education for Parenthood Inventory.

The data were examined to determine if an identifiable order of ranks existed for the total group and if this order was similar for different age groups, sexes, marital statuses, school sizes, number of children, and positions. The hypotheses were tested by Kendall's Co-efficient of Agreement Test.

The findings of this research were as follows:

Evidence was presented to suggest that there was significant agreement among the respondents on order of importance of selected topics in education for parenthood. There was not a significant difference between the rankings for boys and girls, students and teachers, younger students and older students, single persons and married persons, or for small class size and large class size.

The following ranking of the topics by the total group resulted:

- 1) Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers, including the influences of maternal nutrition
- 2) Roles and responsibilities of parents, including guidance and discipline, child nutrition, child health and safety, and development of daily living skills
- 3) Child growth and development (physical, intellectual, social, emotional, including development of a positive self-image)
- 4) Infant care, emphasizing nutrition, health, protection and safety of children

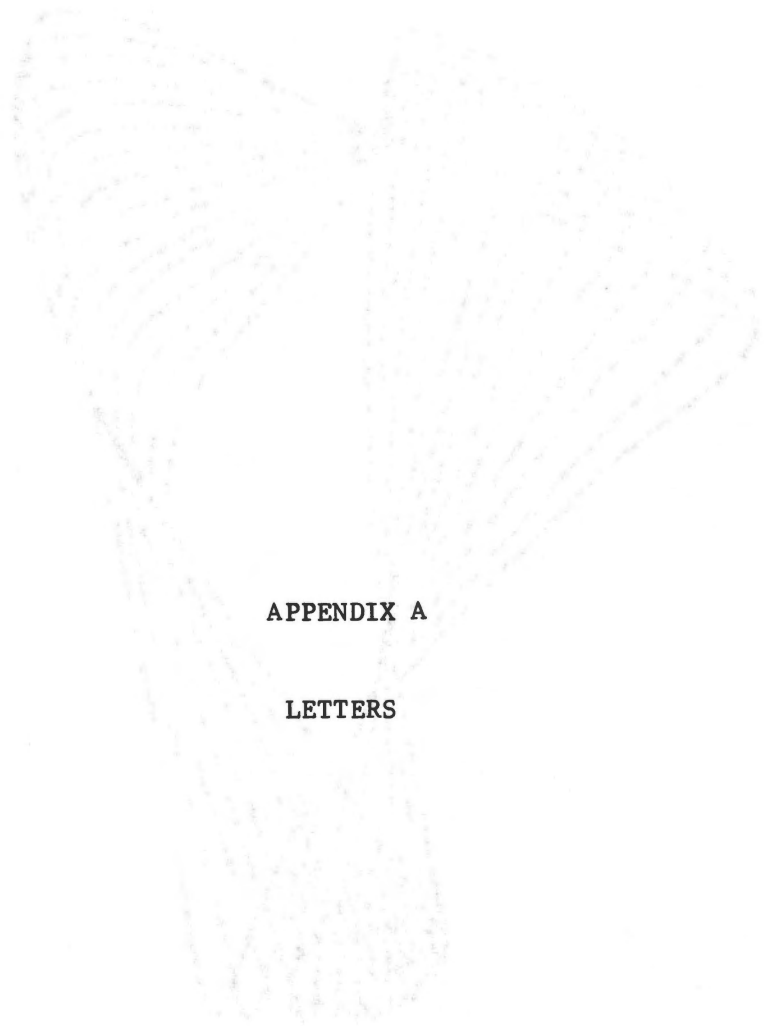
- 5) Prenatal development (from conception to birth) of the child
- 6) Biological factors of human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment
- 7) Family planning and population growth
- 8) Family structure (constitution or make-up) and functions (purposes), including the influence of family environment on child behavior



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**APPENDIX A**

**LETTERS**

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY  
MISSISSIPPI  
COTTON

## LETTER TO FAMILY LIFE EDUCATORS

November 11, 1974

My thesis research project is a study of education for parenthood with high school family living students. The literature has suggested 14 topics which are considered to be important. I wish to narrow the list to eight topics for high school students to indicate preferences. As a family life educator, would you please circle the number of eight of the topics below which you feel would be the most important for high school boys and girls in a family living course in which a goal for the course is educating the students for parenthood.

- (1) Biological factors of human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment
- (2) Pregnancy and childbirth and prenatal and post-natal care for mothers, including the influences of maternal nutrition
- (3) Prenatal development of the child
- (4) Infant care, emphasizing nutrition, health, protection and safety of children
- (5) Child growth and development (physical - motor development, perceptual and cognitive, social and emotional, including development of a positive self-image)
- (6) Individual differences in children
- (7) The handicapped child, including such topics as prevention of handicaps and working with handicapped children
- (8) Creative activities for children, including study of play, developmental toys, art, music and dance
- (9) Family structure and functions, including the influence of family environment on child behavior
- (10) Parental roles and responsibilities, including guidance and discipline, child nutrition, child health and safety, and development of daily living skills
- (11) Family planning and population growth
- (12) Community resources to aid in parenting
- (13) Child care arrangements
- (14) Skills required for effective work with children, including learning by observation and counseling and tutoring the young child

If there are any additional topics on this subject not listed above which you feel would be beneficial, please list them on the back of this sheet.

Please return this sheet to my mailbox in HEW 241 (FRCD Dept.) as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this research.

Sincerely,

Alice Delano

## LETTER EXPLAINING THE RESEARCH TO THE TEACHERS

January 29, 1975

Dear

I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University. For my thesis research project, I am investigating in the area of education for parenthood available to young people in the United States. According to Marland of the U.S. Office of Education, parenting has to do with the full range of activities and concerns and all of the knowledge and skills that being a parent entails. Marland further states that many young Americans know very little about parenting. The educational system of the United States has only lately begun to recognize and act upon its obligation to prepare today's young people for their lives as parents. As Donald J. Cohen, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine and Child Study Center, says: "To provide education for young men and women that will make a difference in the way they lead their lives, we must respect what is really on their minds now, and not intrude what others--with the perspective of the adult generation--believe they ought to be thinking and planning."

I have developed a list of eight topics related to education for parenthood which the U.S. Office of Education and the Office of Child Development's recent analysis of exemplary programs indicates are important. As a part of my research, I wish to find out how some of the students and teachers in Oklahoma feel about these topics. I am interested especially in those who are working in home economics family living courses. In order to obtain the most useful information, I hope to have responses from as many high schools as possible. I would greatly appreciate the help of you and your students in gathering this information.

Enclosed is a sample questionnaire for you to review. Also enclosed is a post card. Please fill it out and mail it back to me by Feb. 10. A random sample of schools will be selected from those who desire to participate in the study. The questionnaires will be mailed.

Sincerely,

Alice Delano

## POST CARD ENCLOSED WITH PRECEDING LETTER

\_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to participate in Delano's  
education for parenthood study and will  
distribute questionnaires to my students.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not desire to participate in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to have results of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of junior and senior family living  
students in my classes.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

If address on envelope is not correct, please  
give correct address below.

## LETTER OF INSTRUCTION

February 19, 1975

Dear

Enclosed are the Education for Parenthood questionnaires for you to distribute to your junior and senior family living students. Please distribute them only in your classes composed of both boys and girls. Before the students begin filling out the questionnaires, please go over the directions on page 1, the eight topics at the top of page 2, and the directions on page 2, and clarify any questions the students have as to meaning of the topics and any questions about the directions. Also, please call their attention to page 4, as I would like very much to have their comments.

Please fill out the questionnaire I sent you in my letter of January 29, and mail it along with your students' questionnaires to me in the enclosed envelope by March 4.

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in this study. Your cooperation in this project is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Alice Delano

APPENDIX B

EDUCATION FOR PARENTHOOD INVENTORY



General Information

This is a research study being conducted by a graduate student in family relations and child development at Oklahoma State University. Your cooperation in this research project is greatly appreciated. You need not sign your name. Please check or fill in answers to all the following questions. Then turn sheet over and read instructions for questionnaire.

1.     Teacher  
        Student
2.    Sex:   Male    Female
3.    Age:
4.    Residential Area:  
        Rural  
        Population less than 2500  
        Population 2500 to 9,999  
        Population 10,000 to 50,000  
        Population over 50,000
5.    Marital status:  
        single  
        Married  
        Divorced  
        Re-married  
        Widowed
6.    Do you have children?  
        Yes     Number of children   
        No
7.    Father's occupation   
       or  
       Husband's occupation

Below are eight topics which may be desirable to study before one has children. Read this list carefully and thoughtfully.

1. Biological factors of human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment
2. Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers, including the influences of maternal nutrition
3. Prenatal development (from conception to birth) of the child
4. Infant care, emphasizing nutrition, health, protection and safety of children
5. Child growth and development (physical, intellectual, social, emotional, including development of a positive self-image)
6. Family structure (constitution or make-up) and functions (purposes), including the influence of family environment on child behavior
7. Roles and responsibilities of parents, including guidance and discipline, child nutrition, child health and safety, and development of daily living skills
8. Family planning and population growth

For this research study, I hope to find out which topics you believe to be most important for young people to learn about before becoming parents. You may want to choose all eight topics, but in order to identify which topics are ranked higher by more people, you are being asked to make choices between each topic and each other topic in the list. You can choose only one at a time. Draw a circle around the number of the topic in each of the following pairs that would be most important to you if you had to make a choice.

Circle one choice from each pair.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2 | Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers         |
| 5 | Child growth and development (physical, intellectual, social, emotional) |
| 4 | Infant care  |
| 8 | Family planning and population growth                                    |
| 1 | Human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment        |
| 6 | Family structure (make-up) and functions (purposes)                      |
| 2 | Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers         |
| 6 | Family structure and functions   |
| 3 | Prenatal development of the child  |
| 7 | Parental roles and responsibilities                                      |
| 5 | Child growth and development   |
| 6 | Family structure and functions   |
| 5 | Child growth and development   |
| 1 | Human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment        |
| 8 | Family planning and population growth                                    |
| 1 | Human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment        |

- 6 Family structure and functions  
8 Family planning and population growth
- 6 Family structure and functions  
7 Parental roles and responsibilities
- 2 Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers  
4 Infant care
- 6 Family structure and functions  
4 Infant care
- 1 Human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment  
7 Parental roles and responsibilities
- 3 Prenatal Development of the child  
4 Infant care
- 5 Child growth and development  
8 Family planning and population growth
- 4 Infant care  
5 Child growth and development
- 2 Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers  
8 Family planning and population growth
- 4 Infant care  
7 Parental roles and responsibilities
- 2 Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers  
7 Parental roles and responsibilities
- 1 Human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment  
3 Prenatal development of the child
- 3 Prenatal development of the child  
8 Family planning and population growth
- 6 Family structure and functions  
3 Prenatal development of the child
- 7 Parental roles and responsibilities  
8 Family planning and population growth
- 3 Prenatal development of the child  
5 Child growth and development
- 1 Human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment  
2 Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers
- 5 Child growth and development  
7 Parental roles and responsibilities

- 2    Pregnancy, childbirth, prenatal, and post-natal care for mothers
- 3    Prenatal development of the child
  
- 1    Human reproduction and the influences of heredity and environment
- 4    Infant care

Please go back and make sure that you have made a choice from each pair.

#### Comments

If there is an additional topic or topics not listed on pages 2 and 3 which you would like to study or if you would like to make other comments, please list them on this sheet.

VITA

Alice Darling Delano

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

**Thesis:** EDUCATION FOR PARENTHOOD: TOPICS PREFERRED BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

**Major Field:** Family Relations and Child Development

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Stillwater, Oklahoma, October 1, 1949, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde R. Delano.

**Education:** Graduated from Guymon High School, Guymon, Oklahoma, in May, 1967. Attended Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Goodwell, Oklahoma, from 1967 to 1972; received a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics from Oklahoma Panhandle State University in 1971; attended Oklahoma State University from 1972 to 1975; completed requirements for a Vocational Home Economics Teaching Certificate 1972-1973; and completed the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Family Relations and Child Development in July, 1975.

**Professional Experience:** Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Family Relations and Child Development, Oklahoma State University, 1974-1975.

**Professional Organizations:** Omicron Nu, American Home Economics Association, Oklahoma Home Economics Association