

INFLUENTIAL BEHAVIOR OF PRE-SCHOOL BOYS  
TOWARD THEIR FATHERS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study was to examine the father-son interaction in a free play situation to determine the nature and extent to which the child is in control.

Wenar and Wenar (1963) and Bell (1968) have pointed out that most studies of the parent-child relationship focus on the influence of the parent upon the behavior of the child, overlooking the influence of the child on parent behavior. Gewirtz (1961), Yarrow and Goodwin (1965), Moss (1965), and Bates (1976), however, support the position that the child is not merely a passive organism molded by parents and environment, but is an active participant in determining the interaction between parent and child. Bowersock (1975), recognizing that children influence parents with reinforcing and punishing behaviors, has even advocated teaching children to be more effective behavior modifiers. The present study was concerned with the power role of the child in a father-son dyad.

An analysis was made of 15 video tapes of the interactions between fathers and their pre-school sons. These tapes showed each father-son dyad in a free play situation. Three judges were trained using a Model tape and the Influential Behavior Checklist (Appendix A). Judges viewed 15 video tapes and evaluated influential child behaviors according to the Checklist. Observed behaviors called Child Initiated included asking, suggesting, demanding, gesturing, touching, and starting a

substitute activity. Influential Child Response behaviors (to the father's initiation) included refusing, substitute request, ignoring, gesturing, and substitute behavior (defined in Appendix B). Instructions to the judges are given in Appendix C.

Specific questions addressed were: 1) will the child attempt to influence the father?; 2) what types of behavior will the child use in these influencing attempts?; and 3) will the child's attempts be successful?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Yarrow (1963) acknowledges the importance of parent-child relations in behavioral and developmental theory, but also recognizes that research in this area is sparse and inconsistent. The existing literature is considered here in three sections: Methodological Issues, Parent-Child Literature, and Father-Son Literature.

#### Methodological Issues

A major methodological problem in parent-child studies is the over-dependence of researchers on the interview technique. In the majority of these studies one person (usually the mother) is asked to supply all information regarding parent-child interactions. Yarrow (1963) commented on the defects of the interview method. For example, she points out that it is not reasonable to assume that all respondents have the outside frame of reference needed to answer questions requiring the rating of their own parental practices. Interview responses represent self-descriptions by biased respondents; furthermore, the parent is often asked to recall feelings and behaviors with an accuracy that is difficult to attain. Finally, respondents are frequently asked to make difficult discriminations (e.g. principles which govern their rearing practices) which they may not have previously formulated.

Moss (1965) echoed Yarrow's call for research utilizing directly



observed behavior. At the same time, Moss considered some of the problems in direct observational studies. He pointed out that one can never be sure that the observed behavior is representative, since it is possibly influenced by the presence of the observer. A second problem with observations is being confronted with too much information to record accurately. One solution to these problems is the use of video tapes. Note-taking and other forms of data collection by observers are decidedly inferior in accuracy to recording by video tape.

Lytton (1971) agreed that the research interview often yielded biased results, but cited the convenience and the relative inexpensiveness of this technique as being in its favor. He concluded, however, that the experimental situation in a laboratory or playroom had two particular advantages over the research interview: 1) that the laboratory allows stimuli to be isolated and manipulated more easily, and 2) that external conditions in the lab can be held relatively constant, thereby permitting easy comparison between groups.

Bell (1964) commented that in the ten year period prior to 1956 only two studies were found giving specific attention to direct observation of parent-child interactions. He reviewed the variations in structure of 14 direct-observation studies from 1951 - 1963, selected as representative of differences in the degree to which the behavior of parent, child, or both are restricted by the arrangements. This restriction is related to classes of behavior which occur and the range of variation within each class. Bell defined the term "class" as the kind of behavior considered relevant to the theory being tested (e.g. dependency, aggression, or achievement). He listed the following classifications of studies: I - Parent restricted to but not within a class;

child restricted to and within a class, II - Parent restricted to and within a class; child restricted to but not within a class, III - Parent restricted to but not within class; child not restricted to or within class, IV - Parent and child restricted to but not within class, and V - Neither parent or child restricted to or within class. By far the most frequently used structure (V) is the one used in the present study, in which the parent and child are left free to interact with minimal instructions.

### Parent-Child Literature

A parent has a great deal of power in all areas of a child's life. Hoffman (1960) has cited the parent's greater physical strength, his or her control over the child's material and emotional needs, and the little external legal restraint imposed on a parent's dealings with a child as evidence of this. Hoffman's feelings are consistent with many other researchers when he states that the parent is a "high power" person. A "high power" person, according to Hoffman, may use techniques to assert power (i.e. apply external pressure) or techniques to attempt to gain "voluntary" behavior change. However, a child, being a "low power" person, is more limited to the latter technique. It is easy to see why most research on parent-child interaction is directed to the question of effects of the parent on the child. As Korner (1965) has commented, in research, the parent-child interaction really means what "a mother does with or to the child" (p.47). Individual differences among children are rarely seen as important in explaining variations in their development.

Bell (1968) has agreed that the long-term helplessness of the

human infant fits with the picture of an organism to be taught and modified by the parent. He goes on to say, however, that this basic model of socialization is too limited to accommodate data emerging from recent human and animal studies, which do not support the concept of the irrelevance of behavior of the young. The parent and the child are a social system, and one would expect that in such a system the response of each participant would be the stimulus for the other (Bell, 1968; 1971). Bell (1968) has developed a child-effect system of explanation which states that

. . .parent behavior is organized hierarchically within repertoires in the areas of social response and control. Reasonable bases exist for assuming that there are congenital contributors to child behaviors which (a) activate these repertoires, (b) affect the level of response within hierarchies, and (c) differentially reinforce parent behavior which has been evoked (p.89).

Other researchers have also begun to study child effects on adults. Yarrow, Waxler, and Scott (1971) hypothesized that a child's attention-seeking from an adult would be potentially significant in shaping the adult's responses. In a nursery school setting, female caretakers were instructed to give equal treatment to all children. However, it was found that both positive and negative adult behaviors varied highly from child to child. This variability was systematically related to characteristics of the child, including dependency, type of interactions with peers, sex of the child, and social reinforcement of the adult.

Two other studies (Osofsky, 1971; Marcus, 1976) produced similar results. Osofsky demonstrated that parental behavior differs across situations in response to a child's role playing of dependent, independent, and stubborn behaviors. Marcus found that children's emotional dependent behavior elicited greater non-directiveness, negative affect,

reward and encourage persistence responses, while instrumental dependent behavior elicited greater directiveness, explains/information giving, and question/helping responses from the adult.

### Father-Son Literature

That there are any studies on parent-child relations at all is primarily due to the emphasis on mothering. Research on fathers is rare, and as Bigner (1970) has pointed out, father-son literature is primarily devoted to the effects of the father-son relationship on masculine development and the effects of father absence on sex role identification. Unfortunately, as Lamb (1976) and Nash (1965) have stated, many of the father-son studies that are done use only information supplied by the mothers and children.

Child care in Western society has been seen as matricentric. Kluckhohn (1949) has described a large section of American women as having little to do but pamper their children, and their husbands as being too wrapped up in the pursuit of their careers to have any say in the children's upbringing.

Gorer (1948) agreed, stating that the father has become vestigial in the American home. Gorer felt that this was particularly unfortunate for the male child who would reach adolescence under almost undiluted female authority.

This view assumes women to have some psychological roots of motherliness, but sees fatherhood as a social obligation. A father who shows nurturance and affection is seen as effeminate, which is a handicap to him in achieving a relationship with his children (Josselyn, 1956).

Nash (1965) felt that it was significant that there had been no

strong protest to this viewpoint. Admittedly, the mother has played a very large role in the child-rearing process. However, attitudes and practices are changing. Given the changing roles due to greater freedom of modern parents, Nash feels it is an appropriate time for reconsideration of the fathers' role in child rearing.

Burlingham (1973) sees the neglect of the father not only as an injustice to his role, but as a distortion of the mother-child relationship. The father is seen by Burlingham as playing a primary role in the infant's progress toward individuation.

In primitive societies it is not unusual for the father to care for small infants and children. The greater equalization of husband-wife roles in this country may revive a biological potential which has been allowed to lie unused through many centuries of civilization (Mead, 1957).

In one of the few studies that has investigated fathers directly, Tasch (1952) found that fathers did not see themselves as secondary to mothers, but rather believed that they were active participants in the daily care of their children. They did not see financial support as their only function, and saw child-rearing as an integral part of their role.

It is not legitimate to expect that mothers have more influence because they spend more time with their children. In a study by Peterson, Becker, Hellmer, Shoemaker, and Quay (1959) of 31 families from the clientele of a guidance clinic, it was found that the attitudes of fathers are at least as related as maternal attitudes to the occurrence and form of behavior problems in children.

In addition, in a review of the current literature on parent-child

relationships, Weinraub (1978) found few clear-cut differences in specific behaviors engaged in by fathers and mothers with their children. During the pre-school years, different parental behaviors may depend on the sex of the child and the nature of the child's behavior. And though he may express his involvement in different ways, the father appears to be as sensitive and concerned with the childrearing process as the mother.

Likewise, Pakizegi (1978) found no significant differences between the interactions of college-educated mothers and fathers with their three year old sons. He also found very few significant differences in the behavior of the sons with the two parents.

The present study was suggested by research done by Sperle (1979). Sperle felt that the area of expression of affection by the father toward the son has been particularly neglected in research, probably due in part to the traditional view that nurturant fathers are effeminate. Sperle found that fathers have very little physical contact with their sons, but do maintain a relatively high level of verbalization with them. In addition, he found no significant relationship between fathers' perceptions of their own fathers' expressed affection and fathers' expressions of affection toward their own sons. While observing the fathers' behavior, it became evident to Sperle that the behavior of the sons elicited certain behaviors from the father. The present study was designed to explore this assumption.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Subjects

The subjects who participated in this study were fifteen fathers, ranging in age from 28 to 41 years, and their three- to six-year-old sons. The fathers were students and faculty at a midwestern university. The subjects participating were a portion of the fathers and sons who had participated in a previous study investigating the expressive-affectionate behavior of fathers in interaction with their sons in a free play setting (Sperle, 1979). Video tapes were re-analyzed for the present study with a focus on child influence. The following procedure is that used by Sperle in the original data collection.

#### Procedure

Father-son pairs were scheduled for video taping in the playroom of the university's Psychological Services Center. Fathers had been contacted earlier, at which time they were told that the experiment was an interactional study of child behavior in the presence of a parent.

The video tape equipment was assembled behind a one-way mirror, with an operator in the room attached to the playroom. The playroom was equipped with a variety of toys and a single chair for the father.

The fathers and sons were escorted to the playroom and directed to

play with whatever they chose. They were told that they would have 20 minutes to play together and a knock on the door would signal two minutes of play-time remaining.

Twenty minutes of behavior were recorded on video tape. At the end of the 20 minutes the father and son were invited to view the video tape and ask questions, after which the experimenter thanked the father and son for their cooperation.

### Equipment

Video tapes were prepared using a Sony Videocorder Model AV-3600. A 20-minute Model video tape was prepared using a father and son who did not participate in the study as subjects. The setting for the Model video tape was the same playroom used in the study.

### Judges

For the present study, three judges in the field of clinical psychology were trained in the observation of father-son interactions using the Influential Behavior Checklist and the 20 minute Model video tape. The Checklist is divided into sections for Child Initiated behavior and Child Responsive behavior. Influencing attempts and successes were recorded under each category. Child Initiated behavior included: VERBAL - asking, suggesting, demanding, and NON-VERBAL - gesturing, touching and starting a substitute activity. Child Responsive behavior included: VERBAL - refusing, substitute request, and NON-VERBAL - ignoring, gesturing and substitute behavior. Those influential behaviors seen which were not included in this list were recorded in the "other" category. An additional sheet of Behavioral Definitions (Appendix B)



was used in acquainting the judges more precisely with the categories of behavior to be observed. The exact instructions to the judges are given in Appendix C.

The judges were trained and tested on the Model tape until a 90% inter-judge agreement was reached. Following this training the judges viewed the 15 observational tapes in random order. The judges evaluated each 20 minute tape to determine interactions in which the child attempted to influence the father's behavior. The judges also determined the success or non-success of these attempts, and the types of behavioral approaches used to influence in each attempt.

#### Data Analysis

Observed data was analyzed by a series of  $t$  tests (Elzey, 1976). These tests were used to assess the differences between the means for the following dimensions:

1. Initiated influence attempts and Responsive influence attempts
2. Initiated influence successes and Responsive influence successes
3. Verbal influence attempts and Non-verbal influence attempts
4. Verbal influence successes and Non-verbal influence successes

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In response to the first question addressed, the results of the data collection show that each child did attempt to influence his father according to the defined criteria. The number of influencing attempts per child ranged from 12.33 - 25.67 (figures averaged for three judges) during the twenty minute session, with the mean number of attempts being 16.13.

The second question involved the types of behaviors used in the influencing attempts. The mean number of Initiated attempts was 9.18, whereas the mean number of Responsive attempts was 6.95. Analysis by  $t$  test showed a significant difference between these means,  $t = 2.28$ ,  $p < .05$ . On the Verbal - Non-verbal dimension the means were: Verbal attempts - 12.09, and Non-verbal attempts - 4.04. The  $t$  test comparing these means was also significant,  $t = 10.59$ ,  $p < .002$ . Table I lists the number of responses for each of these categories.

Question three addressed the success rate of the influencing attempts. Out of a total number of 241.98 attempts to influence the father, 197.32 were judged to be successful, for an overall success rate of 82%. Eighty-eight percent of the Initiated behaviors were successful, as compared with a Responsive success rate of 74%. The  $t$  test used to compare the means for Initiated successes and Responsive successes was significant,  $t = 3.41$ ,  $p < .01$ . Verbal attempts were 81% successful,

TABLE I  
 INITIATED, RESPONSIVE, VERBAL, AND NON-  
 VERBAL INFLUENCING ATTEMPTS  
 FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR THREE JUDGES)

Subject	Initiated Attempts	Responsive Attempts	Verbal Attempts	Non-verbal Attempts
1	12.67	7.33	13.33	6.67
2	9.33	7.00	15.00	1.33
3	6.33	8.00	11.33	3.00
4	8.67	4.66	8.67	4.67
5	6.67	6.67	11.00	2.33
6	9.00	8.33	10.00	7.33
7	8.67	8.33	12.33	4.67
8	11.00	4.00	13.00	2.00
9	9.00	6.66	13.00	2.66
10	9.67	8.00	13.67	4.00
11	6.00	9.66	10.66	5.00
12	9.33	3.00	9.00	3.33
13	9.67	5.33	12.00	3.00
14	10.67	15.00	16.00	9.67
15	11.00	2.33	12.33	1.00
Totals	137.68	104.30	181.32	60.66
Means	9.18	6.95	12.09	4.04

and 82% of the Non-verbal behaviors were successful. The  $t$  test used to compare these means was significant,  $t = 10.05$ ,  $p < .002$ . The number of successful attempts in these categories are listed in Table II. Tables III and IV give a further breakdown of these responses. The  $t$  scores for all dimensions are listed in Table V. Means and standard deviations for all dimensions are listed in Appendix D.

### Inter-judge Ratings

The three judges were trained to a level of 90% inter-judge agreement. Overall, Judges 1 and 2 maintained a 91% - 99% level of agreement for all tapes. However, agreement between Judges 2 and 3 dropped to between 76% - 84% overall for the fifteen tapes and Judges 1 and 3 showed 73% - 78% agreement. This disparity was due to the tendency of Judge 3 to consistently record more attempts and successes in each category than Judges 1 and 2. On the basis of these figures, it was decided to repeat the data analysis, using the data from Judges 1 and 2 only. Tables VI, VII, VIII, and IX list the subjects' responses as recorded by these two judges.

The number of influencing attempts recorded per child ranged from 12 - 24.5, with a mean of 14.77.

The  $t$  test for comparing the means for Initiated attempts and Responsive attempts was non-significant,  $t = 1.29$ ,  $p < .50$ . The  $t$  test comparing the means for Verbal and Non-verbal attempts was significant,  $t = 5.91$ ,  $p < .002$  (Table VI).

A total of 221.5 influencing attempts were recorded, with 181.5 being judged successful, for a success rate of 82%. The only change in rate of success as compared to the previous analysis with three judges

TABLE II  
 INITIATED, RESPONSIVE, VERBAL, AND NON-  
 VERBAL INFLUENCING SUCCESSES  
 FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR THREE JUDGES)

Subject	Initiated Successes	Responsive Successes	Verbal Successes	Non-verbal Successes
1	12.67	5.67	12.67	5.67
2	8.33	3.67	11.33	.67
3	5.00	5.33	8.33	2.00
4	8.00	3.67	7.67	4.00
5	5.33	5.00	8.33	2.00
6	7.33	5.67	8.67	4.33
7	8.00	4.67	10.00	2.67
8	10.33	2.67	11.00	2.00
9	8.33	5.66	11.33	2.66
10	8.67	6.67	12.00	3.33
11	6.00	8.33	9.33	5.00
12	9.33	3.00	9.00	3.33
13	8.00	4.67	10.00	2.67
14	7.33	10.66	9.33	8.67
15	8.00	1.33	8.67	.67
Totals	120.65	76.67	147.66	49.67
Means	8.04	5.11	9.84	3.31

TABLE III  
 INITIATED BEHAVIORS FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR THREE JUDGES)

Subject	Verbal Attempts	Verbal Successes	Non-verbal Attempts	Non-verbal Successes
1	9.67	9.67	3.00	3.00
2	8.67	7.67	.67	.67
3	5.67	4.33	.67	.67
4	6.33	6.00	2.33	2.00
5	6.33	5.00	.33	.33
6	6.67	6.00	2.33	1.33
7	7.00	6.33	1.67	1.67
8	9.67	9.00	1.33	1.33
9	8.67	8.00	.33	.33
10	7.67	7.00	2.00	1.67
11	4.33	4.33	1.67	1.67
12	7.67	7.67	1.67	1.67
13	8.67	7.00	1.00	1.00
14	7.00	4.00	3.67	3.33
15	10.33	7.67	.67	.33
Totals	114.35	99.67	23.34	21.00
Means	7.62	6.64	1.56	1.40

TABLE IV  
 RESPONSIVE BEHAVIORS FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR THREE JUDGES)

Subject	Verbal Attempts	Verbal Successes	Non-verbal Attempts	Non-verbal Successes
1	3.67	3.00	3.67	2.67
2	6.33	3.67	.67	.00
3	5.67	4.00	2.33	1.33
4	2.33	1.67	2.33	2.00
5	4.67	3.33	2.00	1.67
6	3.33	2.67	5.00	3.00
7	5.33	3.67	3.00	1.00
8	3.33	2.00	.60	.67
9	4.33	3.33	2.33	2.33
10	6.00	5.00	2.00	1.67
11	6.33	5.00	3.33	3.33
12	1.33	1.33	1.67	1.67
13	3.33	3.00	2.00	1.67
14	9.00	5.33	6.00	5.33
15	2.00	1.00	.33	.33
Totals	66.98	48.00	37.26	28.67
Means	4.47	3.20	2.48	1.91

TABLE V  
 STANDARD ERROR, VARIANCE, AND t RATIO  
 FOR ALL DIMENSIONS  
 (AVERAGE FOR THREE JUDGES)

Dimensions	Standard Error of the Mean Difference Scores	Population Variance of Dif. Scores	t Ratio	Significance Level
Initiated and Responsive Attempts	.98	14.47	2.28	.05
Initiated and Responsive Successes	.86	11.18	3.41	.01
Verbal and Non-verbal Attempts	.76	8.72	10.59	.002
Verbal and Non-verbal Successes	.65	6.36	10.05	.002

t tests for non-independent means

Degrees of freedom: 14



TABLE VI  
 INITIATED, RESPONSIVE, VERBAL, AND NON-  
 VERBAL INFLUENCING ATTEMPTS  
 FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR TWO JUDGES)

Subject	Initiated Attempts	Responsive Attempts	Verbal Attempts	Non-verbal Attempts
1	10.50	6.00	11.00	5.50
2	8.00	8.50	15.00	1.50
3	5.50	7.00	10.00	2.50
4	7.00	4.50	6.50	5.00
5	5.50	6.50	9.50	2.50
6	7.00	7.50	7.50	7.00
7	8.00	5.00	8.50	4.50
8	10.00	3.00	11.00	2.00
9	10.50	4.00	12.00	2.50
10	11.00	7.00	13.50	4.50
11	5.50	9.50	9.50	5.50
12	11.00	2.50	9.50	4.00
13	8.50	5.50	10.00	4.00
14	9.00	15.50	11.50	13.00
15	10.00	2.50	11.00	1.50
Totals	127.00	94.50	156.00	65.50
Means	8.47	6.30	10.40	4.37

was the Non-verbal success rate, found here to be 85%. The  $t$  test comparing the means for Initiated successes and Responsive successes was significant,  $t = 2.85$ ,  $p < .05$ . A significant difference was also found between the means for Verbal successes and Non-verbal successes,  $t = 5.0$ ,  $p < .002$  (Table VII).

Tables VIII and IX give a further breakdown of these responses recorded by Judges 1 and 2, and Table X lists the  $t$  scores for all dimensions. Means and standard deviations are listed in Appendix E.

TABLE VII  
 INITIATED, RESPONSIVE, VERBAL, AND NON-  
 VERBAL INFLUENCING SUCCESSES  
 FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR TWO JUDGES)

Subject	Initiated Successes	Responsive Successes	Verbal Successes	Non-verbal Successes
1	10.50	5.00	10.50	5.00
2	7.00	4.00	10.50	.50
3	5.00	5.50	8.00	2.50
4	6.50	3.50	5.50	4.50
5	4.00	5.00	7.00	2.00
6	6.00	5.50	7.00	4.50
7	7.00	2.00	6.00	3.00
8	10.00	2.00	10.00	2.00
9	9.50	4.00	11.00	2.50
10	9.50	5.00	11.00	3.50
11	5.50	8.00	8.00	5.50
12	11.00	2.50	9.50	4.00
13	7.00	4.50	8.00	3.50
14	6.50	11.50	6.50	11.50
15	7.00	1.50	7.50	1.00
Totals	112.00	69.50	126.00	55.50
Means	7.47	4.63	8.40	3.70

TABLE VIII  
 INITIATED BEHAVIORS FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR TWO JUDGES)

Subject	Verbal Attempts	Verbal Successes	Non-verbal Attempts	Non-verbal Successes
1	7.50	7.50	3.00	3.00
2	7.50	6.50	.50	.50
3	5.00	4.50	.50	.50
4	4.50	4.50	2.50	2.00
5	5.00	3.50	.50	.50
6	4.50	4.50	2.50	1.50
7	5.50	4.50	2.50	2.50
8	8.00	8.00	2.00	2.00
9	10.00	9.00	.50	.50
10	8.50	7.50	2.50	2.00
11	3.50	3.50	2.00	2.00
12	8.50	8.50	2.50	2.50
13	7.00	5.50	1.50	1.50
14	4.00	2.00	5.00	4.50
15	9.00	6.50	1.00	.50
Totals	98.00	86.00	29.00	26.00
Means	6.53	5.73	1.93	1.73

TABLE IX  
 RESPONSIVE BEHAVIORS FOR EACH SUBJECT  
 (AVERAGE FOR TWO JUDGES)

Subject	Verbal Attempts	Verbal Successes	Non-verbal Attempts	Non-verbal Successes
1	3.50	3.00	2.50	2.00
2	7.50	4.00	1.00	.00
3	5.00	3.50	2.00	2.00
4	2.00	1.00	2.50	2.50
5	4.50	3.50	2.00	1.50
6	3.00	2.50	4.50	3.00
7	3.00	1.50	2.00	.50
8	3.00	2.00	.00	.00
9	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
10	5.00	3.50	2.00	1.50
11	6.00	4.50	3.50	3.50
12	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.50
13	3.00	2.50	2.50	2.00
14	7.50	4.50	8.00	7.00
15	2.00	1.00	.50	.50
Totals	58.00	40.00	36.50	29.50
Means	3.87	2.67	2.43	1.97

TABLE X  
 STANDARD ERROR, VARIANCE, AND t RATIO  
 FOR ALL DIMENSIONS  
 (AVERAGE FOR TWO JUDGES)

Dimensions	Standard Error of the Mean Difference Scores	Population Variance of Dif. Scores	t Ratio	Significance Level
Initiated and Responsive Attempts	1.68	19.42	1.29	non-sig.
Initiated and Responsive Successes	.997	14.92	2.85	.05
Verbal and Non-verbal Attempts	1.02	15.52	5.91	.002
Verbal and Non-verbal Successes	.94	13.35	5.00	.002

t tests for non-independent means

Degrees of freedom: 14

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The question as to whether pre-school sons attempt to influence their fathers was answered in the positive direction. Most studies in the area of child influence have studied the mother-infant interaction, and have shown that even in infancy the child has an impact on the caretaker's behavior. Given the "high power" position of the parent, and his/her control over the material and psychological needs of the child, these are psychologically significant findings.

Secondly, it was found that these sons initiated influence attempts more often than they tried to influence the father responsively. In this laboratory setting, it was probably unlikely that the father would disagree with the son's request. A play-room may be seen as a child's "territory" both by the father and the son, and it is therefore natural for the child to initiate and direct the interaction. It would be interesting to investigate whether the same initiating/responding ratio held true in the home. Also, the son's attempts were primarily verbal rather than non-verbal. These children have already learned the value of language as a tool for communication with the adult world. The use of language allows the child to further master and control the environment, much more so than the pre-verbal and non-verbal tools which are already being used less frequently.

Initiating and responding, verbally and non-verbally, these children

were very successful in their attempts to influence the fathers. Though Initiated behaviors were somewhat more successful than Responsive behaviors, both produced a high success rate. Verbal and Non-verbal attempts were uniformly highly successful also. Sperle (1979) found that this group of fathers perceive that they are more involved with their sons than their own fathers were with them. Given their willingness to participate in this study and their stated commitment to a different model of fathering than their own fathers had shown, it is likely that these father-son interactions may not be typical for the general public. These fathers and sons were all seen as having positive and loving relationships.

Further explanation should be given concerning the significant differences found in success rates in the present study. Though there were significantly more Initiated successes than Responsive successes, the percentage success rates for each were quite similar. This can be attributed to the fact that a higher number of Initiated than Responsive attempts were made. The differences in mean successes were significant because the differences in mean attempts were significant. Similarly, Verbal and Non-Verbal mean successes were significantly different even though the percentage success rates were nearly identical.

An additional and compelling facet of investigation was an analysis of inter-judge agreement. Once judges have been trained to a high level of agreement on the research criteria, it has been assumed that this level is maintained. However, as has been seen in the present study, this assumption is not necessarily correct. This difficulty may be corrected for by periodic checks on agreement level throughout the study and possible retraining sessions. A less desirable alternative



is the one employed in the present study - that of re-analysis using data collected by judges with high agreement.

Finally, three methodological issues deserve further comment. First, the importance of direct observational methods cannot be overestimated. Questionnaires and interviews are biased by the lack of objectivity and recall on the part of the respondent. In addition, sequences of behaviors can be followed and isolated when directly observed, and it can be seen how each person's behavior in the interaction affects the other's response. Secondly, the Model video tape was extremely valuable as a training tool. With it, the judges were able to see samples of the behaviors they would be asked to record, and to develop a level of competency at using the Behavioral Checklist. Finally, an alternative to viewing entire video tapes would be to isolate sequences of behavior for scoring. Once a complete sequence had been viewed the tape could be stopped to give the judges time for comprehensive analysis and scoring. The disadvantage of this approach would be the extended time involved. Another option would be to select random or representative five-minute segments for viewing. This method would incorporate the advantages of viewing entire sequences of behavior and allowing judges to observe more subjects within a shorter time period.

It is hoped that researchers will continue to investigate the area of father-son interactions. The difficulty in enlisting fathers for research studies is unfortunate; researchers must find new ways of attracting fathers and accommodating to their schedules. Also needed are studies looking at fathers and daughters, mothers and daughters, and whole-family interactions, as well as studies incorporating all age ranges of children and parents.

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APPENDIX A

INFLUENTIAL BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST



APPENDIX B

BEHAVIORAL DEFINITIONS

## BEHAVIORAL DEFINITIONS

**INFLUENTIAL BEHAVIOR:** Influential child behaviors shall be defined as those child initiated or child responsive behaviors that are judged as attempts to change or direct the actions of the father.

**SUCCESSFUL BEHAVIOR:** Influential behaviors shall be defined as successful when the father complies with the child's initiated request, suggestion, demand, etc., or if the father changes his initial behavior as a response to the child's non-compliant response.

## TYPES OF BEHAVIORS USED IN ATTEMPT

## Initiative

## VERBAL

Asking: asking for information, assistance, companionship, etc.

Suggesting: stating a desire or suggesting an activity

Demanding: strongly or adamantly stating desire

## NON-VERBAL

Gesturing: non-verbal indication of request or desire (e.g. pointing)

Touching: pulling by the hand, hugging, wrestling, or other non-verbal physical contact

Starting substitute activity: beginning a new activity without asking or discussing

## Responsive

## VERBAL

Refusing: verbally turning down suggestion or initiation by the father

Substitute Request: suggesting activity other than requested by father

## NON-VERBAL

Ignoring: continuing present activity, not responding

Gesturing: non-verbal refusal; arm movement, shaking of head,  
turning or walking away

Substitute activity: beginning activity other than that requested  
by father



APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONS TO JUDGES

## INSTRUCTIONS TO JUDGES

You will be viewing 15 tapes of father-son dyads engaged in free-play. You will be asked to judge whether, and in what manner, the child's behavior influences the father's behavior.

(GIVE EACH JUDGE SHEET OF BEHAVIORAL DEFINITIONS)

On these sheets are the definitions of influential behavior attempts and successes, as well as specific categories of behaviors you will be looking for.

(READ THROUGH SHEET WITH JUDGES, GIVING EXAMPLES OF EACH TYPE OF BEHAVIOR)

Behaviors judged to be influencing attempts will be recorded on the Influential Behavior Checklist.

(GIVE OUT SAMPLE CHECKLIST)

Initiative behaviors will be recorded on the left half of the sheet and responsive behaviors on the right half. When an influencing attempt is made, a mark should be placed in the appropriate "ATTEMPT" box. If the attempt is judged to be successful, a mark should be made in the corresponding "SUCCESS" box.

A Model video tape will be viewed initially, until the categories become familiar and a high level of inter-judge agreement is reached.

APPENDIX D

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS  
FOR ALL DIMENSIONS  
(AVERAGE FOR THREE JUDGES)

TABLE XI  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS  
FOR ALL DIMENSIONS  
(AVERAGE FOR THREE JUDGES)

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Initiative Attempts	9.18	1.83
Initiative Successes	8.04	1.90
Responsive Attempts	6.95	3.07
Responsive Successes	5.11	2.30
Verbal Attempts	12.09	2.05
Verbal Successes	9.84	1.51
Non-verbal Attempts	4.04	2.38
Non-verbal Successes	3.31	2.05

APPENDIX E

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS  
FOR ALL DIMENSIONS  
(AVERAGE FOR TWO JUDGES)

TABLE XII  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS  
FOR ALL DIMENSIONS  
(AVERAGE FOR TWO JUDGES)

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation
Initiative Attempts	8.47	2.02
Initiative Successes	7.47	2.13
Responsive Attempts	6.30	3.30
Responsive Successes	4.63	2.55
Verbal Attempts	10.40	2.16
Verbal Successes	8.40	1.87
Non-verbal Attempts	4.37	2.89
Non-verbal Successes	3.70	2.59

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