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Preschool Children's Perceptions of Their Parents: A Comparison of Children From Married and Divorced Homes

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PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARENTS:

A COMPARISON OF CHILDREN FROM MARRIED AND DIVORCED HOMES

by

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Young children's perceptions of their parents have been shown to affect responses to parents, and to be relevant in personality development and self-esteem. Typically, research examining children's perceptions of their parents focused on children from intact families. Yet, with the frequent occurrence of divorce in our society, and the trauma and lifestyle changes often associated with marital dissolution, it is possible that children's perceptions of their parents may also change.

This study compared two groups of preschool children's perceptions of their parents. Forty-two children (23 males, 19 females) came from two parent, first marriage families. Thirty-two children (16 males, 16 females) were from divorced, single parent households.

Children were visited in their homes and asked to respond to nine questions in the areas of parental relationships, mother role, and father role. Children's responses were coded, using a 17-category coding scheme.

Factor analyses reflected children's perceptions of both traditional and nontraditional parental roles. The developmental level of the children and marital status of parents had the most influence on the children's perceptions of parental relationships. Children from the married sample viewed father's role in a more contemporary and diverse way in comparison to the single sample. Both samples (married and divorced) viewed mother in similar traditional roles. Results can be interpreted in the context of family lifestyles and symbolic interaction theory.

(68 pages)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to symbolic interaction theory, children gauge their own behavior by assessing and judging the actions of others. Observations are made of the roles enacted by family members and the resulting perceptions are incorporated into the child's personality structure (Schvaneveldt, 1966). The perceptions of young children have been found to correlate with adjustment, to affect response to parental behavior, and to be relevant in measurements of self-esteem (Berg & Kelly, 1979; Crase, Foss, & Colbert, 1981; Dubin & Dubin, 1965; Serot & Teevan, 1961).

A question of concern for educators, parents, and researchers is how divorce might influence children's perceptions of their parents. It is estimated that 40% of the children born in the 1970s and 50% of the children born in the 1980s will spend a portion of their lives in a divorced home (Hutchinson & Spangler-Hirsch, 1989; Santrock, 1986).

Research focusing specifically on preschool children's perceptions of their parents is limited. Moreover, empirical work exploring the perceptions of preschoolers regarding parents following divorce is virtually nonexistent. Therefore, this investigation sought to compare the perceptions (the meanings or understandings verbally conveyed by the children about their parents) of parents held by preschoolers from two parent homes and single parent homes.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

For this review of literature, previous research will be outlined in the following manner. First, studies examining older children's perceptions of their parents will be reviewed. Next, research investigating preschoolers' perceptions of parents will be discussed. The literature about children's perceptions and divorce will then be considered. Finally, the theoretical framework for this study will be presented.

Perception Research

One of the earliest studies focusing on the effects of children's perceptions was that of Nye (1958). Teachers of children ages 8 through 13 made a series of home visits. The children visited were categorized as delinquent because of school behavior. The purpose of this study was to allow teachers to base their judgments regarding students upon a broader information base. Anecdotal records were kept of the visits, significant school happenings, and the teacher's interactions with parents. Data from these case studies revealed that children's perceptions of their (a) parents' affection for them as a person, (b) family events, and (c) family situations influenced their delinquent behavior at school (Nye, 1958).

Similarly, Serot and Teevan (1961) found a positive relationship between the adjustment of 9- and 10-year-old children and their perceptions of their relationships

with their parents. The degree of adjustment was determined by a score on The California Test of Personality and perceptions of parent child relationships were measured by the Swanson Child - Parent Relationship Scale (Swanson, 1950).

Perceptions of family and parents have also been found to affect self-esteem as examined in two studies. Berg and Kelly (1979) found that children from divorced families often felt ashamed of the divorce of their parents and reported feelings of rejection and ridicule from peers. Employing the Piers Self-Concept Test (Piers & Harris, 1969), it was discovered that undesirability ratings by the children related to their family's marital status. Using this same measure (Piers & Harris, 1969) as well as The Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (Schaefer, 1965), Crase, Foss, and Colbert (1981) found that children's perceptions (ages 10-12) of parental discipline consistency was positively correlated with their self-concept.

As demonstrated by the previous studies discussed, research exploring the perceptions of children regarding their parents have tended to focus almost exclusively on children during the pre-adolescent years. Because the perceptions of children in this age group were found to be related to undesirable behavior, adjustment, and degree of self-esteem, further exploration with younger age groups and with more specific areas of focus seems warranted.

Preschoolers' Perceptions of Parents

In 1955, Finch undertook one of the first studies focusing on preschool children's perceptions of parents. The thrust of this investigation was on examining the children's interpretation of experiences with parents and their meaning to the

children themselves. The sample was drawn from professional families with children between the ages of 3 and 7. Data collection was completed in both the home and the laboratory, using two techniques: (a) a pictorial interview, using photographs depicting both mother and father in a variety of the same roles; and (b) a direct interview, with children responding to the questions, "What is daddy?" and "What is mommy?" Content analyses were used to code both visual and audio information (Finch, 1955).

Results from the pictorial interview indicated that the majority of the children tended to view both parents as carrying out the roles depicted in the assessment. The direct interview responses with respect to mother fell into the category of household duties half of the time. The father's role was viewed as that of economic provider 75% of the time (Finch, 1955).

Kagan and Lenakin (1960) used an interview method similar to that of Finch. Children aged 3 to 9 years responded to (a) direct questions regarding which parent might carry out a certain action (example: "Who gives you the most presents? Your mommy or your daddy?"), and (b) a picture method. The picture method involved photographs of both mother and father and questions such as: "Who is the strongest one?" Children indicated their response by pointing to a picture of a mother or a father. In this investigation, father was seen by both boys and girls as stronger, smarter, and the major agent of punishment (the one to be most afraid of, and the boss of the house) for both methods of investigation. By contrast, in again analyzing both methods, mother was seen as more nurturant (the giver of presents and kisses).

Value judgments were added to the methods previously used in a later study by Schvaneveldt, Fryer, and Ostler (1970). A direct interview method again was used with preschool children from 3 to 5 years of age focusing on the concepts of "goodness" and "badness" (example: "What is a good father?"). A nine category content analysis was used to evaluate responses. Sex differences were found in this study for the variable quality of nurturance.

Girls viewed father as more nurturant and boys viewed mother as more nurturant. When comparing "goodness" and "badness," bad mothers were seen as the opposite of good mothers (not fulfilling needs such as helping you when you get up in the night or giving kisses) and bad fathers were mentioned in relation to physical appearance (big, dirty, or dumb) (Schvaneveldt et al., 1970).

Using a direct question method similar to that of Kagan and Lenakin (1960), Franz and Mell (1981) explored the perceptions of parents held by children 3 to 5 years old. Although families were divided into professional and nonprofessional groups, all the parents in this study were employed outside the home. Group differences were found. Children from the professional families tended to view both parents performing parental role tasks (i.e., giving medicine, putting children to bed, and fixing breakfast). Children from the nonprofessional group saw these roles as appropriate for one parent only i.e., boys viewed father as the preferred parent to fulfill the role depicted, and girls preferred mother for those same roles.

In these investigations, the preschoolers' perceptions of parents tended to have an overall flavor of the traditional roles for mother as a provider of nurturance and

father as a disciplinarian and monetary provider; with the exception of the Franz and Mell (1981) findings of shared parenting roles in dual career families. With the changed life style and the trauma often associated with divorce, it is of interest what effects marital dissolution might have on children's perceptions of parents.

Children's Perceptions and Divorce

Divorce has been found to interfere with the normal growth process by absorbing a child's mental and emotional energy (Hess & Camara, 1979; Klee, Schmidt, & Johnson, 1989). Reactions of children to divorce appear to relate to their developmental status. Preschool children have more limited cognitive and social competencies and are more dependent on their parents than older children (Hetherington, 1979; Oppawsky, 1991; Rosenthal, 1979; Wynn & Bowering, 1991).

Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) conducted direct interviews with both parents and children following divorce. Results regarding behavior reflected in the interviews with children ages 2 to 5 and their parents included (a) regression from previously attained skills such as toilet training, (b) separation anxiety, and (c) unwillingness to share possessions. Young children in this study tended to be bewildered by the loss of one parent and focused on trying to understand the present and the future family situation. Accusations of guilt for themselves and their families also resulted. In young children, these emotions were found to be highly resistive to the interventions by parents or professionals.

Similar findings emerged in a study by McDermott (1968). He observed children from divorced homes in their preschool environments and found reactions to

parental divorce fell into four different categories: (a) the unchanged child with highly adaptive skills; (b) the sad, angry child (who was found to be the most typical) exhibiting restlessness, aggression, and possessiveness with belongings; (c) the lost, detached child, who at school wandered aimlessly, cried often, and stopped doing tasks previously accomplished; and (d) the pseudo-adult child who tended to be sassy, scolding, and lecturing.

To further add to the complications of divorce, parents reported little was done to prepare their children for the trauma of divorce. Moreover, the younger the child, the less preparation was stated to have been given (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979). As a result, McDermott (1968) concluded that preschool children can be profoundly affected by the disruption of their regular two parent family and become uncertain about their well-being, even with reassurance.

Research indicates that many parents are heavily burdened with their own needs following divorce and are less able than prior to divorce to perceive or respond to the needs of their children (Peck, 1989). Households may become unorganized and changes in the management of the children often occur. This may result in reduced discipline consistency, diminished communication, and less nurturance (Oppawsky, 1991; Peck, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979).

In a similar vein, Hess and Camara (1979) compared interview results of parents and children from both divorced and intact families. Although they found the parent-child relationship to be more important than the marital status of parent, they concluded:

> Divorce disrupts the child's perception of social reality. It confronts the child not only with loss but also with the need to reorder internal representations of familiar external patterns. Concepts of the roles of father and mother and perceptions of the permanence of relationships must be revised. (p. 82)

Divorce has been shown to affect children with respect to their particular developmental level. Often preschoolers experience a great deal of trauma because of their greater dependence on parents and their tendency toward regressive behavior following divorce.

Yet research focusing on divorce and the preschool child has centered around the behavior observed after divorce and changes in life-style, rather than the child's perceptions of their parents. According to Kurdeck and Suskey (1980), the effects of divorce on children are a major theme of divorce literature, but conspicuously missing in this body of literature are explorations of the children's own perceptions of parents, especially those of younger children. This research explored the perceptions preschool children hold of parents following divorce.

Theoretical Framework

According to Stryker (1964), symbolic interaction theory seeks to explain the process of socialization and personality development. He defined personality development as "persistent behavior patterns" (p. 133). Children here are viewed as actors as well as reactors in their world. Individuals are not seen as simply responding to the physical environment as it is presented, but to their own interpretations of it in relationship to their level of cognitive development (Stryker, 1964).

Therefore, children develop their sense of self as others supply them with a name and meanings attached to that symbol. Along with these meanings come expected ways to behave. "Adults define for the child the meaning of events, values, and norms" (Schvaneveldt, 1966, p. 102).

Later, children begin to categorize themselves and the way they should behave. This is carried out by observing, assessing, and judging the actions of others. The resulting perceptions are then incorporated into the child's personality structure (Stryker, 1964).

When divorce occurs, previously observed judgments and assessments children have made about their parents are often no longer valid and need to be reconsidered by the child and new evaluations made (Hess & Camara, 1979). A question of interest here is how the resulting changed perceptions of children from divorced families differ from the perceptions of children from two parent homes.

Purpose of the Study

The perceptions of young children have been shown to affect responses to parents, and to be relevant in personality development and self-esteem (Berg & Kelly, 1979; Crase, Foss, & Colbert, 1981; Dubin & Dubin, 1965; Serot & Teevan, 1961). In the past preschool children have been found to view their parents according to traditional societal roles for mothers and fathers (Finch, 1955; Kagan & Lenakin, 1960). These traditional roles as first outlined by Parsons and Bales (1955) include instrumental roles for father and emotional roles for mother. More recently the

perceptions held by preschoolers have changed to follow more liberal viewpoints (Franz & Mell, 1981; Schvaneveldt et al., 1970).

With the frequent occurrence of divorce currently noted (Hutchinson & Spangler-Hirsch, 1989; Santrock, 1986), its emotional trauma (Hess & Camara, 1979; Hetherington, 1979; Hutchinson & Spangler-Hirsch, 1989; Fulton, 1979; Klee, Schmidt, & Johnson, 1989; McDermott, 1968; Rosenthal, 1979; Stirtzinger, 1987), and changes in life-style (Peck, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979), it follows that children's perceptions of their parents may change as well.

Based on the research of Hess and Camara (1979) in which they concluded that the perceptions of parents need to be revaluated by children following divorce, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the perceptions of parents by preschool children from two parent homes and those from single parent divorced homes.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The following section will explore and compare demographic characteristics of the married and divorced samples. This information will be used to help interpret differences found in the children's perceptions in the discussion section.

Participants

Participants in this study were 74 4- and 5-year-old children ($\bar{x}$ age = 57 months). Forty-two children (23 males, $\bar{x}$ age = 58 months; 19 females, $\bar{x}$ age = 57 months) were from married, two parent homes (overall $\bar{x}$ age = 58 months), and 32 (16 males, $\bar{x}$ age = 58 months; 16 females, $\bar{x}$ age = 57 months) from divorced, single parent homes (overall $\bar{x}$ age = 60 months) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Age of Participants (calculated in months) (N=74)

Condition	Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation
Overall Sample	57.47	.82	7.17
Divorced Sample	60	.24	1.41
Male	58.3	.89	5.77
Female	58.68	2.04	8.17
Married Sample	57.71	1.71	6.4
Male	58.69	1.33	5.86
Female	57.52	9.71	4.65

Families who participated in this study responded to flyers that were posted in the community and sent home at four different preschools in the immediate area. Court records were also used to locate newly divorced families with 4- and 5-year-old children. These families were contacted by phone and invited to participate.

Participants were from families who lived within a thirty-mile radius of Logan, Utah. As illustrated in Table 2, 69% of the parents reported regular church attendance (weekly, bimonthly, and monthly) and 72% of the families participating belonged to the LDS church. Interestingly, families in the divorced sample tended to attend church on a more regular basis (59.3%) than families in the married sample.

Although 59% of the couples from two parent homes in this sample had been married for 10 years or less and 72% of the divorced parents had been married for that amount of time prior to divorce, no significant differences were found between the two groups for this the number of years married using chi-square analyses (see Table 3).

As shown in Table 4, the majority of the children in the overall sample were middle born children: 50% were second through fourth in birth order, while 62% had one or two siblings. More of the children in the two parent sample were first born (48%). Conversely, the children in the divorced group tended more often to be middle children (second or fourth, 68%). The majority of the participants in both groups had one or two siblings (married 69%, divorced 53%). Intact families were somewhat more likely to have 5 to 18 siblings (married 17%, divorced 6%).

Table 2

Participants' Religious Information (N=74)

Condition	Frequency	Percent
Religion		
LDS	53	71.6
Other	21	28.4
Church Attendance		
Overall		
Sporadic[a]	18	24.3
Regular[b]	51	68.9
Not answered	5	7
Married		
Sporadic[a]	31	73.8
Regular[b]	11	26.2
Divorced		
Sporadic[a]	8	25
Regular[b]	19	59.3
Not answered	5	15.6

[a]Yearly, rarely, or never
[b]Weekly, bimonthly, or monthly

Table 3

Number of Years of Marriage for Married and Divorced Samples (N=74)

Number of Years	Frequency	Percent
Married (N=42)		
< 5 years	6	14.3
6 - 10 years	19	45.2
11 - 15 years	11	26.1
16 - 25 years	6	14.3
Divorced (N=32)		
< 5 years	11	34.4
6 - 10 years	12	37.5
11 - 15 years	6	18.7
16 - 25 years	3	9.4

Table 4

Children in Participants' Families (N=74)

Condition	Total	%	Married	%	Divorced	%
Birth Order						
First	25	34	20	48	5	16
Middle[a]	37	50	15	36	22	68
Later Born[b]	12	16	7	16	5	16
Siblings[c]						
Only Child	2	2	0	0	2	6
1 - 2	46	62	29	69	17	53
3 - 4	17	23	6	14	11	34
5 - 18	9	12	7	17	2	6

[a]2nd to 4th child
[b]5th to 18th child
[c]Number of children in the family exclusive of the participating child.

Using categories derived from the Four Factor Index of Social Status (Hollingshead, 1975), chi-square analyses were used to compare parental education and occupation and the total social status score (derived from the total of both the education and occupation scores of both parents) in both the married and divorced groups.

As seen in Table 5, fathers from two parent homes in this sample had significantly higher levels of education than fathers in the divorced, single parent sample. Ninety-five percent of the fathers from two parent homes had attended college while 47% of the divorced fathers were reported as doing so. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2[4] = 25.61$, $p < .001$). Forty-five percent of the fathers in the two parent families had attended graduate school, as compared to 19% from the divorced sample.

Table 5

Fathers' Education

Condition	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Overall (N=74)	High School or less	19	25.6
	College to Bachelor's	30	40.6
	Graduate Work	25	33.7
Married (N=42)		42	56.8
	High School or less	2	4
	College to Bachelor's	21	50
	Graduate Work	19	45.2
Divorced (N=32)		32	43.2
	High School or less	17	53
	College to Bachelor's	9	28
	Graduate Work	6	19

A similar relationship was found when comparing mothers' education. Ninety-one percent of the mothers from two parent homes had attended college while 34% had attended graduate school. Sixty-four percent of the divorced mothers had attended college, but only 12% had attended graduate school (Table 6). These differences were statistically significant ($x^2[4]=7.3$, $p<.05$).

Interestingly, although statistically significant differences were found in education levels between the two samples for both mothers and fathers, no significant differences emerged in types of occupations for either males or females (Tables 7 and 8). Overall, mothers in both groups were more likely to hold unskilled jobs (married 38%, divorced 62%), while fathers from both groups were more likely to hold skilled category jobs (married 43%, divorced 66%).

Table 6

Mothers' Education

Condition	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Overall (N=74)	High School or less	15	20.3
	College to Bachelor's	45	60.8
	Graduate Work	14	18.9
Married (N=42)		42	56.8
	High School or less	4	9
	College to Bachelor's	24	57
	Graduate Work	14	34
Divorced (N=32)		32	43.2
	High School or less	11	34.3
	College to Bachelor's	17	53
	Graduate Work	4	12

No significant differences were found in numbers of hours worked outside the home for either mothers or fathers in both samples.

Table 7

Married Parents' Occupation and Average Hours Worked Per Week

Condition	Variable	Mother (N=42)	%	Father (N=42)	%
Occupation	Unskilled	16	38	3	7
	Skilled	8	19	18	43
	Professional	11	26	10	24
Weekly Hrs.	Not Working	12	28	3	7
	Part-time[a]	11	26	2	4
	Full-time[b]	14	33	17	40
	Over-time[c]	5	12	20	48

[a]Up to 20 hours
[b]21 to 40 hours
[c]41 hours or more

Table 8

Divorced Parents' Occupation and Average Hours Worked Per Week

Condition	Variable	Mother (N=32)	%	Father (N=32)	%
Occupation	Unskilled	20	62	2	6
	Skilled	5	12	21	66
	Professional	5	16	5	16
Weekly Hrs.	Not Working	11	34	1	3
	Part-time[a]	3	9	1	3
	Full-time[b]	11	34	17	53
	Over-time[c]	7	22	13	40

[a]Up to 20 hours
[b]21 to 40 hours
[c]41 hours or more

As illustrated in Table 10, children whose parents were divorced were more likely to attend full-day alternative care programs (either at one or two schools), while children from two parent homes tended to attended half-day programs ($x^2[4]=24.64$, $p<.001$). Children from divorced homes also spent significantly more time at school ($x^2[2]=8.43$, $p=.001$) (Table 9).

Table 9

Time Spent in Alternative Care (Weekly)

Condition	Variable	Married (N=42)	Divorced (N=32)
Hours at School*		$\bar{x}$ = 16.96 Hours	$\bar{x}$ = 15.45 Hours
	Up to 25 hours	88%	69%
	26 to 35 hours	7%	3%
	36 or more hours	5%	28%
Hours at Sitter		$\bar{x}$ = 20.53 Hours	$\bar{x}$ = 13.15 Hours
	Up to 25 hours	95%	62%
	26 to 35 hours	0%	16%
	36 or more hours	5%	22%

*$p < .05$

Table 10

Type of School Attended by Participating Child (N=74)

Type of School*	Married (N=42)	Divorced (N=32)
Half Day Program	76%	22%
Full Day Program	21%	31%
Two Schools	2%	31%
No School	1%	16%

*$p < .05$

Ten of the families in this sample were blended families. Three two parent families contained blends: one with step-siblings, and two with step- and half-siblings. Both parents in these homes were the biological parents of the target child. Seven of the divorced homes contained blends (from previous marriages): six with step-siblings, and one with step- and half-siblings.

Although most of the children (52%) in the divorced sample had experienced the separation of their parent within a year of the time of this study, males in this sample had spent significantly more time in a single parent home than had females ($x^2[4] = 10.41$, $p < .05$). All but two of the children from single parent homes lived with their mothers. Nearly half (48%) of the children visited their noncustodial parent monthly or more, while the remainder (52%) of the children visited on holidays or less often (Table 11).

Table 11

Demographics of Divorced Families (N=32)

Condition	Variable	Overall	%	Male (N=16)	%	Female (N=16)	%
Divorce[a]	1 year	16	50	7	44	9	56
	2 years	4	13	9	56	4	25
	3 years	3	9	0	0	3	19
Age[b]	Birth - 2	15	46.8	9	56	6	37
	Age 3	7	21.8	5	31	2	13
	Age 4	10	31.2	2	13	8	50
Visits[c]	> Monthly	16	50	5	31	12	75
	< Holidays	16	50	11	69	4	25

[a]Years since divorce [b]Child's age at divorce [c]Visits with noncustodial parent

Instruments and Procedures

Following the receipt of an information letter (Appendix A) and completion of a informed consent form (Appendix B), the children were visited in their homes by one of four researchers. During the half hour visit, parents were asked to complete a demographic information sheet (see Appendices C and D) in another room. Meanwhile, the researcher and the children listened to a commercially prepared audio tape of a story and followed along in a corresponding book. This was done to help the child become comfortable with the audio equipment and the researcher.

After completion of the story, the children rolled out playdough on a tray, cut out seven different shapes with cookie cutters (bunny, bird, heart, large female, large male, small male, and small female), and answered nine questions about families:

1. What is love?
2. What is marriage?
3. What is divorce?
4. What are mothers supposed to do?
5. What are mothers not supposed to do?
6. What are fathers supposed to do?
7. What are fathers not supposed to do?
8. What does your mother do?
9. What does your father do?

Questions 1 through 3 were asked while the children worked with the heart shape. Questions 4 and 5 corresponded with the large female shape, 6 and 7

corresponded with the large male shape, and 8 and 9 with the small male and female shapes. The mother and father questions were asked in rotating order based upon a partial Latin Square. For example:

Female Subject 1 would be asked:

What are mothers supposed to do?

What are mothers not supposed to do?

What are fathers supposed to do?

What are fathers not supposed to do?

What does your mother do?

What does your father do?

Female Subject 2 would be asked:

What are fathers supposed to do?

What are fathers not supposed to do?

What are mothers supposed to do?

What are mothers not supposed to do?

What does your father do?

What does your mother do?

The children's responses were recorded on a response sheet by the researcher and on an audio tape. Later the responses were checked for accuracy by another researcher with the audio tape, and then coded into one of 18 categories of response (Table 12). Coding was undertaken by one of five raters. Positive and negative wording of each answer was also coded.

Table 12

Child Questionnaire Coding Categories

Category		Examples of Responses			
1.	**Child Care**	Take care of their kids.	Take care of you.	Keep care of the children.	Washes our hair.
2.	**Care of Home**	Washes the dishes.	Mows the lawn.	Sews the clothes.	Fix the table.
3.	**School or Work**	Go to work.	To work on the farm.	Works and goes to school.	Goes to his job.
4.	**Food Related**	Fix supper.	Bake them some food.	Feed the baby.	Give them some food.
5.	**Love**	Love together.	Love the kids.	People that love each other.	Love the mom.
6.	**Physical Act**	Kiss them.	Hug them.	Putting hand around the neck.	Kiss all the time.
7.	**Negative Habits**	Be mean.	Spanks me.	Yell in the house.	Go speeding fast.
8.	**Habits**	Smoke.	Drink coffee.	Drink bad stuff.	Eat bad food.
9.	**Prosocial**	Be nice.	Help you.		
10.	**Recreation**	Reads the newspaper.	Plays games with you.	He goes out to eat.	Sit.
11.	**Definition***	You love someone.	Getting married.	You're divorced.	Love is love.
12.	**Marriage**	When you get married.	Get married.		
13.	**Family**	You're a mom and a dad.	Have a baby.	Help take care of the mother.	If you're a mom.
14.	**Separation**	They dump them.	Going.	The father lives somewhere else.	Go somewhere.
15.	**I Don't Know**				
16.	**No Response**				
17.	**Bizarre**	It's a cow.	Disneyland.		

* Repeating the main concept of the question in the answer.

Face and content validity of the methods and instruments were determined by discussion with various professionals. Interrater agreement (for all five raters combined) of the entire protocol calculated to a minimum of .88. Any disagreements were resolved in discussion with a third rater. As shown in Table 12, agreement for each question ranged from .78 to .93.

Fourteen of the children in the sample were interviewed a second time (within one month of the first visit) to determine the reliability of the instrument. Seven children were selected from the married sample and seven from the divorced sample. Random identification numbers were selected for the second interviews. The children's answers in the second administration corresponded with their answers on the first interview, at an overall rate of .87. Question by question consistency ranged from .79 to 1 (see Table 13).

Table 13

Interrater and Test-Retest Reliability

Question	Interrater Agreement	Test-Retest Agreement
Love	.93	.85
Marriage	.78	1
Divorce	.93	.93
Father supposed to	.90	.79
Father not supposed to	.83	.79
Mother supposed to	.82	.93
Mother not supposed to	.82	.79
Father do	.90	.85
Mother do	.83	.85

Training and Monitoring Researchers

Each researcher was trained by attending a one-hour training session given by this author. Trainees accompanied the author to interview one child and then interviewed a second in the company of the author. The author accompanied each researcher to interview every fifth child to monitor the consistency of the interview procedures.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The nine questions asked in interviews with the children were divided into three categories:

Parental Relationships

What is love?

What is marriage?

What is divorce?

Questions Regarding Father

What is a father supposed to do?

What is a father not supposed to do?

What does your father do?

Questions Regarding Mother

What is a mother supposed to do?

What is a mother not supposed to do?

What does your mother do?

The children's answers were coded into 1 of 17 categories (Table 12). Factor analyses were used to extract commonalities in the responses of children from two parent homes and to compare these with commonalities found in the responses of the

children from divorced homes. In order to complete the factor analyses, for each question, any response category with fewer than 6 responses was deleted from the analyses (see Appendices). With the categories remaining for each question, dummy coding (1,0) was used to achieve numerical values. Factor loadings for variables within a 16-point range were selected as pertinent factors (substantial loadings). Factors containing only one high loading (other important factor loadings) were retained in order to discern any patterns which might arise. Following factor analyses, t tests were executed for each determined factor to calculate mean differences within the divorced and two parent samples for the variables of sex and age.

Parental Relationships

As shown in Table 14, two factors were derived for the divorced sample: one for the love question (Love) and one for the marriage and divorce questions (Relationship). Children from the divorced homes tended to more often respond to the questions regarding the definition of love and marriage with either "I don't know" or by simply repeating the term being defined, for instance "Love is love" or "Marriage is being married." Surprisingly, although living in a divorced home, these children responded to the question "What is divorce?" also with an "I don't know" (the third coding category making up the factor Relationship). The two factors emerging from this analysis accounted for almost 70% of the variance in the children's responses to this set of questions. T tests revealed no statistically significant differences in means for sex or age (see Appendices G and H).

Table 14

Parental Relationships Factor Loading and Variance Percentages

(Divorced Sample N=32)

Response Categories	Love Factor	Relationship Factor
Definition[b]	-.77[a]	.02
I don't know[b]	.75[a]	.37
Definition[c]	-.14	-.74[a]
I don't know[c]	.03	.88[a]
I don't know[d]	-.03	.90[a]
Separation[d]	.65	.49
Variance[e]	27.00%	42.60%
Total[f] 69.5%		

[a]Substantial factor loadings
[b]Response to question: What is love?
[c]Response to question: What is marriage?
[d]Response to question: What is divorce?
[e]Variance accounted for by each factor.
[f]Total variance account.

Although the responses of the children from married homes fell into six factors (see Table 15), only two loaded within the criterion range. One factor (Marriage) reflected undefined ideas of marriage with definition and "I don't know" responses. The second factor (Concepts) more clearly defined marriage and divorce with marriage is love and divorce is separation response categories. A statistically significant difference in means for age was found with regard to the Concepts factor ($t = 1.27$, $p = .003$). As shown in Appendices E and F, 5-year-olds responded in this manner more often than did 4-year-olds. No significant differences were found for sex for either factor.

Table 15

Parental Relationship Factor Loadings and Variance Percentages

(Married Sample N=42)

Category	Factor 1 (Concepts)	Factor 2 (Marriage)	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Love[e]	.77[a]	-.04	-.12	-.18	.06	.15
Separation[d]	.75[a]	.11	-.00	.29	-.25	-.12
Definition[c]	-.27	-.74[a]	.03	.26	-.01	-.11
I don't know[c]	-.19	.81[a]	.07	.24	.08	.17
Act[e]	-.07	-.00	-.02	-.90[b]	.05	-.05
Love[e]	.11	-.03	-.05	.05	-.90[b]	-.07
I don't know[e]	.16	.23	-.06	.10	.18	.85[b]
Marriage[c]	-.30	-.00	.79[b]	.17	.06	-.11
Prosocial[e]	.46	.06	-.08	.11	.45	-.58
Definition[e]	-.39	-.18	-.58	.34	.19	-.03
Marriage[d]	.10	.50	-.55	-.09	.31	.19
I don't know[d]	-.56	.44	-.39	-.26	-.02	-.01
Variance[f]	18.4%	16.5%	12.3%	11.1%	9.8%	8.7%
Total[g] 76.8%						

[a]Substantial Loadings
[b]Other Important Factor Loadings
[c]Response to question: What is marriage?
[d]Response to question: What is divorce?
[e]Response to question: What is love?
[f]Variance accounted for by factors.
[g]Total variance accounted for.

In comparison, the children from the divorced sample's responses regarding parental relationships fit into a more concise range: two factors in comparison with six from the married sample. Although both analyses accounted for similar variance overall (divorced 69.5%, two parent 76.8%), the two pertinent factors in the married sample accounted for much less of the variance (34.9%) than that of the two pertinent factors in the divorced sample (69.5%).

Interestingly, the response categories which make up the highest loadings for the factors with only one criterion loading all correspond to the question "What is love?" Combined, these factors (3 to 6) account for more of the variance in the children's answers (41.9%) than the factors which contain more than one substantial loading.

Father

Responses to the questions about father for the children from the divorced sample fell into the factors of food and work (Table 16). Factor 1 (Food) is comprised of the two response categories "I don't know what fathers are not supposed to do" and "fathers are supposed to do food-related tasks." Factor 2 (Work) includes "fathers are supposed to work" and "my father does work." Both factors accounted for a total of 58.7% of the variance. As seen in Appendices G and H, no male responses fit into the coding categories which made up the factor "food"; only females responded in that manner. Significant differences were found for age for the "Food" factor with younger children more often responding in that manner ($t = .08$, $p = .05$).

When examining the married sample, as found with the parental relationship questions, the children's answers covered a more diverse range, allowing for a greater number group of factors to be extracted (Table 17). Factor 1 (Balanced Roles I) describes a contemporary balanced role for fathers: "taking care of children" and not working too much." Factor 2 (Mixed Roles I) combines both traditional and nontraditional roles with father "not caring for children", "not participating in

negative behavior (such as hitting and yelling), and "preparing food." Factor 3 (Mixed Roles II) again combines the past and present with "fathers are not supposed to hug and kiss others" and " my father does take care of the house." Factor 4 (Traditional Roles), corresponding with Factor I, fits into traditional definitions with "my father does work" and "my father participates in recreational activities." No significant differences for sex or age were found with regard to these factors (Appendices G and H).

Table 16

Father Factor Loadings and Variance Percentages

(Divorced Sample N=32)

Response Categories	**Food Factor**	**Work Factor**
I don't know[b]	.80[a]	.00
Food[c]	.79[a]	-.18
Work[d]	.08	.73[a]
Work[c]	-.15	.84[a]
Negative Behavior[b]	-.58	-.14
Recreation[c]	-.52	.52
Variance[e]	33.1%	25.5%
Total[f] **58.7%**		

[a]Substantial factor loadings
[b]Response to question: What is a father not supposed to do?
[c]Response to question: What does your father do?
[d]Response to question: What is a father supposed to do?
[e]Variance accounted for by factors
[f]Total variance accounted for

Table 17

Father Factor Loadings and Variance Percentages

(Married Sample (N=32)

Response	Factor 1 (Balanced)	Factor 2 (Mixed Role I)	Factor 3 (Mixed Role II)	Factor 4 (Traditional)	Factor 5
Child[c]	.78[a]	.14	.31	.02	.08
Work[c]	-.90[a]	.05	.13	.03	.11
Child[d]	.17	.63[a]	.29	-.27	-.26
Negative Behavior[d]	.38	-.66[a]	.09	.06	-.24
Food[e]	.17	.66[a]	-.26	.17	.07
Acts[d]	.01	.14	-.77	.10	-.31
Home[e]	.17	-.00	.67[a]	.16	-.39
Work[e]	-.25	-.15	-.14	-.79[a]	.24
Recreation[e]	-.18	-.09	-.09	.74[a]	.11
Don't know[d]	-.00	.07	.05	-.02	.93[b]
Variance[f]	21.2%	14.8%	14%	11.5%	10.7%
Variance[g]	**72.2%**				

[a]Substantial Loadings
[b]Other Important Loadings
[c]Response to the question: What is a father supposed to do?
[d]Response to the question: What is a father not supposed to do?
[e]Response to question: What does your father do?
[f]Variance accounted for by factors
[g]Total variance accounted for

As was found with parental relationship questions, a wider range of factors was extracted for the married sample than the divorced sample in responses regarding father. Conversely, one major difference is seen in these factors versus the relationship factors: four of these factors exhibited substantial loadings which fit into the set criteria while the relationship factors only exhibited two substantial loading

factors. However, the two factors derived from the divorced sample accounted for more comparable amounts of the variance in the children's responses (divorced 58.7%, married 60.7%) than the other set of questions.

Mother

In contrast with the questions pertaining to father and those relating to parental relationships, both the divorced and two parent samples exhibited notably similar perceptions of the roles of mother (Tables 18 and 19).

Table 18

Mother Factor Loadings and Variance Percentages

(Divorced Sample N=32)

Response	Factor 1 (Child & Food)	Factor 2 (Home & Behavior)	Factor 3	Factor 4
Child[c]	-.72[a]	.44	.01	-.14
Food[c]	.84[a]	.25	-.06	-.13
Food[d]	.76[a]	.36	-.24	-.10
Home[c]	-.09	-.79[a]	.12	.19
Home[d]	.19	-.72[a]	-.34	-.31
Negative Behavior[e]	-.09	.18	.72[a]	.16
I don't know[e]	.04	.21	-.71[a]	-.00
Work[d]	-.13	-.01	.09	.95[b]
Child[d]	-.35	.24	.56	-.43
Variance[f]	26.7%	20.3%	15.2%	11.2%
Total [g]	73.4%			

[a]Substantial Loadings
[b]Other important factor loadings
[c]Response to question: What is a mother supposed to do?
[d]Response to question: What does your mother do?
[e]Response to question: What is a mother not supposed to do?
[f]Variance accounted for by the factors
[g]Total variance accounted for

Mothers' roles were perceived by both groups in a very traditional vein: caring for the home, the children, and preparing food. The samples also agreed that they were not quite sure what mothers were not supposed to do except that mothers were not supposed to exhibit negative behaviors (such as hitting or running in the house). No significant differences were found in either sample when looking at means for age or sex (Appendices G and H).

Table 19

Mother Factor Loadings and Variance Percentages

(Married Sample N=42)

Response	Factor 1 (Child & Food)	Factor 2 (Home & Behavior)	Factor 3	Factor 4
Child[c]	.78[a]	.11	.23	-.00
Food[c]	-.80[a]	.06	.03	-.04
Food[d]	-.79[a]	.15	.21	.02
Negative Behavior[e]	.18	.71[a]	.13	-.00
I don't know[e]	.27	-.63[a]	-.08	-.16
Home[d]	.09	-.78[a]	.29	-.61
Work[d]	.05	.01	-.96[b]	.05
Child[d]	.24	.16	.19	.85[b]
Recreation	.34	.30	.24	-.61
Variance[f]	24.7%	18.9%	13.6%	12.9%
Total[g]	70.2%			

[a]Substantial Loadings
[b]Other important factor loadings
[c]Response to question: What is a mother supposed to do?
[d]Response to question: What does your mother do?
[e]Response to question: What is a mother not supposed to do?
[f]Variance accounted for by the factors
[g]Total variance accounted for

Although the variance accounted for in both groups is nearly identical (divorced 73.4%, married 70.2%), the two factors which do not meet the criteria for pertinent factors in the two parent sample explain 26.5% of the variance, leaving the other three factors accounting for 43.7% of the variance (Table 19). Another interesting similarity found in the mother set of questions is the appearance of "my mother does work" as a unique factor (factor with only one high loading variable) in both of the groups.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

While previous research in the area of children's perceptions of their parents has focused on older children in married families, the current investigation compared the perceptions of parents held by preschool children from married and divorced homes. It was hypothesized that differences would be seen in the children's perceptions of the roles of mother and father according to family structure.

As predicted, differences were found when comparing the children's answers from each sample. Specifically, these differences centered on the perceptions of parental relationships and the roles of father (Appendix I).

When looking at the parental relationship questions, two types of responses were secured from children whose parents were married. One factor ("Marriage") reflected, as also seen in the divorced group, a lack of understanding of parental relationships. In contrast, the other married group factor exhibited clearer "Concepts" when discussing parental relationships. Older children were significantly more likely to respond in this manner. As shown by the significant mean differences for age (Appendix G), older children (5-year-olds) from the two parent sample defined marriage and divorce more often in succinct terms as found in the factor "Concepts" (e.g., "Marriage is love"). Perhaps their wider range of experiences with both parents and greater opportunities to observe parental interactions in concert with

more mature thought processes may facilitate, in the older children from this sample, more sophisticated social concepts. Moreover, this group's responses to the father questions also support this view. Four factors arose when looking at the father response, in comparison to two factors in the divorced sample.

The children from divorced homes were unable to define parental relationships, often giving "I don't know" answers or responses such as "Love is love" or "Marriage is being married." "I don't know" was also a common response from this group when questions regarding father were asked. Factors derived from this sample were also limited for both the parental relationship and father questions. Two factors were extracted for each set of questions from the divorced group while six were derived for the two parent group for the parental relationship questions and five for the father questions.

However, the two sample groups were more alike in their perceptions of mother's roles. Both samples presented four very similar factors in their responses regarding mother. No major differences emerged when comparisons were made with respect to mother. Even the two children from the divorced sample who lived with their father responded in the above manner.

Sample

The samples used for this study displayed some unexpected characteristics. Although both the mothers and fathers showed statistically significant differences for education between groups (more fathers and mothers in the married sample were college educated), there were no significant differences when comparing occupations.

Although fathers, like mothers, from the two parent group had significantly higher education levels, most of the fathers in both samples held jobs fitting into the skilled labor category. On the other hand, fathers from two parent families were more likely to work more than 40 hours per week and divorced home fathers more often worked 21 to 40 hours per week. A similar pattern was seen when comparing the occupations of mothers. Both groups tended to hold jobs which fit into the unskilled categories, even though mothers in the married sample had significantly higher levels of education (Tables 5 and 6).

Three circumstances may account for these unexpected demographic findings. First, the numbers of university students present (although not directly measured) in these samples may be the probable cause of the results for both the father and mother's occupation and education discrepancies. Students may be more likely to be working temporarily in jobs below their expected occupation level. Second, the size of the community in which this study was conducted may limit the job opportunities available. Third, the numbers of hours worked may be the circumstance which has the most influence on this variable for mothers. Married mothers in this sample worked part-time more often than divorced mothers, who tended to work full-time. It may be more difficult to find part-time jobs which fit higher levels of education opportunities regardless of one's education level. These factors may also be important when looking at the hours worked by married mothers in comparison to divorced mothers (see Tables 5 to 8).

Not surprisingly, children from divorced homes spent significantly more time at school or at a sitter than children from married homes (Table 9). The children from divorced homes who attended school were enrolled in different types of programs than the children from married homes; they more often attended full day programs or two schools. As reflected in Table 10, children from married homes more often attended enrichment-type programs which only lasted a few hours per day and had session only a few days per week. Over 15% of the children from divorced homes did not attend school at all. Those children not attending school may be in the care of older siblings or relatives. These older siblings or relatives they may not have considered by mothers as alternative care and therefore were not reported on the form. Although visitation findings do not seem to reflect this possibility, divorced fathers were reported to work fewer hours per week than married fathers and may be available to care for the children more often, as well.

Finally, another interesting demographic finding concerns the greater amount of time males had spent in divorced homes in comparison with females. Males, in this sample, had lived in a divorced home for significantly longer periods of time than females. Concurrently, females in this sample tended to visit their fathers more often than the males did (Table 11). This finding may account for the fact that only female responses were found in the factor "Food": namely, females had spent more time with their fathers than males and were able to add further dimensions to their role than simply "Work."

Parental Relationships

In response to the questions: (a) What is love? (b) What is marriage? and (c) What is divorce? older children from the married sample held clear notions of what marriage and divorce were, and were also more specific in their definitions of love (Table 15). Similar to the younger children in the married group, the children from both age groups in the divorced group responded with more unsure answers regarding all three aspects of parental relationships (Table 14).

The life-style of divorce may be an important factor influencing these differences. Children who have experienced divorce may have had less opportunity to view adult relationships in action because of the living arrangement within their home. This perhaps limits children's ability to draw on experience and observations to develop clear ideas of how adult relationships work.

If the divorce was a new situation, as was the case in 52% of this sample (Table 11), the children may still be adjusting to the subsequent changes that follow divorce. According to Hess and Camara (1979) these children may be dealing with the disruption of their already formed perceptions of social realities and thus reflecting this in their undecided responses. Further support for this notion was the finding that the 5-year-old children from the two-parent sample exhibited the clearest understandings of parental relationships, not only love and marriage but divorce as well (Table 15).

Father

When answering the questions (a) What is a father supposed to do? (b) What is a father not supposed to do? and (c) What does your father do?, children from the married group held more diverse ideas regarding fathers' roles. Fathers were viewed as fulfilling a wide variety of roles found in four factors. In more contemporary roles (taking care of children, the home, and making food; mixed with traditional roles, i.e., going to work and participating in recreational activities), once again, the life-style of divorce may have influenced this finding. Although 48% of the children from divorced homes saw their father once a month or more, this amount of interaction time does not equal the daily father-child interaction opportunities afforded in most two parent homes.

An interesting combination of factors was found for the father responses in the divorced sample (Table 15). These factors may reflect aspects of familial interactions between the divorced fathers and their children in this sample. More than half of the children visited their fathers sporadically (only on holidays or less often) (Table 11). These children may view father's work as a reason why their interactions are limited. Moreover, their interactions when time is spent together may center around food activities ("Going out to eat" or "Having a picnic").

Four-year-old girls exclusively answered the father questions with responses that fit into the food factor (no boys responded in that manner). Girls in this sample tended to visit their noncustodial fathers more often than the boys (Table 11). Although the limited age selection in this sample did not allow for age comparisons,

this finding supports work by Seltzer and Bianchi (1988) who found that young children visit with fathers more often than older children and particularly young girls visit father more often than boys.

Mother

In response to the questions: (a) What is mother supposed to do? (b) What is a mother not supposed to do? and (c) What does your mother do?, children responded in an almost identical manner. Children from both groups had more equal opportunities to observe and interact with their mothers than they did with their fathers. This may explain the similarities that were evident between the sample groups (Tables 18 and 19). These clearer ideas of the role of mother may also be reinforced for the children from divorced homes by the greater amount of time spent in alternative care environments where the majority of caregivers are female.

Mother and Father Comparisons

Overall, the children assigned more traditional roles to mother and viewed fathers in a more nontraditional manner. The children from the married group viewed father in more diverse roles while mothers from both groups were seen filling identical roles.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The notions postulated by symbolic interaction theory are reflected and supported by this research. According to Stryker (1964), children derive their social perceptions through observing the enactment of the roles of others and by assessing these roles. The present research suggests that the life-style resulting from divorce seems to limit a young child's opportunities to observe and assess roles of parents, especially with regard to father and the interactions between parents.

Although, overall, this study seems to support the work of Franz and Mell (1981), in which children responded that both parents can enact any role, some reflections of the traditional values of economic provider roles for father and nurturance roles for mother found by Finch (1955) also emerged. Children from this sample clearly viewed mother in more traditional roles than father. Father here was viewed as fulfilling roles more divergent from those traditionally identified.

Although not directly measured in this study, the perceptions of the children from the divorced sample were possibly influenced by the diminished nurturance and communication of a burdened divorced parent (Peck, 1989), the regression behavior experienced by the children following divorce (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1975), and the need for social perspective adjustments to be made by the children (Hess & Camara, 1979). Limited opportunities to view parental relationships and father roles could

delay observation, assessment, and incorporation of these ideas into a child's social perspective and could influence their perceptions. However, they may further limit the child to information gathered through indirect methods such as the media or alternative care environments.

Limitations

This study used an open-ended interview with young children to explore their perceptions of parental roles. Further research in this area should utilize a variety of methods to explore the young child's parental perceptions (for example: use the playdough instrument, look at pictures and discuss roles, and utilize puppets or dramatic play equipment). Using a variety of methods may broaden the range of information gained and distinguish between those aspects of children's perceptions which are stable and those which are not.

Adaptation and self-esteem measures derived from parental and teacher sources of children may also broaden the scope of information and provide further insight into this exploratory area.

Implications

Through comparisons of the experiences and perceptions of the children in this sample, results suggest that there are indeed differences between children from married and divorced homes. These differing perceptions and experiences may be deeply embedded into many of the negative outcomes for children following divorce. Knowledge of these perception differences and related experiential circumstances may

allow parents and educators new insight into areas where further support is needed for young children in their adjustment to divorce.

The results of this work may also help noncustodial fathers become more aware of the importance of quantity and quality interaction time with their children. It may raise the awareness levels of both parents regarding the importance of interactions with father in developing concepts of the roles of father and in observation of adult relationships.

The differences in perceptions which emerged from this research may further support public policy regarding the necessity of both parents to consider the needs of their young children very seriously while in the process of divorce and following divorce. Many states currently have special programs (some voluntary and some mandatory) to make parents more aware of the special needs of their children following marital dissolution and to provide them with skills to cooperatively facilitate healthy adjustment to their family's new life-style for both themselves and their children.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

Parent Letter

Parent Letter

Dear Parents:

I am a graduate student completing a Master's degree in the Department of Family and Human Development. My research project is entitled: Preschool Children's Perceptions of their Parents: An Examination of Intact and Single Parent Homes. The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions of parents held by preschool children from intact homes and from single parent homes following divorce.

In this study parents will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire containing the following background information regarding their family: occupation and educational level of parents; number of children in the family; birth order and school attendance of the child participating in the study. An interviewer will visit your home a maximum of three times at your convenience: once to get acquainted with your child and bring your consent form; and a maximum of twice to interview your child.

In each interview your child will be asked a series of nine questions regarding the roles of parents. The interview is designed to be an enjoyable gamelike experience for your child. The interview will take approximately 10 minutes and an audio tape of the interviews will be available upon your request.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and confidential. Either you or your child may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you have

further questions about this research, please feel free to contact either myself or my advisor, Dr. Shelley Lindauer.

Sincerely.

Sondra Moe
Graduate Student
750-1525

Shelley Lindauer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
750-1532

APPENDIX B.

Parent Consent Form

Parent Consent Form

I agree to participate in this research regarding children's perceptions of their parent's roles. I understand that this will involve completing a questionnaire of demographic information and allowing a researcher to fist my home a maximum of three occasions. I also understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Signed:

Date:

I agree to allow my child to participate in the research regarding children's perceptions of their parent's roles. I understand that this will involve completing a questionnaire with demographic information and allowing a researcher visit my home on a maximum of three occasions. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX C.

Married Parent Background Information

Married Background Information

Child's Name

Sex

Age

Father's Name

Level of Education

Occupation

Number of Hours Worked Weekly

Mother's Name

Level of Education

Occupation

Number of Hours Worked Weekly

Number of Years Parents Married

Number of Siblings

Children's Names (in order) Sex Age

How Often Does the Family Attend Church Meetings

Faith

Name of School Child is Attending

How Many Hours Weekly

Does Your Child Go To A Sitter While You Work or Attend School?

How Many Hours Weekly?

APPENDIX D.

Divorced Parent Background Information

Divorced Background Information

Child's Name

Sex

Age

Father's Name

Level of Education

Occupation

Number of Hours Worked Weekly

Mother's Name

Level of education

Occupation

Number of Hours Worked Weekly

Number of Years Parents Married

Number of Siblings

Siblings Names (in order) Sex Age

How Often Does Your Family Attend Church Meetings?

Faith

Name of School Attending

How many Hours Weekly

Does Your Child Go to a Sitter While You Work or Go To School?

How Many Hours Weekly?

Age of the Child at the Time of Parental Divorce

Which Parent Has Custody of the Child

How Often Does the Child Visit the Non-custodial Parent

APPENDIX E.

Child Responses to the Research Questions (Divorced Sample n=32)

QUESTION	RESPONSE CATEGORY								
	Love	Marriage	Divorce	Father Supposed	Father not Supposed	Mother Supposed	Mother not Supposed	Father Does	Mother Does
Child Care	---	---	---	3	---	7	2	4	7
Care of Home	---	---	---	10	2	6	3	2	7
School/Work	---	---	---	4	3	2	3	6	6
Food Related	---	---	---	2	1	11	1	6	8
Love	1	1	1	---	---	1	---	1	---
Physical Act.	3	2	---	---	2	---	3	---	1
Negative Habits	---	---	---	---	8	---	6	---	---
Habits	---	---	1	2	4	---	3	---	---
Prosocial	3	1	1	1	---	2	---	1	1
Recreation	1	1	---	1	3	---	1	8	2
Definition	8	11	2	1	---	---	---	---	---
Marriage	2	---	4	1	---	---	---	---	---
Family	1	---	1	1	---	1	---	---	---
Separation	---	3	5	---	---	---	1	1	1
I Don't Know	10	11	15	4	8	2	8	2	1
No Response	---	1	---	---	---	---	1	---	1
Bizarre	3	1	2	2	1	---	1	2	1

APPENDIX F.

Child Responses to the Research Questions (Married Sample n=42).

	RESPONSE CATEGORY								
QUESTION	Love	Marriage	Divorce	Father Supposed	Father not Supposed	Mother Supposed	Mother not Supposed	Father Does	Mother Does
Child Care	2	---	---	12	5	17	3	4	6
Care of Home	---	---	---	2	1	2	3	6	9
School/Work	---	---	---	18	3	2	4	16	7
Food Related	---	---	---	2	2	13	3	3	7
Love	6	6	2	---	1	1	1	---	---
Physical Act.	6	3	---	1	6	3	2	4	3
Negative Habits	---	---	---	---	8	1	11	---	2
Habits	---	---	---	1	4	---	2	---	---
Prosocial	6	---	---	1	---	---	---	1	---
Recreation	---	2	---	1	1	1	1	5	5
Definition	6	14	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Marriage	6	1	5	---	---	---	2	---	---
Family	1	2	1	1	---	1	---	---	---
Separation	---	1	6	1	---	---	---	---	---
I Don't Know	7	12	26	1	9	1	10	2	1
No Response	---	---	1	1	1	---	---	1	1
Bizarre	2	1	2	---	1	---	---	---	1

APPENDIX G.

Group Differences for Age

Group Differences for Age

Married		Five-Year-Olds			Four-Year-Olds		
Factor	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**t**
Parent[c]							
Concepts	.42	.76	.17	.17	.38	.08	1.27[d]
Marriage	.31	.79	.19	.26[c]	.8	.2	2.02
Father							
Balanced I	.47[c]	.77	.17	.13	.81	.17	2.45[c]
Mixed Role I	.1	.65	.15	.08[c]	.66	.13	.93
Mixed Role II	.05[c]	.52	.12	.04	.56	.17	.57[c]
Balanced II	.31	.58	.13	.21	.73	.15	.43
Mother							
Child and Food	.10[c]	1.15	.26	.04[c]	1.06	.22	.18[c]
Home and Behavior	.26[c]	.99	.22	.13[c]	.92	.19	.45[c]

Divorced		Five-Year-Olds			Four-Year-Olds		
Factor	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**t**
Parent[a]							
Relations[b]	.18[c]	.8	.19	.28	.82	.22	1.57[c]
Love	.05[c]	.74	.18	.14	.77	.20	.74[c]
Father							
Food	.05	.55	.13	.07	.26	.07	.08*
Work	.17	.39	.09	.07	.61	.16	.58
Mother							
Child and Food	.11	1.05	.25	.64	1.08	.28	1.36[c]
Home	.35[c]	.6	.14	.42[c]	.75	.2	.3
Behavior	.05	.65	.16	.21[c]	.69	.18	1.11

[a]Parental Relationships
[b]Relationships
[c]Designates negative value as consequence of factor components assigned negative values in order to perform t-tests.
[d]$p < .001$
*$p < .05$

APPENDIX H.

Group Differences for Sex

Group Differences for Sex

Married	Male			Female			
Factor	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**t**
Parent[a]							
Concepts	.26	.54	.11	.31	.67	.15	.29[c]
Marriage	.17[c]	.80	.19	.28	.82	.22	1.15[c]
Father							
Balanced I	.13[c]	.87	.18	.16[c]	.83	.19	.1
Mixed Role I	.04	.36	.07	.26	.56	.12	1.52[c]
Mixed Role II	.08	.59	.12	.10[c]	.45	.1	1.15
Balanced II	.05[c]	.67	.13	.5	.61	.14	1.94[c]
Mother							
Home and Behavior	.08[c]	1.94	.19	.31[c]	1.94	.21	.78
Child and Food	.17	1.98	.20	.31[c]	1.16	.2	1.61
Divorced	Male			Female			
Factor	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**x**	**SD**	**SE**	**t**
Parent[a]							
Relations[b]	.31	.79	.19	.26[c]	.79	.20	2.02
Love	.18	.75	.18	.13	.7	.18	1.20
Father							
Food	--	--	--	.13	.7	.18	---
Work	.00	.51	.12	.26	.45	.11	1.52[c]
Mother							
Child and Food	.56	1.09	.27	.13	11.06	.27	1.11
Home	.37[c]	.61	.15	.40[c]	.73	.19	.1
Behavior	.00	.98	.2	.31[c]	.94	.21	.78

[a]Parent Relate = parental relationships

[b]Relate = relationships

[c]Designates negative value as consequence of factor components assigned negative values in order to perform t-tests.

APPENDIX I.

Factor Components

Factor Components

Parental Relationships

Married Factors	Married Components	Divorced Factors	Divorced Components
Concepts	Marriage is love.	Love	Love is Love.
	Divorce is separation.		I don't know what love is.
Marriage	Marriage is Marriage.	Relationship	Marriage is marriage.
	I don't know what marriage is.		I don't know what divorce is.

Father:

Married Factors	Married Components	Divorced Factors	Divorced Components
Balanced Role I	Fathers are supposed to care for children.	Food and Behavior	I don't know what fathers are not supposed to do.
	Fathers are supposed to work.		My father makes food.
Mixed Role I	Fathers are not supposed to care for children.	Work	Fathers are supposed to work.
	Fathers are not supposed to exhibit negative behavior.		My father works.
Mixed Role II	Fathers are not supposed to kiss and hug.		
	My father cares for the home.		
Traditional Role	My father works.		
	My father participates in recreational activities.		

Mother:

Married Factors	Married Components	Divorced Factors	Divorced Components
Child and Food	Mothers are supposed to care for the children.	Child and Food	Mothers are supposed to care for children.
	Mothers are supposed to make food.		Mothers are supposed to make food.
	My mother does make food.		My mother does make food.
Home and Behavior	My mother cares for the home.	Home	My mother cares for the home.
	Mothers are not supposed to exhibit negative behavior.		Mothers are supposed to care for the home.