

PARENTING CHARACTERISTICS IN NATIVE  
AMERICAN FAMILIES

By

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Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

2001

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  
December, 2005

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AMERICAN FAMILIES

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my major adviser, Dr. Maureen Sullivan, for his expertise and mentorship throughout my time at Oklahoma State University. She allowed me a considerable measure of independence on this project, which has been an invaluable professional learning experience.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my other committee members, Drs. Larry Mullins and John Chaney. Their comments and suggestions have been extremely helpful, both with respect to this project, and to my graduate career in general. Further, I would like to thank my fellow lab members for their suggestions regarding the formulation of this project and for assistance with data collection.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support. My husband, Darrell, has been encouraging throughout this process, as have my father, David Wilburn, and my grandparents, Jack and Doris Wilburn. Their faith in me has truly been invaluable, and I will always be thankful for their patience and love.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

There is a general idea within communities about what comprises positive parenting as well as specific parenting styles and strategies that are more beneficial than others. However, the degree to which the strategies actually vary between communities is an issue largely overlooked. The specific ways in which individuals are socialized to parent are influenced by various factors, such as culture, religion, family history, social support, and geographic location. All too often the parenting style employed by the majority culture is deemed most appropriate solely because of its dominating influence. It is important to research and examine strategies used by parents in differing cultures in order to obtain a better understanding of the development of children in those cultures. Specifically, the Native American culture is one in which minimal attention has been given to the style and types of strategies incorporated by parents and/or guardians. Before dominant culture parenting characteristics can be applied to the Native American culture, an empirical examination is warranted in order to see if the parenting styles and strategies are similar enough to justify this generalization. Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to address the shortcomings of the parenting literature by examining and reporting on parenting in the Native American culture.

Before examining the specific variables of interest it is first important to become familiar with the general characteristics of the culture and how they differ from the majority culture. This paper offers a thorough discussion of relevant population and

cultural characteristics so that the reader has a foundation of understanding before moving on to the specifics of the research. This discussion includes recognition of the diversity among Native Americans as well as several other important factors somewhat unique to their culture. Next, specific problems facing the Native American culture are discussed so that the reader understands that this is a population in need of intervention. In particular, alcohol and drug abuse, psychopathology, abuse and neglect, medical concerns, intelligence and education, and acculturation are discussed. Given the rate of these problems, it is imperative that the existing knowledge base of the Native American culture be broadened, specifically in regards to parenting styles and strategies.

Research examining Native American parenting styles, strategies, and expectations is extremely limited. The majority of the literature focusing specifically on parenting was published prior to 1985, and more recent studies are scarce. Given the multitude of changes that have occurred in regards to family framework (i.e., decreased family size, attitudes toward physical punishment, value of extended family) since the 1980's, the need for further research in this area is apparent. The relatively recent literature that has been published is both exciting and promising. Unfortunately, this literature has primarily been discussions and reviews of the Native American culture, and is not empirically based. However, researchers who have spent several years working with the Native American culture have published papers discussing the parenting styles and strategies employed by the Native American culture. Recently, more attention has been focused on several different parenting areas such as discipline, caretaker role, teaching of life-skills, views of formal education, acculturation, parenting confidence, and noninterference with children. These areas of research will be examined and

discussed so that it is made evident how important it is to continue and expand our studies in this field.

As is evident from the discussion above there is still much to be learned about the Native American culture and parenting styles and strategies in particular. We have very limited information about parenting in the Native American culture and which factors are most influential. Due to this limited information it is crucial that future research use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to study Native Americans. By using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, a very rich picture can be obtained of the Native American culture. Obviously, this project cannot answer all there is to know about parenting in Native American families, but hopefully the information gained from this study will serve as a guide for what needs to be done, what can be done, and specifically where to go from here. The goals of my project were to: 1) provide descriptive information about parenting beliefs, values, specific parenting practices, rates of problem behaviors in a Native American sample in which acculturation and basic demographic information were assessed, and 2) examine the relationship between parenting beliefs and values as well as the relationship between discipline and problem behaviors.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### General Information about Native Americans

##### Population Characteristics

According to the United States Census (2000), Native Americans make up approximately 1.5% [4.1million] of the American population. This number includes 2.5 million people, or 0.9%, who reported only Native American and Alaska Native, in addition to 1.6 million people, or 0.6%, who reported Native American and Alaska Native as well as one or more other races. Further, the United States Census (2000) reports that the term Native American is often used to refer to the Native American and Alaska Native population, and refers to people having origins in any of the original people of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. The United States Census (2000) describes Native Americans as first being enumerated as a separate group in the 1860 census, and the 1890 census was the first to count Native Americans throughout the country. The United States Census (2000) reports that prior to 1890, enumeration of Native Americans was limited to those living in the general population of the various states; Native Americans in Native American Territory and on Native American reservations were not included. According to the United States Census (2000), 43% of Native Americans live in the West, 31% live in the South, 17% live in the Midwest, and 9% live in the Northeast. The ten states with the largest Native American populations in 2000, in order, were California, Oklahoma,

Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, New York, Washington, North Carolina, Michigan, and Alaska. The median age of Native Americans according to the U.S. Census (2000) is 28 years of age. The U.S. Census (2000) also reports that approximately 26% of Native Americans are living in poverty.

Although Native Americans are described collectively in the U.S. Census, the extent of variation found within the cultures and traditions of the more than 560 tribes presently recognized by the federal government clearly indicates that it cannot be observed or understood as such (Pevar, 2002). Each tribe possesses unique characteristics that clearly differentiate it from other tribes. However, there are certain features that are common among the Native American culture as a whole.

Several studies have shown that Native Americans do observe the world in quantifiably different ways than their dominant culture counterparts (Jones, Kephart, Langley, Parker, Shenoy, & Weeks, 2001; Yates, 1987; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990). However, for the purpose of this discussion, only those cultural features that most commonly pertain to the Native American population and that differentiate it from the majority population are considered. The next section is a discussion of those particular cultural features.

### Cultural Characteristics

Cultural characteristics are those features that are common among individuals of a particular culture and that differentiate them from the majority culture. This section first overviews the differences that may be found between tribes of the Native American population, and then overviews three specific cultural characteristics that differentiate the Native American population from the majority culture.

Differences Between and Among Tribes. Native Americans are the smallest ethnic minority, even though there are more than 560 tribes (sometimes also referred to as nations, bands, villages, pueblos, rancherias, and communities, depending on the tribe's preference) in the United States (Pevar, 2002). In general, Native Americans prefer their tribal designation rather than the term Native American (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990).

All Native Americans are acculturated to some degree into the dominant culture; but the level of acculturation depends on the strength of the family's support system and the level of the individual's own belief about preserving his or her traditions (Glover, 2001).

Native American people are not a minority ethnic group, if one considers an ethnic minority as being a group of people originally from one country who now reside in and are completely integrated into another part of the world. Native American tribes are not an ethnic group in this sense, namely, that they moved from somewhere else and have put down new roots. Tribes are actually miniature nations consisting of diverse indigenous groups of people, with every tribe having a separate language, religion, culture, and history (Wilkinson, 1980). In fact, generalizations about Native Americans have a tendency to misrepresent the truth due to the variation in lifestyles between the tribes, as well as the differences between rural-reservation inhabitants and urban inhabitants (Burgess, 1980).

Even though Native American people have similar strengths and encounter similar struggles, they are very different. Every reservation contains one or more tribes, each having a distinct culture, language, set of traditions, and spiritual customs.

Additionally, those within tribes and tribes in general differ in the level to which they have assimilated, become bicultural, or retained traditional culture, language, and spiritual customs (Barlow & Walkup, 1998).

The diversity found within Native American tribes and individuals may play a role in preventing group cohesion. The historical battles between tribes as well as the numerous different lifestyles and philosophies present among Native Americans today, can negatively affect group involvement, and may occasionally contribute to feelings of divisiveness (Edwards & Edwards, 1980). Even though there are problems with group cohesion and feelings of divisiveness, Native American families and their tribes generally see themselves as a collective group rather than as individuals. Thus, collectivity versus individuality will be the first cultural characteristic discussed that differentiates the Native American population from the majority culture.

Collectivity versus Individuality. Native American families may be characterized as a collective, cooperative, social system that extends from the mother and father union to the extended family and finally to the community and tribe. Familial social roles can be considered flexible in definition, responsibility, and performance. Parenting of younger siblings by older siblings, sharing of the wage earner role among adults, and alternative family arrangements have been found to be more common than in majority communities (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1980).

Native American people are a family and a tribe is a collection of families in which each person has responsibilities and obligations to different people. In reality, family is at the core of the Native American culture and is actually what a tribe is all about (Wilkinson, 1980). Native American family values most often demand cross-group

relational behavior, instead of autonomy and independence, and extended family systems strongly promote interdependence (Red Horse, 1980).

Traditionally, Native American people exist in relational systems that sustain and promote strong bonds of reciprocal assistance and affection, and even today several tribes continue to embrace a traditional system of cooperative interdependence, with family members accountable not only to one another but also to the different groups to which they belong. The extraordinary emphasis that the dominant culture places on individual accomplishment and success in academic institutions frequently causes conflict for Indian students and their families. For example, Indian university students may think the monetary awards they receive to fund their education should be shared with their family members, even though the financial aid they receive is barely enough to fund subsistence existence. Moreover, Native American students rapidly discover that the academic accomplishment for which they receive recognition on campus may lead to further separation from their own people, which occasionally causes the community to actively dissuade aspirations that necessitate leaving the reservation or the family (LaFramboise & Low, 1998).

Tribalism is a pervasive cultural attitude that stresses the primacy of the extended family and kinship relations over individualism, and views individuals as connected to families, households, and communities, not as isolated beings. Everything is closely related, biologically, spiritually, and emotionally (Glover, 2001). This attitude aligns strongly with the Native Americans' worldview, as well as how they perceive their relationship with the physical world. Therefore, worldview and relationship to the

physical world will be the second cultural characteristic discussed that differentiates the Native American population from the majority culture.

Worldview and Relationship to the Physical World. Most Native American people usually have a closer relationship with nature than most non-Indians, with the physical landscape becoming integrated with the landscape of the mind in more traditional Native American people. Geographic landmarks can absorb the shocks (traumatic events) of history, and can produce bad forces if they are not respected. Often traumatic occurrences are even seen as the result of a “bad force” acting on the individual who was hurt, and this in turn intensifies the psychological pain of the experience in some aspects. When an Native American is injured physically, medical treatment is often sought. However, treatment by a traditional healer is generally preferred when the individual is seeking emotional and/or spiritual healing. The healers’ methods vary, but often include searching for a physical cause of a curse or “bad force.” Part of healing might consist of distinguishing the person who placed the curse on the individuals, however the native healer strongly discourages revenge or retribution, which is thought to hinder or prevent the healing process. Rather, the individuals are taught to mentally and physically avoid the individual who cursed them and to concentrate on the individuals, family, and friends who can aid them through their recovery (Barlow & Walkup, 1998).

To the Native American, life is supposed to be an unhurried, natural progression, where disease, death, and disability are acknowledged as milestones in the course of life’s progress. Native Americans are often perceived as detached or as uncaring and irresponsible due to their seeming disregard for the values of the majority culture. For example, Indian children may not arrive at school on time, and Indian youth may not

finish projects or report for work on time. These children, especially the girls, tend to live in and value present time; deadlines are indications of future time. Because of this disregard for deadlines, Native Americans have often been viewed as lazy or irresponsible (Yates, 1987).

Traditional Native Americans function in a relational model that is instinctive, nontemporal, and fluid. Harmony is valued because everything is connected, and it is vital that all things be in balance. Balance and harmony as well as multiple other variables, including individuals, family, community, nature, and metaphysical forces, are crucial for health (Glover, 2001).

Native American culture views all features of life as interactive and inseparable, and as having a natural course that should not be deliberately altered. Thinking is holistic and perceptive in nature. In addition, time is thought to be adaptable and unstructured in Native American culture. For example, events occur “when the time is right,” emphasis is on the present time, and deadlines enforced by the majority culture are insignificant because time, like life itself, cannot be broken down into discrete units. Also, deadlines indicate a concern for time in the future, which cannot be forecasted and thus is not as important as what is happening in the present (Jones, Kephart, Langley, Parker, Shenoy, & Weeks, 2001).

The Native American perceives land as having a spiritual quality that can neither be possessed nor surrendered. Throughout generations, Native American families have utilized the land cooperatively and productively, never seeing it as an individual possession to be bought and sold for personal gain. Attitudes toward the land base and toward children are similar in that one does not neglect one’s relationship with either, but

provides support, nourishment, and nurturing to guarantee continuity. Similarly, the Native American does not consider a child a personal possession, but as belonging to the whole community (Goodluck & Short, 1980). Native American parents often rely on extended family and various other tribal members to foster the development as well as assist in the upbringing of their children. Thus, parent-child interaction style will be the last cultural characteristic discussed that differentiates the Native American population from the majority culture.

Parent-Child Interaction Style. Parents generally have the primary responsibility of raising their children in Native American and in dominant cultures. However, in comparison to the dominant culture, the Native American culture exhibits a greater reliance on extended family, where members of the extended family and tribe often play a significant role in raising tribal children. In Native American cultures uncles and aunts, one of whom may possibly be designated as a character builder, are significant mentors and teachers who share values, impart knowledge, function as role models, and emphasize tribal learning. Grandmothers and aunts are often utilized as childcare providers. Grandparents and elders, as safekeepers of tribal songs and stories, share these customs with children through the oral tradition (Glover, 2001). Even though the Native American child receives guidance and direction from several different sources, they are essentially considered autonomous beings.

In mainstream American culture, children are considered the responsibility, even the “property,” of their parents, where parents are expected to shape the child, carefully supervising and directing his or her development. This perspective is contradictory to the Native American value of noninterference, in which individuals defer to one another

while reducing the power differential between them. Consistent with this value, adults even consider young children as autonomous individuals, competent in making their own decisions. Native American parents permit their children to develop in their own time and with minimal rules, because attempting to guide or control behavior of another individual is viewed as disrespectful (Jones, Kephart, Langley, Parker, Shenoy, & Weeks, 2001). However, that is not to say that discipline is nonexistent in Native American families.

Correct conduct is taught to children via ceremonies and direct or indirect instruction by parents, extended family, tribal elders, or traditional healers. Cultural codes also determine who has the authority to guide instruction. Since Native Americans usually observe a closer relationship with nature than most non-Indians, local geography often serves as a mnemonic device to aid in teaching children right from wrong. For example, cautionary tales that are related to characteristic features of the landscape are used to teach moral codes and appropriate behavioral conduct. These stories are permeated with social survival skills, as well as lessons for avoiding personal or collective harm. These stories are thought to have been passed down orally from the time of the ancestors who lived before the European encounter (Barlow & Walkup, 1998).

Children are disciplined in accordance to tribal standard, most often using an inductive form of discipline. They are taught not to lie, steal, or cheat, but are seemingly granted autonomy in the most significant areas. Their property and rights are respected, and they are encouraged to utilize these possessions in a self-reinforcing and creative manner. Compliance from children is neither solicited nor anticipated, and the parents seemingly feel inadequate to interfere even in cases of significant misbehavior (Lefley, 1973).

Considering the afore mentioned cultural characteristics that differentiate the Native American population from the majority culture, it is important to remember that as with all other cultures they too are faced with specific problems. There are several areas of concern in regards to the Native American population, and the next section will present a brief overview of these problems.

### Population in Need of Intervention

#### Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Alcohol abuse is an extensive and pervasive problem for the Native American. However, there is considerable variability in substance abuse rates between different tribes. In general though, age-adjusted mortality rates for alcoholism in Native Americans are 465% larger than that of the general population, and alcohol is involved in one third of all Native American deaths. Native American youths' drinking behavior is frequently characterized by binge-like types of drinking. For Native American adolescents, alcohol abuse is more frequent than adolescents from other US racial groups, and Native American youth tend to exhibit more deviant drinking behavior than other US racial groups. (Barlow & Walkup, 1998).

Native American youth most often abuse alcohol and marijuana, and evidence higher rates of substance use disorders than do children and youth from comparison samples (Beals, Piasecki, Nelson, Jones, Keane, Dauphinais, Red Shirt, Sack, & Manson, 1997). In fact, it is not unusual to find children as young as 6 years old already drinking alcohol, but because of the cultural principle of noninterference, adults rarely intervene in the drinking behaviors of their children. Additionally, alcohol-abusing adolescents often turn into alcoholic parents who are likely to neglect their children and become involved

in domestic violence. In fact, an excessive number of accidents are related to alcohol abuse in Native American youth: 75% of accidents are alcohol related, 80% of suicides are alcohol related, and 90% of homicides are alcohol related (Yates, 1987).

Native American youth report using alcohol more frequently and at a younger age than do their non-Native peers, although the numbers vary extensively from tribe to tribe. By age 11, almost one third of Native American children have tried alcohol (Jones, Kephart, Langley, Parker, Shenoy, & Weeks, 2001). In a study by Beauvais, Oetting, and Wolf (1989), 81% of Native American students in grades 7 to 12 reported using alcohol at some time, versus 57% of non-Native students. They found that these elevated usage rates seem to persist throughout adolescence, placing Native American youth at risk for problem drinking and alcoholism as adults, and abuse of other drugs has also been shown to be a considerable difficulty for Native American youth. In the Beauvais et al (1989) survey of youth in grades 7 to 12, 61% of Native American youth had used marijuana, 24% had used inhalants, and 25% had used stimulants. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (1995) found that elevated levels of use persist throughout adolescence, and marijuana use in Native American youth continues to be double that of non-Native youth and nears the level of alcohol use. As stated earlier, Native American parents are hesitant to interfere or warrant against substance use due to the principle of noninterference, and this lack of clear restrictions against substance use may express an attitude of tolerance to children. Additionally, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (1995) found that drinking within the family appears to affect alcohol use in Native American children, with one-third reporting having their first drink of alcohol with a family member. Due to the elevated rates of alcohol use in Native American adults, children may see drinking as

normal as well as a sign of adulthood to a greater extent than do non-Native children (Jones, Kephart, Langley, Parker, Shenoy, & Weeks, 2001). Moreover, in certain areas, drunkenness takes on the same explanatory power as spirit possession: while people are under the influence of either alcohol or spirits, they are not accountable for any antisocial behavior they commit (Beiser & Attneave, 1982).

Unfortunately, the profound impact that alcohol has on the Native American culture has not dissipated. Wall, Garcia-Andrade, Wong, Lau, and Ehlers (2000) evaluated behavioral problems in Mission Indian children and adolescents based on the presence or absence of parental alcohol dependence. A high frequency of a positive family history of alcoholism was found in these children. In fact, they found that seventy-four percent of the children had either one or both parents with alcohol dependence, and only 7% did not have any first- or second-degree alcoholic relatives. Results also indicated that sons of alcoholics scored considerably higher on the Total Behavior Problem Scale, as well as the Internalizing and Externalizing scales, of the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) than sons of non-alcoholics.

The physical effects of alcohol abuse are no longer the only concerns. Increased attention must also be focused on the resulting psychopathology found in these children. It is important to examine the existing literature regarding the psychological functioning of Native American children in order to understand what factors may be potential risk factors for mental health problems, thus enabling increased success with interventions. The next section will present an overview of the most concerning areas of psychopathology found within the Native American population. Specifically, the areas

that will be examined are: psychopathology, abuse and neglect, intelligence and education, medical concerns, and acculturation.

### Psychopathology

Native American children are more likely than non-Indians to be referred for mental health care (Plas & Bellet, 1983). They are at increased risk for numerous disorders, including depression, anxiety, disruptive behavior disorders, and developmental disorders. Suicide and homicide rates in Native Americans are also areas of great concern

Manson, Bechtold, Novins, and Beals (1997) conducted a study in which they assessed psychopathology in Native children and adolescents. They found depression to be the most common specific diagnosis assigned to teenage females in the Mental Health Branch of the Indian Health Service. Further, they report that the 6-month prevalence rate of a mood disorder among a Northern Plains sample of Native American youth was 6.4%, which is significant and deserving of attention. They also found that high rates of anxiety-related conditions are also reported among Native American youth, with at least three distinct dimensions of anxiety being suggested among Native American youth: physiologic anxiety reactions, phobic anxiety reactions, and performance anxiety reactions. They found that the 6-month prevalence rate of any anxiety disorder among a Northern Plains sample of Native American youth far exceeded that of the general population. In conjunction with depression and anxiety, Native American youth also appear to be at increased risk for developing Disruptive Behavior Disorders. In the same study evaluating psychiatric disorder among Northern Plains Native American Adolescents, Manson et al (1997) found that the Native American youth evidenced

higher rates of disruptive behavior than did children and youths from two comparison samples. They found that the prevalence rate for conduct disorder (9.5% of Northern Plains youth met criteria) was significantly greater than the general population, and that the prevalence rate for ADHD (18.1% of Northern Plains youth met criteria) is also significantly greater than the general population. Lastly, the researchers commented on the incidence of developmental disorders in Native American youth, reporting that high rates of mental retardation, learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, sensory disabilities, and multiple handicaps have been identified among Native American youth, and that for the nation as a whole, Native Americans have the highest incidence of mental retardation, and surpass the national averages for speech impairment and multiple handicaps as well. Thus, many Native American youth clearly are at increased risk for a variety of developmental disorders. Unfortunately, emotional and behavioral problems are not the most severe threats for the Native American child; the occurrence of untimely death, by means of homicide and suicide is a growing concern.

Homicide is a growing mental health problem for Native American children. Barlow and Walkup (1998) report that over the last two decades, homicide rates for Native Americans have been approximately twice the national average, and that homicide patterns differ for Native Americans compared with the general US population in two aspects: firearms are less often used, and family members or acquaintances are more often the perpetrators among Native Americans. They found that the group at highest risk for homicide is Indian men 25 to 34 years of age, followed by men 15 to 24 years of age. However, it is important to keep in mind that homicide rates vary widely from tribe to tribe. However, they did find that, in general, Indian Health Services (IHS) areas with

high homicide rates also have high suicide rates. They also examined suicide rates in Native Americans and found that suicide is a bigger mental health problem for Native American children than other US children. In fact, they report that on Native American reservations, suicide rates peak among youth ages 15 to 24 years of age, while in the general US population suicide rates are comparatively stable between 20 and 60 years of age and then increases with age. Moreover, they report that as in the US population, more men commit suicide than women, although more women than men attempt suicide, but do not die. They found the relatively common occurrence of suicide among Native American children 10 to 14 years of age particularly concerning, but did not report on it. However, they did report that suicides on a number of reservations regularly occur among the young as “epidemics,” where suicide appears to spread into the collective conscience as a temporarily acceptable social norm. This phenomenon would probably be explained much differently by traditional Native American groups. For example, community members might believe a “dark force” was hanging over the community, influencing youth to attempt suicide.

Yates (1987) found that the suicide rate among Native Americans peaks in the teenage and young adult years and is the second primary cause of death in adolescence. However, as with homicide, there is considerable variation among tribes. She also found that rates are usually more elevated in dislocated tribes where members are unable to observe the traditional life style, whereas the suicide rate has remained low on a small number of reservations where traditional practices are retained and where adolescents can attend school and work within the tribal community.

Another area of concern, which is somewhat related to the increased risk for psychopathology, is that of abuse and neglect of Native American children. Although the connection is not clearly defined, it is natural to question the well being of a child who exhibits some type of psychopathology or is raised in an environment in which there are increased levels of psychopathology. Hence, it is important to examine the literature and present an overview of abuse and neglect of children in the Native American population.

### Abuse and Neglect

The nature and extent of child abuse and neglect differs greatly across Native communities, however, interpersonal conflict, marital discord, parental substance abuse, attachment problems, parental unemployment, and violent death occur regularly among many abused and neglected Native American children (Yates, 1987). Native American youth have also been reported to be at risk for child abuse and neglect due to sociocultural shifts, such as a shift away from traditional values, modifications of gender roles and expectations, and the shifting nature of the extended family in the Native culture (Manson, Bechtold, Novins, & Beals, 1997).

Yates (1987) found, however, that physical punishment is generally disapproved of in most Native American communities, and children are often protected through informal placement with the extended family, which is an important resource for Native American children. She reports that most mistreated Native American children are neglected rather than physically abused, which is not surprising given the level of poverty on Native American reservations. Compounding this issue is the possibility that Native American parents may be thought neglectful by Anglo agency workers due to cultural differences. Despite the lower rate of child mistreatment, Yates found that Native

American children are 5 to 20 times more likely to be placed in out-of-home placements as are children in the culture as a whole, and up to 85% of these placements were in non-native residences, thus inducing an extreme breaking of cultural ties. “Poverty” was reported to be the most frequent justification for out-of-home placement.

Glover (2001) associates Native American child abuse with the boarding school era, and identified the following factors as being involved in the abuse of Native American children: problems adjusting to the demands of the dominant culture, social isolation from the extended family and other support community to aid in child rearing, deficient parenting skills, apprehension of spoiling the child, belief in the importance of physical punishment, and difficulty being accountable for their own lives. Obviously, parents who spent most of their childhood in boarding schools were denied the opportunity to experience family life, and thus reached adulthood lacking a clear concept of proper parenting behavior and family functioning. Moreover, she reports that boarding schools introduced new and dysfunctional behaviors to Native Americans, such as sexual abuse and the use of harsh physical punishment.

Children who are raised in homes that are abusing or neglectful often suffer repercussions in several different areas. Their social interactions, self-esteem, general attitude toward themselves, the future, and others, as well as their interest in education can be affected. The intelligence and education level of Native American children is not only affected by the type of home they are raised in, but by several other variables as well.

### Intelligence and Education

Beiser, Sack, Manson, Redshirt, & Dion (1998) find that only 20% of Native children in North America graduate from high school, while the rest begin to drop out as early as the fifth grade. Further, they state that Native American students achieve as well as or above the performance of non-Indian students in elementary school, and then exhibit a decline in performance between the fourth and seventh grades. Explanations for this decline in performance vary. For example, it may be that Native American children have a culturally rooted method of learning that is incompatible with the teaching methods currently used in public education systems, or that culturally rooted behaviors may hinder Native American children's school performance. Barlow and Walkup (1998) find that traditional Native American children are taught to respect figures of authority by not making direct eye contact or asking questions. Non-Indian teachers may misconstrue this behavior as lack of interest, or even noncompliance, and may even inadvertently label them as problem children, as well as treat them as such, possibly foreshadowing a self-fulfilling prophecy. Other explanations offered by Barlow and Walkup (1998) of low school performance include the lower value of high school and college educations in attaining acceptable adult status in the cultural contexts of Native American versus non-Indian populations, and the fact that poor performance in school may increase Native American students' low self-esteem, compounding other risk factors for psychological and emotional problems.

Beiser, Sack, Manson, Redshirt, & Dion (1998) examined mental health and academic performance of Native American and majority-culture children. Striking differences were found in the way in which Native American and non-Indian children perceive their competence to perform school-related tasks. Although similar in grade two,

the self-concept of non-Indian children becomes more positive over time, whereas Native American self-perceptions grow progressively more negative.

Sack, Beiser, Clarke, & Redshirt, (1987) examined emotional, cognitive, and cultural factors that differentiate high academic achievement from low academic achievement in Oglala Sioux children. It was found that high achieving children tend to come from intact, two-parent families with a solid employment history, a strong social network, frequent contact with the school, and acculturation tendencies toward the majority culture. Davidson (1992) compared the relative cognitive strengths of Native American and Caucasian students as measured by the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children. No significant difference was found in overall intelligence; however, Native American children as a group scored significantly higher than Caucasian children as a group in Simultaneous Processing, while Caucasian children scored significantly higher than Native American children as a group in Sequential Processing. These findings are support for the theory that most Native American students process information in a simultaneous/holistic manner and that most Caucasian student's process information in a sequential manner.

Clearly, poor academic performance and achievement in Native American children can occasionally be accounted for by various medical problems. Yates (1987) found that 33% of Native American children are currently thought to have learning disabilities and 19% fall into the mentally retarded range. The rate of learning problems and retardation is thought to be associated with the fact that otitis media and nutritional problems are widespread on many reservations. In fact, Yates (1987) reports that a direct and significant connection exists between the number of episodes of otitis media and the

degree of hearing deficit and lower verbal scale scores on the WISC. Consequently, it is evident that medical problems are another area of concern in the Native American population, and will thus be briefly discussed.

### Medical Concerns

Yates (1987) reports that the majority of Native Americans living on reservations are dependent on government surplus foods, which are loaded with carbohydrates and fats, whereas fruits, meats, and vegetables are often in short supply, which contributes to the incidence of malnutrition. Unfortunately, malnutrition among numerous other variables, also contributes to several other medical concerns in Native American children.

Wright, Mercer, Mullin, Thurston, & Harned (1993) examined the differences between Native American and non-Indian children referred for psychological services, and found that Native American children displayed a higher incidence of otitis media, ordinary chicken pox, varicella, mumps, three-day measles, jaundice, and heart murmurs, as well as more speech problems, episodes of “lazy eye” and more visual acuity problems.

The last area of concern that will be discussed in this section is that of acculturation. The process of acculturation as well as acculturation level has the potential to greatly affect the developing child and their resulting ability to function both within their tribal community as well as with the majority culture.

### Acculturation

As Native American cultures change and acculturate, their views regarding child development, parenting strategies, and family interaction also change. Acculturation has been defined as

the cultural change that occurs when two or more cultures are in persistent contact. In this process, change may occur in each of the cultures to varying degrees. A particular kind of acculturation is assimilation, in which one culture changes significantly more than the other culture and, as a result, comes to resemble it. This process is often established deliberately through force to maintain control over conquered peoples, but it can occur voluntarily as well.

(Garcia & Ahler, p. 24)

In fact, advances in technology that have occurred over the last 30 years have begun to reach reservations in the last decade. Native American children, even in the most remote and traditional areas, are exposed to parallel sets of extensively conflicting influences from western and traditional cultures. During a single day, Native American children can experience the internet, cable television, videos, and musical CDs, in addition to attending ancient sacred or public ceremonies performed in their Native language. However, the number of individuals knowledgeable of indigenous language and cultural traditions is decreasing with each passing generation (Barlow & Walkup, 1998).

Dislocation of Native American tribes and the wavering in traditional ways of earning a living, with resultant poverty, has had a significant effect on many Native American communities. Berlin (1987) found that poverty, hopelessness, and the appeal of dominant culture possessions has resulted in the reduction of importance of tradition and ancient culture in the everyday life of numerous Native Americans. He also reports that efforts of a few Native American communities to emphasize the teaching of traditional ways and to deal with community problems in new ways are encouraging, and these pilot efforts, which originate from the tribe or are encouraged and helped along by mental

health professionals, have begun to modify the status and sense of well-being in both adults and children.

It is evident after reading the preceding information that the Native American population is a very diverse group with each tribe having specific cultural practices. Further, as with any other culture, individuals within a tribe may also show extreme variation from one another. The following section will review the parenting styles, strategies, and expectations most commonly utilized by the Native American population. This review will include a discussion of the caretaker role, parenting confidence of Native American's, views on formal education, teaching of life skills, the view of children as autonomous individuals, discipline, and acculturation.

### Native American Parenting Styles, Strategies, and Expectations

#### Caretaker Role

Native Americans are normally part of an extended family system. Strong, DeVault, and Sayad (1998) define extended family as “the family unit of parent(s), child(ren), and other kin, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins” (p. 72), and define nuclear family as “the family type consisting of mother, father, and children” (p. 14). In Native American families aunts may be referred to as “mother,” uncles may be referred to as “father,” and an individual's cousins may be considered brothers and sisters. Grandparents are frequently important decision-makers and often play a significant role in the parenting of young children, while other members of the extended family typically take on child care responsibilities and may discipline children. The extended family system and its various members can be a remarkable source of support, and can make up for inadequacies in a biological parent's capability as a parent (Horejsi,

Craig, & Pablo, 1992). Child-rearing customs among Native Americans have been strongly related to the extended family concept and in that regard have depended on more than just the parents of the children in the role of parenting. However, parents usually have the primary responsibility of child rearing, and for some, the extended family has become an uncommon resource, and as a result some Native American parents have found it increasingly difficult to be “good parents” (Glover, 2001).

LaFramboise and Low (1998) reported that traditionally, Native American people live in relational systems that serve to support and nurture strong bonds of reciprocal assistance and friendliness, and that several tribes currently continue to participate in a traditional system of communal interdependence, with family members accountable not only to one another but also to the community and tribe to which they belong. They found that uncles and aunts, one of whom may be designated as a character builder, are valuable teachers; they share wisdom, impart morals, are often role models, and reinforce tribal customs. Grandmothers and aunts often care for children, and in certain tribes, child care is also shared by the men. Grandparents and other elders are especially vital in that they are the protectors of tribal stories and songs and often spend time with children sharing their oral tradition. Further, they found that when problems appear among Native American youth, they become problems of the community as well. In fact, it was reported that family and friends join together to monitor the youth’s behavior, draw him or her out of seclusion, and integrate that person back into the activities of the community. This community cohesion most likely contributes greatly to the parenting confidence demonstrated by Native Americans, which will be discussed in the next section.

## Parenting Confidence

Native Americans have the same desires and dreams for their children and families that the general population does. The majority want their children to receive a good education and become productive members of society, while in more traditional families, these desires include learning about tribal values, beliefs, and traditions (Berlin, 1987).

Currently, years after the boarding school era, many Native Americans continue to be ill-prepared for the parenting role. Moreover, parents who lack parenting skills and do not have a clear concept of the parenting role are easily aggravated by ordinary parental responsibilities (Horejsi, Craig, & Pablo, 1992). From this information it would be logical to assume that Native Americans have low confidence in their parenting abilities, since lack of knowledge in an area is often correlated with lack of confidence in that area. However, at least one study has found results that conflict with this assumption.

In a study by Gfellner (1990) it was found that Native American parents perceived their actual parenting behaviors as exceeding their perceived norm or ideal. The congruence between Indian parents' ideal beliefs and their reported parenting practices suggests that these parents are comfortable and feel competent in their parenting role. This confidence probably has a great deal to do with the community cohesion and support seen in most tribes, which many Native Americans feel that institutions of formal education are destroying. The views of formal education by Native Americans is varied and appears to be changing, thus it is important to examine the literature in this area in order to afford a better understanding of the Native American perspective.

## Formal Education

The great importance that is placed on individual achievement in most dominant culture academic institutions can cause conflict with tribes and families. Being commended for success may result in estrangement from home, and some family members may actively dissuade goals that involve leaving the family and home. The inability to live up to community expectations can often cause conflict or guilt over noncompliance (Glover, 2001). Frequently, because the values of home and school are so different, the child has to choose between being a good Native American and being a good student (Beuf, 1977).

Berlin (1987) found that elders esteemed by children generally have little use for school since they consider it to be taking their children away from tradition, and into a destructive and foreign world. Therefore, many Native American children may find there is no one to support their eagerness to learn or their special talents throughout their school experience, and thus their cognitive development goes unnurtured. However, Berlin (1987) reports that some communities have recently been able to offer schooling near the reservation. This allows communities to put increasing importance on effective education, combining both traditional values as well as the skills required to help individuals and the community function in a technological society.

Being able to offer schooling near the reservation not only allows for increased transmission of traditional values, but also provides another opportunity for training in life skills. Not only are the students kept close to their community and able to avoid negative influences from the dominant culture, but they can also potentially benefit from

the increased opportunity to see traditional behaviors and attitudes modeled in the community.

### Teaching of Life Skills

Generally, most parents want their children to be giving, respectful, to relate well with others, and to make responsible choices. Infants are generally treasured and are stimulated by the many activities within their view. In the Native American community, as children develop, older children and subsequently adults model the specific roles the child will take on in adolescent and adult life. Berlin (1987) found that training in developmental tasks is encouraged and rewarded but not deliberately taught or forced, while societal norms may be presented through stories that are memorized and passed down from generation to generation. Also, when a story is shared, children are encouraged to listen, to be receptive to what others think, and to observe rather than to ask questions. In effect, learning in the Native American culture is most often by trial and error, rather than by direct training.

According to Glover (2001), traditional Native American families actively teach by modeling and storytelling early on in a child's life that these specific values are crucial and paramount to being Native American. Traditionally, Native Americans thought that children were special gifts from the creator, and prophecies were often made about the worth of a child. Tribal elders used praise and reassurance to support a positive loving connection between parents and children, and through storytelling, children learned about appropriate relationships with the environment and other people, and moral development was given particularly careful and constant attention. Additionally, children were taught to be skillful observers and to appreciate the meaning of nonverbal communication.

Child-rearing standards from the past, such as noninterference and viewing children as autonomous individuals, continue to provide strong models for parenting today. Viewing children as autonomous individuals and valuing noninterference is a characteristic of the Native American culture that is quite diverse from the majority culture. Thus, the next section will examine the literature and provide a thorough review of these values.

### Noninterference & Children as Autonomous Individuals

Native American families continue to be consistently different from the majority culture in their support of autonomy, by permitting their children to develop in their own time and with minimal rules. Unlike majority culture children, Native American children are expected to learn through observation, and guidance is given only when children specifically asked for it. Words of advice are to be chosen carefully, and even when an elder is asked for advice, he/she may choose not to give it if he/she does not feel that he/she has expertise in that area (Jones, Kephart, Langley, Parker, Shenoy, & Weeks, 2001).

The majority culture often expresses concern about the comparative freedom given to an Native American child and the apparent lack of parental concern about the child's behavior; but what may appear as excessive permissiveness could be an alternative way of allowing healthy development in children (Glover, 2001). Autonomy is highly valued in Native American families, and children are allowed to make their own decisions and operate semi-independently at an early age with the freedom to experience natural consequences. According to LaFromboise and Low (1998), infancy is often marked by several celebrations that honor developmental milestones, such as the first smile, first steps, or first attempts to use language, and even though Native American

families honor these developments, they feel little stress over the timing of such events, because their values include recognition of a child's own readiness, as well as restraint from pressuring a child to perform.

Lefley (1976) examined acculturation, child-rearing, and self-esteem in two Native American tribes. A clear distinction was found in the level of acculturation between the two tribes, with one being fairly acculturated while the other tribe remained fairly traditional. Regarding strictness and rules, the common response in both tribes was to permit children to stay up until sleepy, and to report "no rules" with respect to tasks, homework, and the like. However, the "traditional" tribe was somewhat less permissive than the "acculturated" tribe in reporting no rules (53% vs. 70%), interestingly enough placing the "traditional" tribe closer to mainstream conceptualizations of appropriate child-rearing, than the "acculturated" tribe. This finding may suggest that a group that has retained strong ties with its cultural practices and traditions tends to maintain specific core values that are similar to the dominant society, while a group undergoing the distress of acculturation may become socially disoriented and in their efforts to become more like the dominant culture err more drastically from the "norm."

Yates (1987) believes that Native American children are not thought to be the property of their parents, but to be autonomous, equal individuals who make progress in life at their own unique pace and who are responsible for their own decisions. Therefore, toddlers choose when to eat or sleep, grade school children may choose not to attend school, and older children are allowed to travel by themselves as well as make important decisions regarding their future. Since there is no "correct" way to rear children, parents do not interfere with the predicted course of development. However, according to Yates

(1987) guidance in developmental tasks is encouraged and rewarded but it is not deliberately taught or enforced. Individual autonomy is the respected standard in the Native American culture, even within the family, where one can give advice, but not a command. In fact, as mentioned previously, children predominantly learn through imitation and modeling. Lefley (1973) found, however, that in many families, the customary autonomy given children seems to extend to noninterference even in possibly harmful situations. However, discipline is used in Native American communities, but not in the same manner as used in the majority culture. Because of this variation from the majority culture, it is important to examine the existing literature regarding Native American's use of discipline.

### Discipline

According to LaFromboise and Low (1998), when problems come up among Native American youth, information about a youth's misbehavior might be passed from the mother to her parents and sisters or from mother or father to an aunt or uncle who has been selected as responsible for guiding the youth's character development. They report that amends for the misconduct on the part of the youth may involve an apology to each of the family members who are concerned about the youth or who are embarrassed by the youth's misbehavior. This indirect line of communication may serve to protect the relationship between parents and their children and strengthens extended family involvement in maintaining standards of behavior, while continuing to stress the effect of the child's behavior on others.

Glover (2001) reports that social control of children in the Native American community is minimal and used subtly. In fact, cautions about the effects of bad

behaviors are presented in terms of community, identifying how others might see the behavior, and seldom is a threat of physical punishment used; however, shame is a regularly used disciplinary tool. She further reports that discipline may be administered in ways not perceptible by outsiders. However, Native American children are not punished frequently nor are they in constant fear of punishment. This may be due in large part to Native Americans' utilization of inductive discipline (e.g., learning how your behavior affects others) for centuries, where disciplining might include words of objection, ignoring the child, or forcing the child to make amends for misbehavior.

In a study examining the effects of an Native American culture program on correlates of self-concept among Native American children from two different tribes, Mikosukee and Seminole, Lefley (1973) found that the preferred punishment method is spanking. In both tribes, the mother was the one who administered punishment predominantly. Both tribes indicated that punishment was a more effective method of child rearing than positive reinforcement. Lefley (1976) conducted a follow-up study where she examined acculturation, child-rearing, and self-esteem in two Native American tribes. It was found that the common response for both tribes was to "talk and reason" rather than to reprimand as the principal means of handling misbehavior. However, when punishment was necessary, the preferred method was spanking, administered by the mother. The Mikosukees (traditional) differed significantly from the Seminoles (less traditional) in continuing to use the traditional punishment of "scratching," that is "drawing several sewing needles across the upper arm to remove bad spirits from the blood" (p. 393). Both indicated that punishment was a more effective means of child

rearing than positive reinforcement. When the latter was used, however, the Mikosukees preferred social reinforcement, while the Seminole's preferred tangible rewards.

Thompson and Joseph (1951) examined the effect of majority culture contact on two Native American communities, one which had retained its ceremonial system (First Mesa), and the other which no longer used the ceremonial system (Third Mesa). The test findings suggest that, compared to First Mesa, there was a greater emphasis on negative social punishments than on positive ones, particularly in regard to the influence of the community on the individual at Third Mesa. The idea of immediate justice was emphasized, and there was more anxiety and less happiness at Third Mesa. At First Mesa, where the ceremonial cycle was still intact, a much more balanced social setup was found. This was exhibited not only in the family, where both the mother and the father have a fundamental place, but also between the family and the community. Whereas at Third Mesa, where the ceremonial cycle was not intact, it was found that a large amount of the child's punishments came directly from the tightly connected but dwindling kinship group. At First Mesa the family, the community, and the supernatural supported one another in both a positive and negative role.

Obviously, acculturation has had a tremendous impact on the manner in which discipline is used and understood in Native American cultures. Unfortunately, the effect of acculturation is not only seen in the discipline strategies used by Native American communities, but also entire community functioning.

#### Acculturation

Even though several of the core traditional values pervade the lives of Native Americans across tribal groups, Native Americans are not an entirely homogeneous

group. Acculturation stress, or the dilemma of being caught between two worlds, has prompted a large amount of writing and research (Trimble, 1999). Trimble and Thurman (2002) report that customarily it is thought that individuals immediately encounter conflict between the new and old cultures as they begin movement toward a new culture, because there is implicit inherent conflict between beliefs, behaviors, and old and new values. Moreover, they report it is commonly assumed that when an individual embraces something from the new culture, it inevitably replaces something of the old, because a person has only so much capacity for culture. In fact, conflict will continue to exist until the individual has made a complete transition to the new culture and all of the old is replaced, according to this view. However, Oetting and Beauvais (1991) put forward a different conceptualization of acculturation. They postulate that transitioning between two cultures does not necessarily have to engender conflict or stress, because individuals have ample capacity not only to endure but also to grow from their ability to participate in two or more cultural domains. Furthermore, there is some belief that bicultural individuals, those who can function well in two worlds, may actually enjoy superior psychological health, although the empirical evidence is only modest at this time. Garrett and Pichette (2000), have identified the subsequent levels of acculturation for Native Americans:

- 1 *Traditional*. May or may not speak English, but generally speak and think in their native language; hold only traditional values and beliefs and practice only traditional tribal customs and methods of worship

- 2 *Marginal*. May speak both the native language and English; may not, however, fully accept the cultural heritage and practices of their tribal group nor fully identify with mainstream cultural values and behaviors.
- 3 *Bicultural*. Generally accepted by dominant society and tribal society/nation; simultaneously able to know, accept, and practice both mainstream values/behaviors and the traditional values and beliefs of their cultural heritage.
- 4 *Assimilated*. Accepted by dominant society; embrace only mainstream cultural values, behaviors, and expectations.
- 5 *Pantraditional*. Assimilated Native Americans who have made a conscious choice to return to the “old ways.” They are generally accepted by dominant society but seek to embrace previously lost traditional cultural values, beliefs, and practices of their tribal heritage. Therefore, they may speak both English and their native tribal language.

These five levels are a continuum along which any given Native American individual may fall. Not considering blood quantum, the most common and most erroneous means of determining a person’s “Indianness,” is his/her degree of traditionalism, which comes not only from his/her ethnic heritage, but also from his/her life experiences.

All Native Americans have become acculturated in varying degrees into the majority culture; however, the level of acculturation depends on the strength of the family’s support systems and the extent of their own commitment to retaining their traditions (Glover, 2001). When a family joins the dominant culture, they inevitably make modifications in their behavior to adapt to their new community. Garrett (1995)

described the following four levels of acculturation as they applied to transitions an individual makes as he/she enters the dominant culture:

1. *Traditional level.* A person holds onto only traditional beliefs and values.
2. *Transitional level.* A person holds both traditional beliefs and values and those of the dominant culture, but they may not accept all of either culture.
3. *Bicultural level.* A person is accepted by the dominant culture and also knows and practices traditional ways.
4. *Assimilation level.* A person embraces only dominant cultural beliefs and values.

It is obvious that within-group differences have to be considered when working or dealing with Native Americans. Because of differences in acculturation, approaches that might be appropriate for a given individual may not be appropriate for all Indians (Choney, Berryhill-Paapke, & Robbins, 1995).

#### Summary/Critique

It is evident from reviewing the existing literature on Native American parenting styles and strategies that there is a great need for further research in this area. The inconsistent and limited literature that exists regarding Native American families is a disadvantage to those working with these types of families. This is obviously a population in need of intervention, but without information and knowledge about the target populations, successful intervention is difficult. Specifically, areas that need to be further explored are discipline strategies used within the family and tribe, caretaker role, teaching of life-skills, value of education, effects of acculturation, parenting confidence, and the value of noninterference with children. Each of these will be addressed below.

There are minimal studies examining discipline in Native American cultures, and those that do exist are dated and report contradictory findings. Lefley (1973) reports that the preferred punishment method in the Mikosukee and Seminole tribes is spanking, whereas in a follow-up study, Lefley (1976) reports that the common response for both tribes was to “talk and reason” as opposed to reprimanding as the primary means of handling misbehavior. Further, discrepant findings have also been reported in regards to who is responsible for administering the punishment. Thompson and Joseph (1951) examined two Native American communities, and found that in the more traditional tribe (First Mesa) punishment is primarily administered by the mother and father whereas in the less traditional tribe (Third Mesa), punishment largely came from the tightly connected kinship group. However, Lefley (1973, 1976) reports that in the Mikosukee and Seminole tribes, punishment is primarily administered by the mother. These discrepant findings could be due to a number of factors including differences between tribes, differences in acculturation, differences in methodology, and differences in the ages of children being studied. Since it is unclear how these different factors interact to affect the previous findings, future studies should use standardized measures, while being aware that the results may not accurately reflect Native American parenting styles and strategies due to the fact that parenting measures have not historically been normed with Native Americans. Further, acculturation and age of child studied should be carefully taken into consideration and their effect on the resulting data should be thoroughly analyzed.

Studies reporting on who is/are the primary caretakers in Native American culture commonly find that the extended family system as well as other tribal members are

strongly valued and heavily utilized in the care-taking of Native American children (Horejsi, Craig, & Pablo, 1972; LaFramboise & Low, 1998). However, Glover (2001) reports that for some the extended family has become an uncommon source of support. It is critical to thoroughly investigate the caretaker role within Native American cultures and how it might affect the Native American child. Specifically, it is important to clarify how involved the extended family as well as other tribe members are in the care-taking of Native American children and if this involvement serves to support and foster strong bonds of reciprocal assistance or if it promotes instability within the home.

The existing literature on the value Native Americans place on education is not only limited but inconsistent as well. While many studies suggest that education is discouraged, others indicate that it is the estrangement from the tribe that education may bring that is disliked. Further, it is not quite clear whether it is an individual's desire for higher education that causes conflict or the personal accomplishment that comes along with it. It is important to separate these variables in order to elucidate how the Native American culture views formal education and on what values those views are based.

The great importance that is placed on individual achievement in most dominant culture academic institutions can cause conflict with tribes and families. Being commended for success may result in estrangement from home, and some family members may actively dissuade goals that involve leaving the family and home. The inability to live up to community expectations can often cause conflict or guilt over noncompliance (Glover, 2001). Frequently, because the values of home and school are so different, the child has to choose between being a good Native American and being a good student (Beuf, 1977).

Berlin (1987) found that elders esteemed by children generally have little use for school since they consider it to be taking their children away from tradition into a destructive and foreign world. Therefore, many Native American children may find there is no one to support their eagerness to learn or their special talents throughout their school experience, and thus their cognitive development goes unnurtured. However, Berlin (1987) reports that some communities have recently been able to offer schooling near the reservation. This allows communities to put increasing importance on effective education, combining both traditional values as well as the skills required to help individuals and the community function in a technological society.

Parenting confidence is another area in which further research needs to be conducted with Native Americans. The research to date is inconclusive and limited in its findings. It is not quite clear whether the boarding school era, and thus the gap in communication of parenting skills, is still affecting the level of confidence that Native Americans have in their parenting. On the other hand, the confidence Native Americans have in their parenting could be boosted by the close communal relationship of the extended family and tribe. It is important to clarify how confident Native Americans are in their parenting abilities so that parenting programs can build on the strengths they already have and foster the development of skills in which they are lacking.

### CHAPTER III

#### CURRENT INVESTIGATION

Parenting styles and strategies have been found to significantly contribute to child development, behavior, and adjustment. However, these domains have not been consistently examined in the Native American culture. This study utilized well-standardized and accepted measures as well as a newly developed measure in order to collect local normative data on parenting styles and strategies of Native Americans residing in Oklahoma, an area with a moderately large Native American population.

This study had four primary purposes:

First, the study provides descriptive information about parenting beliefs, values, specific parenting practices, and rates of child problem behavior in a Native American sample.

Second, the data gathered on the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) and Parenting Scale (PS) are examined and compared to normative data so as to determine if separate norms needed to be developed for Native American populations or if the existing norms could be used. It was predicted that the data gathered on the Native American sample would differ on some aspects from the normative data.

Third, the relationship between parenting behaviors such as laxness, verbosity, and overreactivity are examined in relation to problem frequency and problem level of child misbehaviors. It was predicted that less effective parenting would be related to a higher frequency of child misbehaviors. It was also predicted that increased laxness and

noninterference would be related to parents' seeing child misbehavior as less problematic.

Finally, the study examined acculturation, parenting strategies, and income in order to determine how they were related to/predict child problem behavior in Native American families. It was predicted that there would be differences found in the relationship of acculturation, parenting strategies, and income to child problem behavior.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHOD

#### Participants

Fifty-seven parents with children between the ages of six and twelve years were recruited as participants. Participants were recruited from Indian Health Services (IHS) hospitals and clinics, cultural events, craft fairs, powwows, personal contacts, and posters on campus and in the community. Two parents were dropped because they were Caucasian and four parents were dropped because their child was not in the targeted age range. The resulting final sample size was fifty-one Native American parents with children between the ages of six and twelve years (See Table 1). Caregivers were given ten dollars or a gift worth approximately \$10 for participating in the study.

Most participating parents were married or living with a partner, and were the biological mother of the child. Average age of parent was 36 years (range 22-68), and average child age was 9.04 yrs. There were more male children (n=36) than female children (n=15). Fifty-five percent of the sample was Cherokee, with the remainder representing 18 other tribes/nations. Other tribes/nations that are represented in this sample are Cheyenne Arapaho, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, Commanche, Crow, Iowa, Otoe-Missouria, Navajo, Papago, Pawnee, Ponca, Seminole, Shoshone, and Sioux. Approximately 35% were from urban areas, while 65% were from rural settings.

## Measures<sup>1</sup>

### Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire was completed by the parents for descriptive purposes (Appendix A). The questionnaire assessed the participants' income, occupation, age, level of education, ethnic background, Native American tribal affiliations, and gender.

### Eyeberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI)

The ECBI (Burns & Patterson, 1990; Eyeberg & Ross, 1978) is used to assess parent reports of behavior problems in children between 2 and 16 years old. It is a 36-item scale, with two ratings for each item (intensity and problem). The intensity rating reflects how often the child engages in a particular behavior, whereas the problem rating reflects how problematic that specific behavior is for the parent. A problem score and an intensity score are produced. The ECBI has high internal consistency for both the Intensity ( $r = .95$ ) and Problem ( $r = .94$ ) scores, good test-retest reliability ( $r = .86$ ), and reliably discriminates between problem and nonproblem children (Robinson, Eyberg, & Ross, 1980). For the present sample, the alpha coefficients were .94 for the Intensity score and .94 for the Problem score. This is comparable to what has been found in previous studies.

### Parenting Scale

The Parenting Scale (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, & Acker, 1993) assesses dysfunctional parental discipline techniques of parents with children between 18 months and 5 years old. It is a 30-item scale, using seven-point ratings. The Parenting Scale has

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<sup>1</sup> Three additional measures were included (Support from Friends and Family, Parenting Stress Index: Short Form, and Parent Education Questionnaire) in participant packets for the purpose of a larger study. The

adequate reliability and internal consistency (Arnold, et al., 1993). A total score is obtained as well as three sub-factor scores: Laxness, Overreactivity, and Verbosity. The Laxness factor is related to permissive discipline and describes the ways in which parents give in, fail to enforce rules, or give positive consequences for misbehaving. The Overreactivity factor reflects parental behaviors such as displays of anger, meanness, and irritability. The Verbosity factor reflects protracted verbal responses and a reliance on talking even when talking is futile. Although the standardization data were developed for families with children ages 18 months to 5 years, there is some evidence that this measure is useful for families with children older than 5 years (Collett, Cimpel, Greenson, & Gunderson, 2001). Psychometric properties appear to remain strong among the parents of elementary school children, with minimal differences in scores as a function of children's age. Collett et al. (2001) report coefficients alpha of .85 for Total Score, .86 for Laxness, .81 for Overreactivity, and .50 for Verbosity. The results of their analyses suggested that Verbosity was not a distinct construct, but rather overlapped with Overreactivity and Laxness. For the present sample, the coefficients alpha were .83 for Total Score, .81 for Laxness, .83 for Overreactivity, and .42 for Laxness. This is comparable to what has been found in previous studies.

#### Native American Acculturation Scale

The Native American Acculturation Scale (Garrett & Pichette, 2000) is a 20-item multiple-choice measure which assesses an individual's level of acculturation along a continuum, ranging from traditional Native American to assimilated mainstream American. It can be administered individually or in groups, and has a ninth-grade reading level. A total score is gained, ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 representing a low level of

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data from these questionnaires was not analyzed for the purpose of this study.

acculturation and 5 representing a high level of acculturation. A total score of 3 represents the cut-off score, with a total score above 3 identifying people holding the majority culture's values and beliefs. The Native American Acculturation Scale has adequate reliability and validity, and has been deemed culturally appropriate by a panel of experts from various geographical and tribal affiliations. Garrett and Pichette (2000) report reliability (internal consistency) of this scale to be .91. For the present sample, coefficient alpha was found to be .88, which is comparable to what was found in the Garrett and Pichette (2000) study.

#### Native American Parenting Survey (NAPS)

The Native American Parenting Survey (NAPS) (Appendix A) is a newly developed 13-item measure which assesses several parenting factors: upbringing, parenting confidence, discipline, education, and traditional values. Reliability and validity have not yet been established for the NAPS.

#### Procedure

Packets containing assessment materials were provided to IHS agencies and contacts for review. Upon approval from the IHS agencies and contacts, packets containing an introductory letter describing the study and soliciting participants were distributed to Native American parents with children between the ages of six and twelve years. Packets also contained consent forms, demographic questionnaire, ECBI, Parenting Scale, Acculturation Measure, Native American Parenting Survey, PSI, Social Support Measure, Parent Education Questionnaire, and a debriefing questionnaire. Participants were contacted at powwows, fairs, or other cultural events. Flyers were distributed to some participants, who later contacted the researchers to receive a packet in

the mail; completed packets were returned via pre-paid postage. Other participants received packets at the event, and either completed and returned the packet at the event, or returned the completed packet by mail. Finally, some participants received packets from previous participants who agreed to distribute packets to eligible families; these completed packets were returned via pre-paid postage. Parents were notified that they would be awarded a ten dollar monetary gift or the equivalent as compensation for their participation. Upon receipt of the packet, a ten dollar money order or a tangible item of equivalent value was mailed to the participating family.

## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS

Initial data analysis focused on descriptive information regarding the background and values of the participating families. Descriptive data on Native American parenting, acculturation, parenting techniques endorsed, and level of child problem behavior are presented in order to obtain as complete a picture as possible of these Native American families.

#### Native American Parenting Survey (NAPS)

Review of the NAPS responses indicated that for all of the families, one or both parents were primarily responsible for childrearing. However, in 49% of the families, a significant role in childrearing was also shared with extended family members (See Table 2). These family members included grandparents, great grandparents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and older siblings. The NAPS questionnaire contained several questions to which the parents responded on a ten-point likert-type scale, with 1-2 being equal to “never,” 3-4 being equal to “sometimes,” 5-6 being equal to “half the time,” 7-8 being equal to “most of the time,” and 9-10 being equal to “always.” The following percentages pertain to parents who responded answering “most of the time” or “always” (See Table 3 for detailed results). Results indicated that for the majority of participants (96%), confidence in parenting was high. Further, the majority of participants (96%) felt that they made good decisions in regard to their children. Parents reported relatively low levels of frustration with their children. Only 13.8% of parents reported they were easily

frustrated by their child. Results also indicated that 90.2% of parents reported being primarily responsible for teaching their child right from wrong as well as being primarily responsible for teaching their child self-care skills. Most parents (86.3%) reported that their children most often sought guidance from them about important life decisions. In regards to discipline, 76.5% of parents reported being primarily responsible for disciplining their child. Further, 88.2% of parents reported that they were consistent in the use of discipline with their child. Results also indicated that most parents (86.3%) believed girls should receive the same type of discipline as boys. In setting educational goals for their children, 93% reported wanting their children to attend college, with all parents placing high emphasis on the value of receiving formal education. Only 13.8% of the parents reported that education interferes with their child retaining traditional values. In rating their goals for traditional and mainstream values for their children, about 93% indicated that both traditional and mainstream values were important. These data are consistent with the NAAS scores (see below).

#### Native American Acculturation Scale (NAAS)

The mean NAAS score was 3.44 (*S.D.* = .61), which is a moderate level of acculturation, reflecting slightly less identification with the Native American culture. Using the authors' recommended cutoff score of 3.0, only 17.6% of the sample falls within the highly identified range. About 62% of the sample falls within the midrange, and about 20% falls within the highly acculturated range.

#### Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI)

Two total scores were calculated from this parent-report measure: an Intensity score reflecting the frequency of occurrence of problem behaviors and a Problem score

reflecting how many behaviors parents found problematic. There were incomplete data on the ECBI measure for 6 of the participants in this study. Therefore, ECBI results reported here are on a sample size of 45. The mean Intensity score was 100.49 (*S.D.* = 30.96, range = 42-193) and the mean Problem score was 8.27 (*S.D.* = 8.44, range = 0-30). Six children, or 13.33%, scored above the ECBI Intensity score clinical cutoff (Intensity score  $\geq$  132), while 9 children, or 20 %, scored above the ECBI Problem score clinical cutoff (Problem score  $\geq$  15). The data gathered on the ECBI were compared to the standardization sample data to see if the scores significantly differed (See Table 4). Using the mean scores on both the intensity and problem scales of the ECBI, a one-sample *z*-test was conducted in order to determine if these scores differed significantly from the normative data for this measure. The normative data indicate that the mean Intensity score is 104.34 (*S.D.* = 24.50) and the mean Problem score is 4.62 (*S.D.* = 4.97). Results indicated that there was no significant difference between this sample and the normative sample for the mean Intensity score ( $z = .85, p > .05$ ) or for the mean Problem score ( $z = 4.29 \times 10^{-7}, p > .05$ ).

#### Parenting Scale (PS)

A Total score and three factor scores (Laxness, Overreactivity, and Verbosity) were calculated from this parent-report measure. There were incomplete data on the PS measure for one of the participants in this study. Therefore, PS results reported here are on a sample size of 50. The mean Total score was 2.94 (*S.D.* = .63, range = 1.50 – 4.40). The mean Laxness score was 2.42 (*S.D.* = .79, range = 1.09 – 4.55). The mean Overreactivity score was 2.84 (*S.D.* = .99, range = 1.00 – 5.30). The mean Verbosity score was 3.92 (*S.D.* = .85, range = 1.86 – 6.43). These scores are comparable to those

obtained by Harvey, Danforth, Ulaszek, & Eberhardt (2001) in a group of normal control children aged 5-12 years. Using the mean scores on the Laxness, Overreactivity, and Verbosity scales of the PS, a one-sample  $z$ -test was conducted in order to determine if these scores differed significantly from the normative data for this measure (See Table 5). Normative data indicate that the mean Laxness score is 2.4 ( $S.D.$  = 0.8), the mean Overreactivity score is 2.4 ( $S.D.$  = 0.7), the mean Verbosity score is 3.1 ( $S.D.$  = 1.0), and the mean Total score is 2.6 ( $S.D.$  = 0.6). Results indicated that there was no significant difference between this sample and the normative sample for the mean Laxness score ( $z = .43, p > .05$ ), the mean Overreactivity score ( $z = 4.45 \times 10^{-6}, p > .05$ ), the mean Verbosity score ( $z = 3.36 \times 10^{-9}, p > .05$ ), or for the mean Total score ( $z = 2.49 \times 10^{-5}, p > .05$ ).

Correlational and regression analyses were used in the next step of analyses in order to test hypotheses regarding interrelationships between parenting strategies, child behavior, and other variables in this sample.

#### Relationships Among Parenting Strategies, Child Behavior, and Other Variables

Parenting strategies were correlated with frequency and problem level of child misbehavior in order to explore possible relationships between parenting strategies and child behavior in a Native American culture as measured in this study. It was predicted that less effective parenting would be related to a higher frequency of child misbehaviors. It was also predicted that increased laxness would be related to parents' seeing child misbehavior as less problematic. Scale scores from the PS (Verbosity, Laxness, Overreactivity factor scores and Total score) were correlated with the Frequency and Problem scores of the ECBI using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Table 6 presents the Pearson correlations between these variables. Consistent with

predictions, less effective parenting, as indicated by higher scores on the Parenting Scale, was related to a higher frequency and problem level of child misbehaviors. However, the Parenting Scale Laxness score was found to be positively correlated with the ECBI Problem score, rather than negatively as predicted. Both of these relationships remained significant after a modified Bonferroni correction, which set the alpha level at .00625.

Parenting strategies, problem level of child misbehavior, family income, and acculturation level were analyzed in order to determine how they were related to each other. A correlation matrix was computed first in order to examine relationships between Total PS Score, ECBI Intensity Score, family income, and Total Score on the NAAS (See Table 7). The resulting correlation matrix indicates that three of the observed relationships were significant. The strongest relationship was that between the PS Total Score and the ECBI Intensity Score ( $r=.61$ ), which was discussed in the previous section. Additionally, family income was positively correlated with Total NAAS Score ( $r=.53$ ) and negatively correlated with the ECBI Intensity Score ( $r=-.37$ ). No further significant correlations were found among these variables. After a modified Bonferroni correction, which set the alpha level at .00833, the relationship between family income and ECBI Intensity score was no longer significant. However, both of the other relationships remained significant.

Family income and acculturation level were further analyzed in order to determine how they were related to specific NAPS items. Items on the NAPS related to parenting confidence were summed and the summed score was used in the analyses. Further, items on the NAPS related to teaching of life skills were also summed, and the summed score was used in the analyses. Finally, the NAPS items, “responsibility for

discipline” and “consistency of discipline,” were summed, and the summed score was used in the analyses. A correlation matrix was computed in order to examine relationships between family income, NAAS Total Score, summed NAPS confidence item, summed NAPS teaching item, and NAPS discipline item (See Table 8). The resulting correlation matrix indicates that the only significant relationship is that between family income and responsibility for discipline. There was a negative correlation between family income and responsibility for discipline, indicating that families with lower levels of income are more likely to rate themselves as bearing more discipline responsibility with their children than families with higher incomes. After a modified Bonferroni correction, which set the alpha level at .00833, the relationship between family income and responsibility for discipline was no longer significant.

Specific NAPS items were further analyzed to determine how they were related to Parenting Scale factor and total scores. A correlation matrix was computed in order to examine relationships between the Laxness, Overreactivity, Verbosity, and Total Score on the Parenting Scale as well as the summed NAPS confidence item, summed NAPS teaching item, and NAPS discipline item (See Table 9). The resulting correlation matrix indicates that seven of the observed relationships were significant. The strongest relationship was the negative correlation between the PS Total Score and the summed NAPS confidence item ( $r=-.58$ ), indicating that fewer dysfunctional parenting techniques are associated with higher confidence in parenting ability. Therefore, these parents could be reported to be appropriately confident in their parenting abilities. Further, both Laxness and Overreactivity were negatively correlated with the summed NAPS confidence item. The NAPS consistency item was found to be negatively correlated with

the Parenting Scale Total Score as well as the three Parenting Scale factor scores. This relationship indicates that parents who are more consistent in their discipline tend to use fewer dysfunctional parenting techniques. This is consistent with other general parenting literature. No further significant correlations were found among these variables. After a modified Bonferroni correction, which set the alpha level at .003125, the relationship between the Parenting Scale Verbosity score and NAPS Consistency of Discipline was no longer significant.

Specific NAPS items were also analyzed to determine how they were related to ECBI scores. A correlation matrix was computed in order to examine relationships between the ECBI Intensity and Problem Scores as well as the summed NAPS confidence item, summed NAPS teaching item, and NAPS discipline item (See Table 10). The resulting correlation matrix indicates that three of the observed relationships were significant. The strongest relationship was the negative correlation between the ECBI Problem Score and the summed NAPS confidence item ( $r=-.59$ ), indicating that higher confidence in parenting is associated with a parent viewing his/her child as exhibiting fewer problem behaviors. The ECBI Intensity score was also negatively correlated with the summed NAPS confidence item, indicating that higher confidence in parenting is also associated with parenting a child who exhibits problem behavior less frequently. Finally, the NAPS consistency of discipline item was negatively correlated with the ECBI Intensity score, indicating that a parent who endorses more consistent use of discipline techniques is more likely to rate his/her child as exhibiting less frequent behavior problems than a parent who endorses less consistent use of discipline techniques. No further significant correlations were found among these variables. After a

modified Bonferroni correction, which set the alpha level at .00625, the relationship between ECBI Intensity score and NAPS Consistency of Discipline was no longer significant.

Finally, in order to differentiate between the unique and combined contributions of parenting strategies, family income, and acculturation to child problem behavior, they were entered into a regression equation using stepwise selection. The results of the previous zero-order correlations were used in determining which factors to enter into this regression analysis. It was predicted that parenting strategies, family income, and acculturation would each contribute unique variance in explaining child problem behavior. However, only Total PS Score and family income were found to have significant unique contributions in predicting the Intensity scale score of the ECBI. The proportion of variance increased from .36 (PS Total Score, entered in step 1), to .41, with the addition of family income in step 2. Level of acculturation (NAAS Total Score) was not entered into the equations as it did not contribute any unique variance to the Intensity scale score of the ECBI (See Table 11).

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION

This study utilized well-standardized and accepted measures as well as a newly developed measure in order to collect local normative data on parenting styles and strategies of Native Americans residing in Oklahoma, an area with a moderately large Native American population. This study had four primary purposes. The first purpose of the study was to provide descriptive information about parenting beliefs, values, specific parenting practices, and rates of child problem behavior in a Native American sample. The second purpose of the study was to examine the data gathered on the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) and Parenting Scale (PS) and compare it to normative data so as to determine if separate norms needed to be developed for these Native American families and perhaps Native American populations in general or if the existing norms could be used. The third purpose was to examine the relationship between parenting behaviors such as laxness, verbosity, and overreactivity in relation to problem frequency and problem level of child misbehaviors. The fourth purpose was to examine acculturation, parenting strategies, and income in order to determine how they were related to/predict child problem behavior in Native American families.

#### Interpretations of Results

Fifty-one Native American parents with children between the ages of six and twelve years participated in this study. Of the 51 participants, 28 (55%) were of Cherokee heritage. The remaining 45% of the sample was representative of 18 other tribes/nations.

Although data were collected in several areas of northern and eastern Oklahoma, it is important to note that a large proportion of this sample (55%) were of Cherokee heritage. Thus, this sample may be most representative of Cherokees and not as representative of other tribes. There are several reasons why this may have occurred. First, the Cherokee Nation is the largest tribe in Oklahoma and has enrolled members all over the state. Further, Cherokee Nation has specific guidelines, policies, and procedures in regards to research (including an established tribal IRB), indicating that the tribe is both familiar and comfortable with the research process. Therefore, Cherokee members may be more likely to participate. Members from other tribes in Oklahoma, however, may not be as accustomed to research with Native families, and thus may have a lower rate of participation. Although, a majority of the sample did identify as Cherokee, a range of parenting practices were reported with some reports closely resembling those in previous literature on characteristics of Native American parenting. This finding could be interpreted to mean that the results of this study may be representative not only of Cherokee Nation but of other tribes in Oklahoma as well.

### Characteristics of Parenting

Parents reported extensive involvement of extended family members in childrearing. Involved caregivers ranged from aunts and uncles to great-grandparents. This result is consistent with Red Horse (1980), who found that Native American family values most often demand cross-group relational behavior, instead of autonomy and independence, and extended family systems strongly promote interdependence. This practice, although not unique to the Native American culture, is not typically found in mainstream culture. Typically, a family is defined as and characterized by the mother and/or father and their

children, without significant reliance on extended family members. This type of family is commonly known as a nuclear family. However, in this sample of Native American families we find that about half rely on extended kin to assist them in the caretaking and upbringing of their children. This reliance on extended kin has been discussed in previous literature and is likely related to the value placed on knowledge of traditional Native American practices and beliefs for their children. It seems logical that traditional beliefs and practices would be more easily passed on in families with high interdependence. For example, a child who is cared for by his/her great aunt versus a day care setting, has more opportunity to learn and be exposed to the particular values and traditions of his/her family. Further, with extensive involvement of extended kin, a child is exposed to a greater range of the family's practices and culture. A family that places great value on traditional beliefs and practices may observe reliance on extended kin as necessary in order to ensure the transmission of these beliefs and practices to their children.

This interdependence among Native Americans leads one to consider the ancient African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child." All cultures begin with the group, meaning that culture is inherently social. It is impossible to have a culture of one. A child is shaped by the society in which he/she is reared. While parents are often a child's most significant teachers, many other adults are very influential in shaping how that child thinks and behaves. Child rearing is a collective responsibility with ingrained cultural traditions governing everything from respecting one's elders to individual character. How children work, play, and express themselves differs significantly by location. Regional traditions may vary greatly, reflecting the ethnic background of the population. Regardless of where a child is brought up, the environment, or the village,

helps shape the personality and behavior of that child. Another characteristic that was examined was the family's view of education.

All of the participants in this sample were found to place high emphasis on the value of receiving formal education, with 93% of the sample reporting they wanted their child to attend college. Further, 86% of the parents in this sample reported that education does not interfere with their child retaining traditional values. This finding is contradictory to previous literature on Native Americans' view of education, which indicates that formal education is not emphasized in the Native American culture because of the desire to preserve traditional beliefs and practices. Berlin (1987) found that elders esteemed by children generally have little use for school since they consider it to be taking their children away from tradition, and into a destructive and foreign world. Further, Beuf (1977) reports that because the values of home and school are so different, a child has to choose between being a good Native American and being a good student. This contradictory finding regarding the view of formal education could be due to several factors.

Historically, many Native Americans were sent to boarding schools where they were prohibited from engaging in cultural practices. Boarding schools were an intensive attempt to assimilate Indians into "Americans." Educators cut children's hair, changed their dress, and subjected them to harsh routines and discipline. Additionally, they suppressed tribal languages and cultural practices, seeking to replace them with English and Christianity. For many Native American children, this led to confusion, anger, estrangement, and homesickness. However, boarding schools served as sites of both cultural loss and cultural persistence. These institutions, intended to assimilate Native

people into mainstream society and eliminate Native cultures, became important components of Native American identities and eventually contributed to the desire for political and cultural autonomy. This search for political and cultural autonomy is most likely tightly interwoven with the emphasis on formal education, as these concepts may no longer be viewed as incompatible.

Another view regarding the changed opinion of formal education within the Native American culture relates to the importance of higher education. Higher education has almost become a necessity in order for an individual to secure a good job, and as stated previously in this paper, Native American families, like all other families, want only the best for their children (Berlin, 1987). Native Americans generally stress the importance of the extended family and kinship relations over individualism (Glover, 2001). In the educational arena, individual achievement is often stressed. This intense focus on the individual is not compatible with Native American culture, where the group/community takes precedence over the individual. However, those individuals that do receive higher education may be doing so for the benefit of the community. It may be acceptable to succeed as an individual when the skills learned and education received will be brought back to the community. In fact, many tribes have developed higher education programs in order to facilitate their members' attainment of higher education. The purpose of these higher education programs is to develop and support thorough social, educational and employment programs. These programs provide educational and employment opportunities to prepare Native Americans for productive lives as tribal members.

The level of acculturation of participating families in this study may have also contributed to this sample's emphasis on formal education. Few families scored in the

range indicating highest identification with or highest emphasis on traditional values. Most scored in the mid-range, reflecting identification with both traditional and mainstream values. Thus, if emphasis on traditional families is not initially high there may not be any fear or concern that formal education will interfere with one's ability to retain those values and beliefs. Finally, this difference may also be due to the fact that participating families resided in Oklahoma. Native Americans in Oklahoma do not have a history of reservations, and tend to live in areas in which members of multiple tribes (rather than predominantly a single tribe), and non-Native families reside. These and other potential differences (e.g., living on a reservation, speaking a tribal language, etc.) between Native American families are important factors to consider not only in regard to education, but in regard to parenting practices as well. Another characteristic that was examined is parents' confidence in their parenting abilities.

Parents in this sample were very confident in their parenting abilities, believed that they made good decisions as caregivers, and indicated relatively low levels of overall frustration with their children. These results are very similar to what Gfellner (1990) found in her study. She reported that Native American parents perceived their actual parenting behaviors as exceeding their perceived norm or ideal. It seems logical that with the extended social and familial support that is typically available to Native American families, that there would be increased confidence in their parenting skills and lower frustration with the children. Community and familial support then, may serve as a bolster or safety net for the insecure or overwhelmed parent. It is reasonable to assume that lack of knowledge about the responsibilities of parenthood and the parenting role would be strongly related to decreased confidence in parenting ability. If we are to

consider a parent who has minimal knowledge about the responsibilities of parenthood we would assume that he/she most likely has very little confidence in his/her ability to parent. However, if this same parent is surrounded by friends and family who will assist with the childrearing and give guidance to this new parent, then understandably his/her confidence will be higher. Further, a parent with this extended support network also experiences lower frustration levels with his/her child due to the ability or opportunity to turn to others for advice, guidance, or respite care. This lower frustration level may also be due to the way in which the families utilize discipline techniques.

Parents in this sample reported being consistent in their discipline, which could in turn lead to lower frustration levels with their children. It is well known that a parent who is consistent in the use of his/her discipline is more likely to have a better behaved child than a parent who is inconsistent. However, unlike previous literature, parents in this sample reported that they are the ones primarily responsible for disciplining their child. LaFromboise and Low (1998) found that when problems come up among Native American youth, information about a youth's misbehavior might be passed from the mother to her parents and sisters or from mother or father to an aunt or uncle who has been selected as responsible for guiding the youth's character development. It is not clear why the parents in this sample differ from previous findings, but this is an issue that could be researched further in future studies. Additionally, although this finding may seem inconsistent with what was reported previously in regard to the value of interdependence, it is important to note that valuing interdependence does not prevent a parent from taking primary responsibility in certain areas of the child's development. Therefore, there may be certain areas in which the parent relies heavily on extended

family members to assist with the child rearing while still being the individual primarily responsible for other areas, such as discipline.

Although these findings may not be generalizable to other Native American families, they do provide a nice foundation for the perception of current parenting characteristics in the Native American culture. Although some of the results of this study correspond to what is found in previous literature, there are also significant differences. The interdependence among family members found in this sample is very similar to reports from previous literature. However, the extent of this interdependence is not clear, nor is it clear if this interdependence is found in tribes outside of Oklahoma. To appreciate a better understanding of the role of interdependence in tribal communities, further research must be conducted examining its intricacies. Opinions regarding formal education in this sample did differ significantly from what was found in previous literature. Several potential reasons were given as to why this difference may have occurred in this sample, but without further research no strong conclusions can be made. The research area regarding current trends in Native American parenting is in its infancy, and until more studies are conducted yielding similar findings, these results cannot be generalized to other Native populations.

#### Comparison of Standardized Measures to Normative Data

In examining scores on standardized measures of parenting and child behavior, a wide range of scores was found. It was hypothesized that the data gathered on this sample would differ on some aspects from the normative data. However, the analyses conducted did not demonstrate any significant differences between the Native American sample and the normative population. This may again be due to the moderate level of acculturation of

participating families. It is reasonable to assume that the more acculturated an individual or sample is, the more similar their responses will be to those of the normative sample. However, this finding could also be due to the types of behaviors that were examined by the parenting and child behavior measures. The hypothesized difference between this sample and the normative sample was predicted due to the Native American value of noninterference. Although noninterference is traditionally a strong value for Native American cultures, it may not be as strongly practiced with respect to overt misbehaviors. A Native American parent could value noninterference in the overall development of his/her child while still being highly responsive in reacting to his/her child's misbehaviors. The Native Americans in this sample responded to the standardized measures in a manner consistent with the normative group, indicating that the reported norms for the ECBI and PS may be appropriate for use with this group.

#### Relationships Among Parenting Strategies, Child Behavior, and Other Variables

A goal of this study was to test the hypothesis that less effective parenting would be related to a higher frequency and problem level of child misbehaviors, which was the case for this sample. Parents who endorsed higher levels of dysfunctional parenting techniques reported having children with more frequent and intense misbehaviors. It seems logical that a parent who utilizes unreliable and/or faulty discipline techniques is more likely to have a child with persistent problematic behaviors. Rather than improve a child's problematic behavior, dysfunctional discipline may potentially increase the likelihood of it occurring again or becoming worse. This relationship will in turn likely frustrate the parent and cause him/her to increasingly view the behavior as more problematic.

It was also hypothesized that increased laxness and noninterference would be related to parents' seeing child misbehavior as less problematic. This hypothesis was not supported, however the opposite was found. Increased laxness was found to be related to parents' seeing child misbehavior as more problematic. Again, this result could be related to the way in which noninterference is practiced in Native American families. A parent can be both highly responsive to his/her child's misbehaviors and still strongly value and practice noninterference. Conversely, being lax in discipline practices may not necessarily be related to noninterference. There is not a specific definition which details the intricacies or complexities of this idea. For different parents it may take on different meanings and be used in different ways. There are numerous areas (i.e., child's friendships, extracurricular activities, planning for the future) in which noninterference may be practiced. For example, LaFromboise and Low (1998) report that although Native American families honor and celebrate developmental milestones, they feel little stress over the timing of these events, because their values include recognition of a child's own readiness, as well as restraint from pressuring a child to perform. Further, Yates (1987) reports that Native American children are thought to be autonomous individuals who are responsible for their own decisions. It has been previously speculated that the value of noninterference precludes the use of standardized parent training programs. However, this finding indicates that this may not necessarily be the case. As stated previously, a parent can be both highly responsive to his/her child's misbehaviors and still strongly value and practice noninterference. At this point the specifics regarding the use of noninterference in Native American families are ambiguous. Additional research needs to be conducted to examine how Native American parents view and utilize this value.

Exploratory analyses were conducted in the next step of analyses in order to determine whether any relationships could be identified between the variables under examination in this study. Several of the observed relationships were found to be significant.

Income was found to be positively related to acculturation level and negatively related with intensity of child problem behaviors. The association between income and acculturation indicates that individuals with higher levels of income in this study tended to be more acculturated than individuals with lower levels of income. At this time it is unclear why this relationship may have been found, but one possibility is that this finding is strongly influenced by the income and acculturation level of the participating families in this sample. It is important to recall that there was a moderate range with respect to both level of acculturation and income level for participating families in this sample. Although there were some families who fell in the lower income range and more traditional range, the majority of the families in this sample indicated moderate to high levels of income and less traditional beliefs. It is important to note that this relationship (between income and acculturation level) was no longer significant after the modified Bonferroni correction. The lack of relationship found after the modified Bonferroni correction could be related to insufficient power. It is possible that with a larger sample this relationship would remain significant. However, it is also possible that the relationship between income and acculturation is just a weak relationship that lost significance with a moderately stringent correction. Future studies need to be conducted evaluating this relationship to determine if these findings can be replicated with a larger sample. The negative relationship between intensity of child misbehavior and income

indicates that individuals with higher levels of income in this sample are more likely to view their children as exhibiting fewer problem behaviors than individuals with lower levels of income. Families with lower levels of income are likely experiencing more stress due to financial issues and thus may have an overall lower threshold when dealing with their children's problem behaviors.

The negative relationship that was found between income and responsibility for discipline suggests that parents in this sample with higher levels of income did not have as much responsibility for disciplining their children as did parents with lower levels of income. One potential reason for this relationship could be due to families with higher levels of income having both parents in the family working. Although this particular relationship was not examined for this study, it seems logical that families with two working parents would have an overall higher level of income than one working parent. If both parents are employed full-time, then it is highly likely that someone outside the immediate family is assisting with the care-taking and disciplining of the children. For high-income families in which there is a single parent or only one working parent, it is possible that the additional income is used to hire someone to assist with the care-taking and disciplining of the children.

Analyses conducted to examine relationships between parenting strategies and NAPS items indicated that several of the observed relationships were significant, with the strongest relationships being a negative relationship between parenting strategies and parenting confidence, and a negative relationship between parenting strategies and consistency of discipline. The negative relationship between parenting strategies and parenting confidence suggests that increased confidence in parenting abilities is related to

lower endorsement of dysfunctional parenting techniques, which is consistent with previous literature. Bandura (1982) reports that diminished levels of perceived efficacy may result in poor persistence, depression, and self-blaming attributions on behalf of the parent. If a parent is utilizing discipline techniques that are ineffective then it is reasonable to presume his/her child's behaviors are most likely not improving or remitting. After several instances of a specific misbehavior followed by the utilization of a dysfunctional discipline technique, a parent will likely become frustrated by his/her inability to successfully correct his/her child's behavior. Bugental (1987) finds that parenting efficacy serves as a moderator of parent-child relationships and parents with diminished levels of perceived control over child behavior cope with difficult child behavior ineffectively.

The negative relationship between parenting strategies and the consistency of discipline suggests that parents who are more consistent in their discipline tend to use fewer dysfunctional discipline techniques. Conversely, parents who report increased utilization of dysfunctional discipline techniques are less consistent in their discipline. Referring to the previous example about a parent who repeatedly utilizes a dysfunctional discipline technique, one can easily understand how the parent not only becomes frustrated but how his/her reliance on the technique or techniques would become less consistent. One may wonder why the parent would not just try something different rather than decreasing the consistency of his/her discipline. A parent who is utilizing a dysfunctional discipline technique may not know more effective alternatives. Without knowledge of appropriate and effective parenting strategies, a parent is forced to rely on what he/she knows and what he/she has. If he/she were equipped with better tools (more

effective discipline strategies) then perhaps consistency of discipline would increase as a factor of increased compliance from his/her child.

Analyses conducted to examine relationships between child misbehavior and NAPS items indicated that three of the observed relationships were significant: negative relationship between problem level of child misbehavior and parenting confidence, negative relationship between frequency level of child misbehavior and parenting confidence, and negative relationship between frequency level of child misbehavior and consistency of discipline.

There was a negative relationship found between parenting confidence and both problem and intensity level of child misbehavior. These negative relationships indicate that higher parenting confidence is associated with less frequent and intense child problem behaviors. Perhaps the parents in this sample that reported fewer and milder child problem behaviors have a level of confidence that is appropriate. If a parent is utilizing effective parenting strategies then typically his/her child will exhibit minimal problem behaviors. Due to the effectiveness of the utilized parenting strategies, the parents' confidence in his/her ability to parent is bolstered with each successful discipline interaction. On the other hand, a parent who repeatedly uses ineffective strategies will most likely have a child who is not being appropriately corrected for his/her misbehavior and thus will continue to engage in said misbehavior. This relationship between ECBI Problem and Intensity scores and NAPS confidence items is consistent with reports of other general parenting literature. Gartstein and Sheeber (2004) found that child externalizing behavior was predictive, over time, of disruption in both family functioning and a decline in maternal self-perceived parenting competence.

The negative relationship between the intensity level of child misbehavior and consistency of discipline indicates that parents in this sample who were more consistent in their discipline had children who engaged in less frequent misbehaviors than parents who were inconsistent with their discipline. One reason for this finding could be the child's expectation of the parent's behavior. If a child is not sure how the parent is going to react to a specific misbehavior (inconsistency in discipline) then he/she may be more likely to engage in said behavior on the chance that he/she will not be punished. In other words, this child is being conditioned with a variable schedule of reinforcement. On the other hand, a child whose parent is very consistent in his/her discipline is much less likely to engage in a specific misbehavior as he/she is aware of the consequences that will most likely follow. It seems reasonable that more consistent discipline will result in less misbehavior, whereas less consistent discipline will result in increased misbehavior. This finding is consistent with previous literature. It is well known that irritable, demanding, or difficult behaviors exhibited by infants and toddlers were antecedents of inconsistent and coercive parenting (Shaw & Bell, 1993; Campbell, 1991; Forehand & Long, 2002).

The regression analysis conducted to examine relationships between intensity level of child misbehavior and family variables found that dysfunctional parenting techniques and level of family income each had significant unique contributions in predicting intensity of child misbehaviors. Level of acculturation was not found to contribute any unique variance in explaining intensity of child misbehaviors. It has already been established that dysfunctional parenting techniques and intensity of child misbehaviors are highly related. Family income was found to be related to intensity of child misbehavior, but the amount of variance explained is minimal. There is still a large

amount of variance in the intensity of child misbehaviors that is unexplained. This unexplained variance should be researched further in future studies by assessing other variables that may be potential contributors.

### Conclusions

In summary, this study found that Native American parents in this sample strongly value interdependence, and are primarily responsible for disciplining their children. Child rearing is viewed as a collective responsibility, with the parents generally being the child's most significant teachers while many other adults have a significant role in shaping how the child thinks and behaves. Although these findings may initially seem conflictual, it is important to remember that valuing interdependence does not prevent a parent from taking primary responsibility in certain areas of the child's development. There are likely particular areas in which the parent depends on extended family members to help with child rearing, while he/she is still the individual primarily responsible for other areas, such as discipline.

Additionally, this study found that in regard to standardized measures of parenting and child behavior, there were not any significant differences between the Native American sample and the normative population. The Native American parents in this sample responded to the standardized measures in a manner consistent with the normative group, indicating that the reported norms for the ECBI and the PS are appropriate for use with this group. Additionally, this result also provides promising support for the use of similar parenting interventions with Native and non-Native families.

This study also found that dysfunctional parenting techniques and level of family income both had significant unique contributions in predicting intensity of child

misbehaviors. The relationship between dysfunctional parenting techniques and intensity of child misbehaviors is well established. Although family income was found to have a significant unique contribution, the amount of variance explained in intensity of child misbehavior is minimal. There is still a large amount of variance in intensity of child misbehaviors that is unexplained and needs to be researched further in future studies by assessing other variables that may be potential contributors.

### Clinical Implications

Some clinical implications have emerged from the results of the current study. The data demonstrated that Native Americans in this sample are similar in some aspects of their parenting to what has been reported in previous literature. However, there have been significant changes from previous literature in some aspects of parenting as well. This finding could mean a number of different things. This finding may suggest that Native American parenting styles have changed over time, where the Native Americans in this sample are both holding on to traditional ways as well as adopting different strategies that they believe to be most beneficial for their children. However, this finding could also mean that these differences have always been present and have only been discovered now with this sample of Native Americans in Oklahoma. Most previous studies used reservation or urban samples. It is possible that Oklahoma Natives have always utilized different styles of parenting. Finally, these differences could be attributed to methodological differences between previous studies and the current studies.

The Native Americans in this sample continue to embrace a traditional system of cooperative interdependence, with family members accountable not only to each other but also to the different groups to which they belong. This suggests that in clinical

setting, these families should be treated from a systems perspective. Appreciating and understanding the context in which the family operates will serve to improve the therapeutic relationship and ensure best therapeutic progress. This finding also suggests that when conducting parent training programs with Native American families it may be useful to involve extended family members who play a significant role in child rearing. When conducting a parent training program it is always important to include everyone in the family and/or community who have a significant role in raising the child.

This sample's view of formal education is also different than what was reported in previous literature, with this sample of Native Americans placing high emphasis on the attainment of higher education. Participants in this sample did not see higher education and preservation of traditional values as mutually exclusive. This finding is encouraging when one considers that only 20% of Native American students graduate from high school (Beiser, Sack, Manson, Redshirt, & Dion, 1998). Clearly, it is important for parents, teachers, and other professionals to be aware of and support this emphasis on higher education. Perhaps with the development of additional educational and employment programs for Native Americans the retention and graduation rate of Native Americans will increase. This emphasis on higher education may also influence acceptance of and participation in parent training programs. Parent training programs are typically education focused with the primary goals being to provide resources to the family and teach the parents skills to better interact with their children. Considering that the participants in this sample placed significant emphasis on the attainment of higher education, it is reasonable to assume that they would be receptive to participating in a parenting program which had education at its core.

The results from this study provide tentative support that the ECBI and PS are appropriate to use with the participants in this sample. Neither the problem level or frequency of child misbehaviors nor the utilization of dysfunctional parenting techniques differed significantly from what is reported for the normative sample. Further, this result also provides promising support for the use of similar parenting interventions with Native and non-Native families. However, it is important to note that these results only provide tentative support and future research must be done in order to better understand these relationships.

Finally, it is important to discuss the clinical implications of what was found in regard to acculturation. Although acculturation was not found to be related to any of the variables other than income or provide unique variance in the explanation of intensity of child problem behavior, it is still an important concept to consider. The data reported in this paper may not be an accurate reflection of Native Americans who did not participate in this study. Additionally, there are several areas that were not tapped into by this study in which acculturation may have a strong influence. It is important for acculturation of Native Americans to continue to be assessed in both the clinical and research arenas.

#### Limitations and Strengths

In general, there are several limitations to this study which must be noted. Of primary importance is the fact that the sample was recruited from Oklahoma and the majority was of Cherokee heritage. This limits the ability to generalize the results to Native Americans of other heritage as well as Native Americans in other states. Further research is needed in order to evaluate whether these results are generalizable or are only applicable to an Oklahoma sample that is predominantly Cherokee. A second limitation

includes the fact that this sample was relatively small. Since the findings regarding Native American parenting characteristics were discrepant with previous studies, future research should use a greater number of participants with a wider variety of tribal identification in order to see if the same results are obtained. Another limitation of this study was the limited inclusion of qualitative assessment. Although quantitative data yields important information, it is much enriched by the addition of descriptive assessments. The addition of more qualitative measures may have tapped into factors that were not touched upon in this study. An additional limitation of this study is related to shared-method variance. Problems associated with the fact that raters are not independent and thus that information about parenting and child outcomes is filtered through the same source constitute a critical limitation. Finally, it is possible that there was a selection bias in this sample, where moderately to highly acculturated individuals may have been more interested in participating in this study (or any type of research for that matter) than less acculturated individuals. This bias may have influenced potential participants in their decision to participate in this sample and may have led to a more homogeneous sample than had this selection bias not occurred.

Significant strengths of this study should also be noted. This study collected data on Native American parents, who have been largely neglected in the norm samples of many psychological measures. Further, this study examined the appropriateness of using well-accepted measures with Native American parents. This study also gathered information on acculturation, tribal affiliation, and location of residence (urban vs. rural) in order to provide a thorough description of the sample. Collection of this data is important as Native Americans may differ by location, level of acculturation and by tribe.

Another strength of this study was the measurement of reliance on traditional parenting practices, interdependence among family members, and views on formal education. This information is important as it will strongly influence the assessment and treatment of Native American families.

#### Areas for Future Research

The exploratory nature of the current study suggests a number of directions for future research. Although the results garnered from this study were rich and informative, the sample was relatively small and somewhat homogeneous. Future studies should attempt to attain a larger and more diverse sample in order to determine if results found in this study are potentially generalizable to Native Americans outside of Oklahoma. Further, a larger sample will also help to clarify whether the relationship between acculturation and income found in this study can be replicated. Additionally, future research should also include both standardized and descriptive measures of parenting and child behavior. The inclusion of both descriptive and standardized measures is likely to yield rich data, which will be useful in comparing results of future studies with those of past studies. Using both qualitative and quantitative measures may additionally yield factors that were not touched upon in this study that could be important to examine. There are numerous areas which will be important to examine in future research that will necessitate the use of qualitative measures. There are not currently any standardized measures that have been developed which will appropriately tap into issues such as the further exploration of noninterference or generational differences in parenting.

The value of noninterference should be further examined so that a better understanding of its purpose and utility with Native families can be gained. Further

exploration of this concept will illuminate the way in which noninterference is conceptualized and used by Native Americans, which will aid in the development and application of parent training programs to Native families. Additionally, it will be useful to investigate generational differences in parenting in future studies. It was found in this study that while some things are very similar to what was found in previous literature on Native American parenting; many differences were discovered as well. To understand the extent of these differences and how they are affecting the family, it is necessary to explore this issue further by the use of descriptive measures.

Finally, the results reported in this paper are reflective only of the Native American participants sampled in northern and eastern Oklahoma with a moderate level of acculturation. It is not clear whether or not the results here are descriptive of Natives living outside of this area or of more traditional Native Americans. Future research should attempt to attain a more diverse sample so that regional differences and similarities between Native American parents can be better understood and parenting programs can be better developed to meet the needs of this population.

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Table 2.

Native American Parenting Survey (NAPS) - Extended Family Members Sharing in Childrearing

	<u>n</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Child's Grandmother	17	33.30
Child's Grandfather	9	17.60
Child's Great Grandmother	3	5.90
Child's Great Grandfather	3	5.90
Child's Stepmother	1	2.00
Child's Stepfather	3	5.90
Child's Aunt	10	19.60
Child's Uncle	7	13.70
Child's Cousin	6	11.80
Child's Older Sibling	8	15.70
Other	5	9.80

Table 3.

Summary of Native American Parenting Survey (NAPS) Likert-type Items

Confidence in Parenting Abilities				Discipline			
I am a good parent	<u>n</u>	<u>Percent</u>		Responsible for disciplining my child	<u>n</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
Never	0	0%		Never	0	0%	
Sometimes	1	2%		Sometimes	0	0%	
Half the time	1	2%		Half the time	12	24%	
Most of the time	28	55%		Most of the time	19	37%	
Always	21	41%		Always	20	39%	
I am easily frustrated by my child				Consistent in the discipline of my child			
Never	10	20%		Never	0	0%	
Sometimes	27	53%		Sometimes	0	0%	
Half the time	7	14%		Half the time	6	12%	
Most of the time	6	12%		Most of the time	25	49%	
Always	1	2%		Always	20	39%	
I make good decisions regarding my children				Believe girls and boys should receive the same discipline			
Never	0	0%		Never	0	0%	
Sometimes	1	2%		Sometimes	3	6%	
Half the time	1	2%		Half the time	4	8%	
Most of the time	29	57%		Most of the time	12	24%	
Always	20	39%		Always	32	63%	
Teaching				Education			
Teaching child right from wrong				Important for my child to receive a good formal education			
Never	0	0%		Not important	0	0%	
Sometimes	0	0%		Somewhat important	0	0%	
Half the time	5	10%		Important	0	0%	
Most of the time	14	27%		Very important	1	2%	
Always	32	63%		Extremely important	50	98%	
Teaching child self-care skills				Education important in order to earn a living			
Never	0	0%		Not important	0	0%	
Sometimes	0	0%		Somewhat important	0	0%	
Half the time	5	10%		Important	0	0%	
Most of the time	10	20%		Very important	4	8%	
Always	36	71%		Extremely important	47	92%	
Give child guidance with important life decisions				Education interferes with my child retaining traditional values			
Never	0	0%		Never	26	51%	
Sometimes	1	2%		Sometimes	10	20%	
Half the time	6	12%		Half the time	6	12%	
Most of the time	14	27%		Most of the time	3	6%	
Always	30	59%		Always	4	8%	

Table 4.

One-sample z-test for the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI)

<u>Intensity Score</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Native American sample	100.49	30.96
Standardization Sample	104.34	24.50

$z = .85, p > .05$

<u>Problem Score</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Native American sample	8.27	8.44
Standardization Sample	4.62	4.97

$z = 4.29E-07, p > .05$

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Table 5.

One-sample z-test for the Parenting Scale (PS)

<u>Laxness Score</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Native American sample	2.42	0.79
Standardization Sample	2.40	0.80

$z = 4.29E-07, p > .05$

<u>Overreactivity Score</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Native American sample	2.84	0.99
Standardization Sample	2.40	0.70

$z = 4.29E-07, p > .05$

<u>Verbosity Score</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Native American sample	3.92	0.85
Standardization Sample	3.10	1.00

$z = 4.29E-07, p > .05$

<u>Total Score</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Native American sample	2.94	0.63
Standardization Sample	2.60	0.60

$z = 4.29E-07, p > .05$

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Table 6.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations between the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) Intensity and Problem Scores and the Parenting Scale (PS) Laxness, Overreactivity, Verbosity, and Total Scores

PS scores	ECBI scores	
	Intensity Score	Problem Score
Laxness	<b>.43**</b>	.39**
Overreactivity	<b>.53**</b>	<b>.47**</b>
Verbosity	.37*	.32*
Total	<b>.61**</b>	<b>.56**</b>

*Note.* Correlations in bold remain significant after the modified Bonferroni correction.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\* $P < .01$ .

Table 7.

Correlations of Income, Acculturation, Parenting Techniques, and Child Behavior

		Income	Acculturation	PS Total	ECBI Intensity Score
Income	Pearson Correlation	1.00	<b>.53**</b>	-.156	-.372*
	Significance (2 tailed)		<b>.001</b>	.281	.012
Acculturation	Pearson Correlation	<b>.53*</b>	1.00	-.102	-.168
	Significance (2 tailed)	<b>.001</b>		.479	.270
PS Total	Pearson Correlation	-.156	-.102	1.00	<b>.611**</b>
	Significance (2 tailed)	.281	.479		<b>.001</b>
ECBI Intensity Score	Pearson Correlation	-.372*	-.168	<b>.611**</b>	1.00
	Significance (2 tailed)	.012	.270	<b>.001</b>	

*Note:* Correlations in bold remain significant after modified Bonferroni correction.

Table 8.

Pearson Correlations of NAPS, Acculturation, and Income (2 tailed significance)

	NAPS Responsible for Discipline	NAPS Consistency of Discipline	NAPS Teaching Life Skills	NAPS Confidence in Parenting
Income	-.31* (.028)	-.099 (.489)	.209 (.141)	.269 (.056)
Acculturation	-.012 (.935)	.009 (.629)	.240 (.089)	.235 (.097)

*Note:* Correlation between Income and NAPS Responsibility for Discipline does not remain significant after modified Bonferroni correction.

Table 9.

Pearson Correlations of NAPS and Parenting Scale (2 tailed significance)

	NAPS Responsible for Discipline	NAPS Consistency of Discipline	NAPS Teaching Life Skills	NAPS Confidence in Parenting
Laxness	-.074 (.610)	<b>-.531*</b> (.001)	-.042 (.773)	<b>-.465*</b> (.001)
Overreactivity	-.018 (.904)	<b>-.434*</b> (.002)	-.130 (.370)	<b>-.510*</b> (.001)
Verbosity	-.142 (.326)	-.356* (.011)	-.214 (.135)	-.255 (.074)
Total Score	-.063 (.664)	<b>-.541*</b> (.001)	-.145 (.315)	<b>-.575*</b> (.001)

Note: Correlations in bold remain significant after modified Bonferroni correction.

Table 10.

Pearson Correlations of NAPS and ECBI (2 tailed significance)

	NAPS Responsible for Discipline	NAPS Consistency of Discipline	NAPS Teaching Life Skills	NAPS Confidence in Parenting
Intensity Score	-.028 (.857)	-.333* (.025)	-.209 (.169)	<b>-.503*</b> (.001)
Problem Score	.127 (.405)	-.280 (.062)	-.070 (.650)	<b>-.592*</b> (.001)

Note: Correlations in bold remain significant after modified Bonferroni correction.

Table 11.

Summary of Stepwise Regression for Variables Predicting the Intensity Score of the ECBI.

(N = 45)

Variable	Multiple R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	Significance of F	<i>B</i>	<i>SE (B)</i>	
Step 1	.61	.37	.36	24.97	.0001			
PS Total Score						29.04	5.81	0.61**
(Constant)						15.49	17.37	
Step 2	.66	.44	.41	15.98	.0001			
PS Total Score						26.55	5.68	0.56**
Family Income						-5.23	2.39	-0.26*
(Constant)						46.91	26.00	

Note: Acculturation (NAAS Total Score) was not entered into the equation

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 7/15/2004

Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2003

IRB Application No AS0396

Proposal Title: CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTING WITH NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Megan S. Dunlap  
215 N. Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Tamara Wilburn  
215 N. Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Maureen Sullivan  
215 N Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

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Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 7/8/2005

Date: Friday, July 09, 2004

IRB Application No: AS0396

Proposal Title: CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTING WITH NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Megan S. Dunlap  
215 N. Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Tamara Wilburn  
215 N. Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Maureen Sullivan  
215 N Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

**Modification/Continuation**

---

Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Friday, July 09, 2004

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

# Tamara C. Newcomb

## PERSONAL DATA

**School Address:**  
Oklahoma State University  
Department of Psychology  
215 North Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74075  
Phone: (405) 744-6027

**Home Address:**  
2876 Mark Circle  
Stillwater, OK 74075  
Home Phone: (405) 377-7743  
Cell Phone: (918) 873-2237  
tamara.newcomb@cox.net

## EDUCATION

**Doctor of Philosophy (Expected May 2008)**  
Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, Oklahoma)  
Clinical Psychology (APA Accredited)

**Master of Science (Expected December 2005)**  
Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, Oklahoma)  
Clinical Psychology, Cumulative GPA: 3.918  
Master's Thesis Chairperson: Maureen Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Thesis Title: Characteristics of Parenting in Native American Families

**Bachelor of Science in May 2001**  
Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, Oklahoma)  
Family Relations and Child Development, Cumulative GPA: 3.575  
Senior Thesis Advisor: Laura Hubbs-Tait, Ph.D.

**Bachelor of Arts in May 2001**  
Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, Oklahoma)  
Psychology, Cumulative GPA: 3.575

## HONORS / PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

<b>August 2001 – July 2003</b>	<b>American Indian Graduate Center Fellow</b>
<b>August 2000 – May 2001</b>	<b>Gates Millennium Scholar</b>
<b>September 2000 – May 2001</b>	<b>Psi Chi National Psychology Honors Fraternity</b>
<b>July 2000 – Present</b>	<b>American Psychological Association</b>
<b>July 2000 – Present</b>	<b>Oklahoma Psychological Association</b>
<b>July 2000 – Present</b>	<b>Society of Indian Psychologists</b>
<b>June 2000 – July 2000</b>	<b>American Indians Into Psychology Fellow</b>

October 1999 – May 2001            **Golden Key National Honors Society**  
September 1999 – May 2001       **Phi Upsilon Omicron National Honor Society**  
September 1998 – May 2001       **Kappa Omicron Nu National Honor Society**

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**August 2001 - Present**            **Parenting Characteristics in Native American Families**  
Supervisor: Dr. Maureen Sullivan, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.  
Defended: September 2005  
Summary: Examined parenting beliefs, values, specific parenting practices, and rates of problem behaviors in a Native American population, and examined the relationship between parenting beliefs and values as well as the relationship between discipline and problem behaviors in Native American families

**August 2001- Present**            **Research Lab Member: Child Behavior Research Lab**  
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.  
Supervisor: Maureen A. Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Duties: Attended two weekly meetings in which lab issues are discussed, cooperate and assist with ongoing lab projects, develop research ideas for future projects as well as conduct background work.

**August 2000- May 2001**            **Undergraduate Research Assistant: Child Behavior Research Lab**, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.  
Supervisor: Maureen Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Duties: Reviewed background literature, coded mother-toddler interactions with a complex structured observation code, attended a weekly meeting with Dr. Sullivan in which issues concerning graduate school and psychology were discussed, and calculated interrater reliability with kappa correction.

**June 2000- July 2000**            **American Indians Into Psychology Summer Enrichment Program**, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.  
Supervisor: John M. Chaney, Ph.D.  
Duties: Participated in a 6-week program with intensive exposure to research, activities with tribal agencies, professional development, and preparation for applying to graduate school. Attended weekly seminars, assisted Dr. Maureen Sullivan in her child behavior research lab by reviewing background literature, coding mother-toddler interactions using a complex and structured observation code, and calculating interrater reliability with kappa correction.

**August 1999 – May 2000**            **Senior Thesis: FRCD**  
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma  
Title: The Relation of Different Parenting Styles to Hyperactivity in Children.  
Supervisor: Dr. Laura Hubbs-Tait, Ph.D.  
Duties: examined the effect of different types of parenting (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive) on symptoms of hyperactivity in children. Responsible for data analysis and formal write-up of results in APA style.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

Wilburn, T., Ballew, M., & Sullivan, M. (2004, November). *Characteristics of Native American parenting*. Poster presented at the 38<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy, New Orleans, LA.

## **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

**August 2004 -  
Present**

**Clinical Practicum Student:** University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, A Better Chance Clinic, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**Supervisor:** Robin Gurwitch, Ph.D.

**Duties:** Conducting assessments for at-risk children from three months to six years of age. Tests administered include the WPPSI, Bayley Scales of Infant Development-II (Cognitive and Motor), Early Screening Profiles (ESP), Preschool Language Scales – Edition 4 (PLS-4), and individual parent measures.

**August 2003 –  
August 2004**

**Clinical Practicum Student:** Claremore Indian Hospital, Claremore, Oklahoma.

**Supervisor:** John Gastorf, Ph.D.

**Duties:** Worked in a general outpatient clinic. Conducted developmental, psychoeducational, ADHD, and dementia assessments. Gave feedback to clients and wrote brief assessment reports.

**August 2001-  
August 2004**

**Clinical Practicum Student:** Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

**Supervisors:** Trish Long, Ph.D.

Doug Scambler, Ph.D.

John Chaney, Ph.D.

Cynthia Hartung, Ph.D.

**Duties:** Worked in a general outpatient clinic and was responsible for conducting intakes, offering individual adult, child and family therapeutic services. Led a social skills group and a parent support group. Conducted developmental, ADHD, and autism-spectrum disorder assessments.

**June 2000-  
July 2000**

**Fellow: American Indians Into Psychology**

**Summer Enrichment Program.** Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

**Supervisor:** John M. Chaney, Ph.D.

**Duties:** Completed a practicum at the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma in which I assisted in the creation of a promotional CD-ROM portraying the Iowa Tribe children's shelter. Accompanied social workers on home visits, read through the charts to gain familiarity with case loads, and assisted clients in library and on the computer.

**August 1998-  
July 2001**

**Rehabilitation Aid / Van Driver / Secretary:**

**Edwin Fair Community Mental Health Center,** Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Supervisor: Lynn Smith, B.A.

Duties: Prepared for and conducted educational groups with clients. Completed fee agreements, consent forms, and client data cores. Maintained clinic paperwork, copied and remitted client records, took care of and met client needs, proofed progress notes and treatment plans, and created charts.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**August 2003 –  
May 2004**

**Graduate Instructor: Introduction to**

**Psychology**, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Supervisor: Bill Scott, Ph.D.

Duties: Served as instructor for two sections each semester (approximately 160 students total), where I lectured for six hours a week on multiple topics in psychology. I also developed and maintained a course website, held office hours, and created examinations.

**January 2003-  
May 2003**

**Teaching Assistant: Cognitive Psychology,**

Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Supervisor: Doug Hershey, Ph.D.

Duties: Served as a teaching assistant for one class which had approximately 40 students. My duties included grading examinations, class projects, and homeworks, as well as holding office hours.

**August 2002-  
December 2002**

**Teaching Assistant: Neurobiological Psychology,**

Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Supervisor: David Thomas, Ph.D.

Duties: Served as a teaching assistant for one class which had approximately 60 students. My duties included attending lectures, developing test questions, holding office hours, grading, running class experiments, and assisting students with various questions related to the class

## **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

**August 2001 -  
Present**

**Graduate Assistant: American Indians Into**

**Psychology Summer Enrichment Program.** Stillwater, Oklahoma

Supervisor: Patricia Alexander

Duties: Served as a mentor for summer fellows. Organized and assisted in program activities. Assisted in the organization of program applications and certifications. Served as a liaison between the AIIP program and community tribal members and associations.

**August 1997-  
December 1997**

**Nursery Assistant: Therapeutic Nursery.**

Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Duties: Assisting with children during clinic and riding the transport van.

Name: Tamara Newcomb

Date of Degree: December, 2005

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: PARENTING CHARACTERISTICS IN NATIVE AMERICAN  
FAMILIES

Pages in Study: 92

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Clinical Psychology

Scope and Method of Study: Theoretical articles suggest that, compared to the majority culture, Native American parents may have different parenting styles, utilize different parenting and discipline strategies, have different preferences for parent-training counselors, and differ in their acceptability of PCIT. However, few empirical studies regarding these topics have been published. Further, there is minimal research at this point that has examined family characteristics with the Native American population. The present project has two main purposes: (1) provide descriptive information about parenting beliefs, values, specific parenting practices, and rates of problem behaviors in a Native American sample in which acculturation and basic demographic information will be assessed, and (2) examine the relationship between parenting beliefs and values as well as the relationship between discipline and problem behaviors in Native American families.

Findings and Conclusions: Families in this study reported a range of parenting practices. In some ways, their reports closely resembled those in previous literature on characteristics of Native American parenting. However, unlike some previous studies, parents also placed high emphasis on formal education for their children, and indicated that they believed that formal education did not interfere with traditional beliefs. Few families scored in the range indicating highest identification with or highest emphasis on traditional values. Most scored in the mid-range, reflecting identification with both traditional and mainstream values. In examining scores on standardized measures of parenting and child behavior, a wide range of scores was found. Mean scores and standard deviations were comparable to those reported in primarily Caucasian samples.