The Relations Between Parenting Stress, Father Involvement, and Leisure, Among Fathers of Preschool-Age Children

Patricia Mehl Brown

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THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PARENTING STRESS, FATHER INVOLVEMENT, AND LEISURE, AMONG FATHERS OF PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

by

Patricia Mehl Brown

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE in Family and Human Development
ABSTRACT

Parenting Stress, Father Involvement, and Leisure Among Fathers of Preschool-Age Children

by

Patricia Mehl Brown, Master of Science
Utah State University, 1996

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Department: Family and Human Development

This study examined relations between fathers' parenting stress, father involvement in child caregiving, and family leisure activity among 46 fathers of preschool-age children. Results indicate that the relations between parenting stress and father involvement depend on child gender. A negative association was found between parenting stress and father involvement in caregiving among fathers of boys but a positive association was found between these two variables among fathers of girls. Furthermore, higher levels of family play are associated with lower levels of parenting stress among fathers of boys. Results also indicated a negative association between father involvement and mothers' play alone. There was little evidence that leisure functions as a moderating variable between parenting stress and father involvement. Variables such as parental
employment, family stage, and religious activity were also examined in relation to parenting stress, caregiving, and leisure.

(99 pages)
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Patricia M. Brown
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PROBLEM STATEMENT

As increasing numbers of women enter the workforce, fathers are being called upon to become more involved in the daily care of their children. While many studies have found that the move toward involved fathering is "much ado about nothing" (Miller & Garrison, 1984, p. 328), other researchers have noted a movement in families of employed women toward more shared parenting and housework (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Darling-Fisher & Tiedge, 1990; Johnson & Blair, 1992). Although it appears that the movement is gradual, the increase in father involvement has implications for today's families.

It is likely that as fathers become more involved in the day-to-day care of their children, they will experience more stress in their role as parents. Parenting stress, shown to be related to many negative aspects of parenting and child development, may increase significantly with father involvement. However, there may be variables that moderate this association. Parenting stress due to greater father involvement may be moderated by the type of involvement. For example, father involvement in physical caretaking activities may increase fathers' parenting stress, while greater father involvement with children in leisure activities may help reduce their parenting stress.
Parenting stress differs from external stressors, such as work-related pressures or financial demands, in that it focuses on the feelings of irritation, annoyance, and frustration that parents encounter in their daily interactions with their children (Abidin, 1986; Ventura, 1987). Although several studies have addressed the relations between stressors outside the parenting role and parent/child interaction (Miller, Cowan, Cowan, Hetherington, & Clingempeel, 1993; Pianta & Egeland, 1990; Webster-Stratton, 1990; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983), researchers are also examining the stress that occurs as a result of the parenting role itself (Crnic & Booth, 1991; Jarvis & Creasey, 1991; Mash & Johnston, 1990; Quittner, Glueckauf & Jackson, 1990). Findings indicate that inner stressors, such as the daily hassles of parenting, are an important source of stress to families and have been found to be negatively related to positive parenting (Crnic & Booth, 1991).

High levels of parenting stress are related to negative parenting, insecure attachment, child behavioral problems, and even abuse (Abidin, 1986; Jarvis & Creasey, 1991; Mash & Johnston, 1990; Mash, Johnston, & Kovitz, 1983; Teti, Nakagawa, Das, & Wirth, 1991). Parenting stress has also been found to be related to lower levels of maternal involvement in free play sessions with toddlers (Teti et
Although parenting stress may be associated with father involvement, research has shown that there are, nevertheless, many benefits of father involvement. First, father involvement benefits children. Paternal involvement has been demonstrated to positively influence child development in distinctive ways by fostering cognitive development, aiding in the development of a higher internal locus of control, influencing sex-role identification, as well as enhancing development in social and psychological areas (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984; Lamb, 1981; Rossi, 1984). Second, father involvement benefits fathers. Findings indicate that involved fathers have reported increases in personal satisfaction, and enjoy the closer father-child relationship (Russell, 1983). Third, father involvement benefits mothers. Involved fathering has been found to reduce the burden of caregiving in mothers (Ross & Mirowsky, 1988; Yogev & Brett, 1985), in addition to allowing mothers time off from their children (LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981).

Although much research has been conducted regarding parenting stress and outcome variables such as child behavior or parenting techniques, researchers have not focused on the parenting stress experienced by involved fathers and any factors that may moderate parenting stress.
One variable that may be associated with lower levels of parenting stress is leisure. Researchers have suggested that play may function as a coping mechanism for stress and anxiety (Csikszentmihayli, 1975; Ellis, 1973) and recently, researchers reported an inverse association between parenting stress and leisure in a sample consisting of Head Start families whose parenting stress levels were relatively high (Roggman, Moe, Hart, & Forthun, 1994).

In addition to the moderating relations of leisure with parenting stress, it is also possible that leisure and father involvement have a bi-directional association, in that leisure may affect father involvement, and father involvement may affect leisure. Leisure activities participated in by fathers may affect either the opportunities for, or limitations to, father involvement. For example, leisure activities that fathers engage in which either include or exclude children may affect the time available for fathers to be involved with their children. It is also possible that family leisure patterns may be associated with the type and degree of interaction a father has with his children, as well as the satisfaction or stress a father feels in the interactions he has with his children.

There may be a connecting, possibly circular, association between parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure. It is difficult to make a directional
statement about these relations because there is very little research addressing an association between any combination of these variables, that is, parenting stress and father involvement, parenting stress and leisure, and father involvement and leisure. Moreover, the most appropriate framework upon which to base this research is systems theory, which suggests that variables are interconnected and interdependent, and that relationships are not necessarily uni-directional.

If a directional relationship was hypothesized, it might be that father involvement increases parenting stress with leisure moderating this association by reducing parenting stress. The relationship becomes circular when father involvement, through leisure activities, becomes a more positive, less stressful experience for fathers which, in turn, increases the likelihood that fathers will become even more involved. If bi-directional effects are considered, however, in light of the findings of Teti et al. (1991) indicating that mothers with high levels of parenting stress withdrew from involvement with their children, it is also likely that high levels of fathers' parenting stress may be associated with a decrease in involvement by fathers.

There are, of course, other factors that affect these relations. While gender of the child and parental employment have been found to be associated with father
involvement (Giveans & Robinson, 1985; Harris & Morgan, 1991; Russell, 1983), less is known about their relations with parenting stress, leisure activities, and the relations between these three variables.

It is possible that fathers of boys may be more likely to be involved with their children than fathers of girls. It may also be that the parenting stress experienced by fathers of boys in relation to their involvement is different from the parenting stress experienced by fathers of girls. Furthermore, fathers of boys may be more involved in leisure activities with their children than fathers of girls.

Parental employment may also influence fathers' parenting stress, involvement in child caregiving, and leisure. Fathers who work shiftwork or overtime may experience more parenting stress than fathers who work days or fewer hours per week. In addition, it is possible that a father's or mother's work schedule may be related to the amount of time a father is available to be involved with his children. For example, if a father works shiftwork, he may have more time available during the day to be involved with his preschooler or if a mother works a swingshift schedule, it may be likely that the father has more responsibility for the child while she is at work:
The number of hours a father or mother works per week may influence the degree of father involvement. Fathers who work overtime may be less available for child caregiving, or fathers whose wives work full-time as opposed to part-time may, out of necessity, be more involved in child caregiving.

It is also likely that employment is related to the amount of time available for leisure within the family. For example, fathers who work overtime, or who work days rather than shiftwork, may have less time available for leisure. Similarly, mothers' work schedule may influence the amount of time fathers have available for leisure, especially leisure within the family.

In addition to focusing specifically on fathers of preschoolers, it is possible that family stage may have some bearing on the parenting stress, father involvement, or leisure activity experienced by fathers. Fathers with children preschool-age and younger may experience more parenting stress as well as a higher degree of father involvement due to the more physical demands of caregiving that young children require. In addition, they may also have less opportunity for leisure than fathers who also have older children in the home. Therefore, family stage will be examined to determine if fathers whose oldest children are preschoolers differ from fathers whose oldest children are school-age or adolescents.
Due to the predominance in the study location of a religion that encourages family togetherness and plans activities to promote this value, religious affiliation and activity level may have some influence on the results of this study. Therefore, aspects of religiosity will also be examined.

Religious affiliation may be associated in some way with the degree of parenting stress and father involvement that fathers experience. It is possible that highly religious fathers may hold somewhat more traditional views of gender roles, which might influence their involvement in child caregiving. Furthermore, the level of religious activity may hinder opportunities for fathers to be involved in the caregiving of their children.

Fathers who are highly religious may place more priority on family time together, thereby spending more time in leisure activities with their family, or it may be that fathers who are very active in their religion may find their opportunities for leisure limited. In addition, "attending church" is included in some literature as a leisure activity (Firestone & Shelton, 1988; Hill, 1988).

Due to the possible benefits of involved fathering and the possible negative effects of parenting stress, this area of study has important implications for families today, particularly as parents become more involved in shared
parenting. In addition, while the parenting experiences of mothers have been studied widely, the examination of the parenting experiences of fathers has been neglected. Some researchers suggest that more research is needed to examine parenting from a father's point of view (Creasey & Jarvis, 1994; Grimm-Thomas & Perry-Jenkins, 1994; Noppe, Noppe, & Hughes, 1990). The recent research on parenting stress that does include fathers as well as mothers (Creasey & Jarvis, 1994; Jarvis, Creasey, Phelps, & Cockrel, 1994; Noppe et al., 1990) tends to focus on the outcomes of parenting stress, rather than on variables that may moderate the parenting stress experienced by fathers. Researchers have acknowledged the importance of further study in this area and suggest that studies that specifically focus on the parenting stress of fathers and variables that may moderate this stress are needed (Creasey & Jarvis, 1994).

The purpose of this project is to study the parenting stress that fathers experience relative to their involvement, and to identify whether leisure may be a moderating variable in this association. A review of the literature shows that most research on parenting stress focuses on at-risk families and, in fact, the one study that relates parenting stress and leisure (Roggman et al., 1994) consists of families involved in the Head Start Program, which serves low-income families. Therefore, in order to
extend previous research to middle-income fathers, the sample in this study will consist primarily of middle-class fathers and their preschool-age children. This study with middle-class families has the potential to add to the knowledge already obtained regarding fathering.

Definitions

Parenting Stress

Parenting stress can be defined as the stress that parents feel in their parenting role. It is based on the feelings of irritation, frustration, and inadequacy which parents incur in response to the encounters they have with their children (Abidin, 1986).

Father Involvement

Father involvement can be defined as the amount of paternal participation in child socialization, physical care of the child, and decision making about the child, in addition to the availability of the father to the child (Radin, 1985). This study will be conducted with fathers in intact families; therefore, this definition of father involvement applies to fathers in this particular category.

Leisure

There are many definitions of leisure focusing on either "time" or "activity." Leisure has been defined as
any time not spent in paid employment, or as time free from obligations; it has also been defined as any activity in which an individual freely chooses to engage (Parker, 1983). For the purposes of this project, a definition combining both time and activity will be used. Leisure shall be considered the "relatively freely chosen non-work area of life" (Roberts, 1978, p. 125). The frequency of specific types of leisure activities will be categorized in relation to the other people involved, for example, leisure alone, with children, or with family.

Research Questions

This study will attempt to identify the links between father involvement, parenting stress, and leisure among middle-class families. Specific questions are as follows:

1. Is fathers' parenting stress directly related to father involvement? Is fathers' parenting stress directly related to leisure within the family system? Is father involvement directly related to leisure activities within the family?

2. Does leisure moderate the parenting stress experienced by fathers in relation to father involvement?

3. Is gender of the child related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, or parent-child leisure? Do fathers of boys experience less parenting
stress, more father involvement, or spend more time in leisure activities with their children than fathers of girls? Does gender interact in the relations between fathers' parenting stress and father involvement?

4. Is parental employment (mothers' and fathers'), in terms of type and amount of hours worked, related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, or frequency of leisure activity?

5. Does family stage have an association with fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure?

6. Is the degree of religious activity related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, or leisure?
Systems theory had, at its inception, a biological orientation. Ludwig von Bertalanffy, an Austrian biologist, believed that phenomena should be studied as they occur in a system or "set of elements standing in interrelation among themselves and with the environment" (Bertalanffy, 1975, p. 159).

Systems theory, when applied to families, incorporates the following concepts: wholeness and interdependence of system elements, circularity, and subsystems and the interactions between them. These concepts have relevance when considering parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

Wholeness and interdependence imply that an individual element cannot be understood apart from the other elements in the system. Therefore, the involvement of fathers with their children should be examined in connection with other variables in the system, such as leisure activity and parenting stress, which may be related to the amount of time fathers spend with their children, or the type of activities fathers engage in with their children.

The term "circularity" acknowledges that the behavior of each individual element influences other elements that, in turn, influence others (Stafford & Bayer, 1993). Hence, leisure may moderate high levels of parenting stress,
thereby increasing a father's desire to be involved, which may, in turn, influence family leisure patterns. For example, involved fathers may have less time for individual leisure, and may spend more time in leisure activities that include children. In addition, involved fathers may allow mothers more time for individual leisure. Conversely, fathers who experience high levels of parenting stress may decrease the amount of time they spend with their children and increase individual leisure time.

Systems theory also contends that the family is a structure of related parts or subsystems that affect, and are affected by the actions of and relationships in and between the other subsystems. In addition, the family is a system within the larger suprasystem of community, encompassing work, school, and religion, among others (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993), which may provide contexts for leisure in addition to regulating the time available for leisure.

Researchers have acknowledged the importance of utilizing systems theory when studying leisure (Holman & Epperson, 1984) and father involvement (Belsky, 1984). Holman and Epperson (1984, p. 290) commented that systems theory "alerts one to the need to ascertain . . . the behaviors of all family members and all combinations of family members in order to understand family leisure
behavior." For the purposes of this thesis, in addition to the family system, aspects of the parent-child subsystem and the personal subsystem will be examined to determine what relations leisure activities in these subsystems have to father involvement and parenting stress. The interactions between employment and leisure, and religion and leisure, will also be investigated to determine how these factors may be related, directly or indirectly, to father involvement and parenting stress.

Parenting Stress

Parenting stress has been found to be an important determinant of various aspects of parenting (Crnic & Booth, 1991). Research has linked parenting stress to insecure attachment (Jarvis & Creasey, 1991), dysfunctional parenting (Abidin, 1990), and child abuse (Chan, 1994).

There is very little research relating parenting stress specifically to fathering. However, a study of fathers with infants indicated that fathers who reported more parenting stressors were less positive in their interactions, less sensitive to their infant, and less likely to nurture their infants' social-emotional growth (Jarvis et al., 1994). A study conducted by Noppe et al. (1990) found that fathers who were lower on stress vulnerability were more likely to engage in childcare for their infants. These researchers
contend that men who feel less stress in their interactions with their infants may be more apt to engage in the tasks associated with childcare.

Studies have examined factors that moderate the negative effects of parenting stress upon children. Findings suggest that specific coping mechanisms, in particular, positive reappraisal techniques, may moderate the negative effect of parenting stress on insecure attachment in infants (Jarvis & Creasey, 1991).

Studies that focus on factors that moderate or reduce parenting stress itself are also rare. Social support has been found to moderate parenting stress among at-risk families (Roggman et al., 1994; Webster-Stratton, 1990) as well as more advantaged families (Crnic & Booth, 1991). There may, however, be other variables that moderate parenting stress that also deserve attention. In a study focusing on stress among low-income single mothers with young children, researchers suggest that although social support was used as a coping mechanism, other characteristics of these mothers' lives should be examined which might predict differences in individual coping patterns (Olsen & Banyard, 1993).

Leisure has been found to have an inverse association with parenting stress. Specifically, researchers have reported that the parenting stress that fathers experience
has been found to be negatively related to involvement in leisure activities with children and on an individual basis (Roggman et al., 1994). However, because this sample consisted of presumably highly stressed families involved in the Head Start Program, which provides some opportunities for family leisure, it is difficult to generalize these findings to all families.

Many studies suggest that further research should be conducted to examine parenting stress, especially that relating to fathers. Barnett and Baruch (1987) posit that there is little known about the stress that fathers experience outside of the workplace and other researchers suggest that, in addition to examining the parenting experiences of fathers as well as mothers (Noppe et al., 1990), studies that examine the specific coping mechanisms that might alleviate parenting stress would be beneficial (Jarvis & Creasey, 1991).

Father Involvement

The degree of a father's involvement with his children varies among fathers and has been shown to affect the whole family. A high degree of father involvement has many positive effects on family members. First, father involvement benefits children. Paternal involvement has been demonstrated to positively influence child development
in distinctive ways. For example, involved fathers foster their children's cognitive development as well as enhance the development of a higher internal locus of control (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984; Rossi, 1984). Fathers also influence their children's sex-role identification and, more generally, affect their social and psychological development (Lamb, 1981). Second, father involvement benefits fathers. Russell (1983) found that as fathers became more involved they reported an increase in their own self-confidence and personal satisfaction, and a strengthening of the father-child relationship. Third, father involvement benefits mothers. Involved fathering has been found to relieve the stress of employed as well as nonemployed mothers (Ross & Mirowsky, 1988; Yogev & Brett, 1985). Fathers who are involved allow mothers to get tertiary time, or "time off" from their children, which has been found to raise maternal well-being (LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981).

There are many variables determining the quality and quantity of father involvement. Biernat and Wortman (1991) reported that maternal and paternal education levels are positively related to paternal involvement, while paternal career orientation and number of hours spent at work are negatively correlated with involved fathering. Furthermore, the specific work schedule of fathers has been found to be associated with their level of involvement with their
children (Brayfield, 1995). One study determined that fathers who worked four 10-hour days per week as opposed to those with the traditional five 8-hour day schedules participated in nearly four more hours a week in child care (Benokraitis, 1985).

In general, research has shown that maternal employment has only a slight correlation with the degree of father involvement. Findings indicate that employed mothers still spend significantly more time in child care than fathers (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Kingston & Nock, 1985; McHale & Huston, 1984). While some researchers have concluded that husbands whose wives are employed outside the home spend the same amount of time in domestic tasks as men whose wives are not employed (Thompson & Walker, 1991), others suggest that there is some difference, although relatively slight.

Fathers whose wives were employed full-time spent significantly more time with their children than those whose wives worked either part-time or not at all (Katzev, Warner, & Acock, 1994; O'Neil & Greenberger, 1994). In a study of more than 300 couples, findings indicated that husbands of women employed full-time participated in 30% of physical childcare activities; husbands of women employed part-time participated in 25% of the physical childcare activities; and husbands of women not employed outside the home participated in just 20% of the physical childcare
activities (Darling-Fisher & Tiedge, 1990). Other research suggests that it is fathers' amount of time available to be involved relative to mothers' that defines the association between maternal employment and father involvement (Bailey, 1994).

It appears that maternal employment may have more of an effect on type rather than quantity of father involvement. In general, fathers spend more of their time with their children in play than in caregiving (LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981; McHale & Huston, 1984). However, compared to fathers with nonemployed wives, fathers with employed wives spend more time in caregiving than in leisure activities with their child (McHale & Huston, 1984).

Father involvement has also been determined to be influenced by the father's perceptions of child behavior. Findings indicate that fathers may engage in negative parenting practices, in part because they view the child as difficult. In addition, fathers may withdraw from nurturing their children when they experience unpleasant interactions with them (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990).

Father involvement has also been found to be related to gender of the child. Sons have been found to be the recipients of paternal attention more often than daughters (Harris & Morgan, 1991). Furthermore, child gender was found to be related to paternal involvement in family life.
(Katzev et al., 1994). However, other research has indicated that a father's involvement is not linked to gender of the child (Bailey, 1994).

Leisure

Families view leisure as important and name the two primary objectives of leisure to be "time spent with family" and "companionship" (Orthner & Mancini, 1990). Family-oriented leisure activities have been found to be the type of leisure activity most often engaged in. Furthermore, many people report that they would prefer to participate in even more leisure activities with their families (Carlson, 1976). Leisure has also been correlated with family satisfaction and family relationships (Kelly & Kelly, 1994).

An essential characteristic of a healthy family is shared leisure time. In a study of families who perceive themselves as strong, "doing things together" was cited as one of the most important family strengths. In fact, of the 17 things identified that strengthen families, the majority are activities that are commonly perceived to be leisure such as enjoying the outdoors together and vacationing (Stinnett, Sanders, DeFrain, & Parkhurst, 1982).

There has been very little research conducted that specifically addresses the relationship between leisure and fathering. However, play has been found to be an important
aspect of the father-child relationship. The rough and tumble games that fathers' engage in with their children have been related to the development of spatial awareness (Grusec & Lytton, 1988). Furthermore, this emphasis on play in the paternal role may enhance the satisfaction that fathers derive from parenting (Johnston & Mash, 1989) and could be circular in nature, motivating fathers to become even more involved in parenting. Leisure with children has been found to be a significant predictor of parental satisfaction (Freysinger, 1994), and paternal leisure that includes children may play a vital role in the development of a strong father-child relationship.

There are various factors that appear to affect the quantity and nature of leisure activities within the family. Specifically, family developmental stage, parent gender, and parental employment have been found to be related to family leisure activity in varying ways.

Family developmental stages impact the frequency and type of family leisure. Research suggests that the frequency of leisure is lower for households with children under 6 years old (Jackson & Henderson, 1995) and that families with preschoolers tend to participate in more family than individually oriented leisure activities (Kelly, 1980). In addition, among families with preschoolers it is more often the mother than the father who takes the role of
organizing recreational activities, whereas in families with older children fathers are more apt to arrange or plan leisure activities (Carlson, 1976). Family stage also affects spousal leisure. Parents with preschool-age children in the home tend to spend less time in shared spousal leisure activity (Orthner & Axelsson, 1980; Hill, 1988) than families in other stages. Because family developmental stages impose variations in family leisure, it is important when studying leisure to specify family stage.

Leisure appears to be differentially experienced by men and women. On the average, men appear to have three more hours of leisure time per week than women (Firestone & Shelton, 1988). Fathers have also been found to pursue leisure activities outside their parental role more often than mothers (Horna, 1989). Furthermore, mothers engage in more leisure and semi-leisure activities with their children than fathers do, especially when their children are of preschool age (Horna, 1989).

Gender differences have also been noted in the perceptions parents have toward leisure activities involving children. Fathers have been reported to perceive play and games with their children as leisure while mothers report these activities as only "semi-leisure" (Horna, 1989). Maternal and paternal employment are variables that have also been related to family leisure. Studies have reported
both positive and negative effects of maternal employment on leisure (Firestone & Shelton, 1988; Jorgenson, 1977). However, other research suggests that paternal employment has a stronger effect on leisure time with children than maternal employment (Nock & Kingston, 1988). Interestingly, in a study assessing change in the levels of father involvement between 1965 and 1975, it was found that although fathers decreased their hours spent at work, they did not increase their level of involvement with their children; instead, there was an increase in the time fathers spent in leisure activities without their children (Coverman & Sheley, 1986).

There are numerous activities that people consider to be leisure, from "hiking" and "painting" to "sitting and doing nothing" (Firestone & Shelton, 1988). Religious activities have also been categorized as leisure in current research (Firestone & Shelton, 1988; Hill, 1988). Firestone and Shelton (1988) listed "church group: other," "church group: meeting," "church services," and "individual religious practice" as activities considered to be leisure (p. 491).

Parenting stress has been linked to leisure activity within the family. In a recent study assessing the relations between leisure and parenting stress, Roggman et al. (1994) found that family leisure was associated with
lower parenting distress in both fathers and mothers. Leisure activities involving specific family subsystems were related to parenting stress in positive and negative ways. Leisure involving fathers alone was found to be negatively related to fathers' parenting stress, and leisure including both spouse and child was related to higher psychological well-being and lower depression in fathers. However, leisure activities with other families were associated with higher levels of parenting stress and dysfunctional interactions between the father and his preschool-age child. In addition, leisure activities participated in by the wife with a friend were correlated with higher dysfunctional father/child interactions and an increased perception by the father of his child as difficult (L. A. Roggman, personal communication, June, 1994). In general, however, Roggman et al. (1994) have suggested that family leisure is likely to promote positive parental functioning.

Findings indicate that there is a similar association between leisure and marital satisfaction. Joint leisure activities have been found to be positively related to marital satisfaction (Holman & Jacquart, 1988); conversely, a high frequency of individual leisure activity has been related to lower marital satisfaction (Orthner & Mancini, 1990). Moreover, Hill (1988) has suggested that the relations between marital satisfaction and leisure may be
circular, with marital satisfaction affecting leisure and leisure affecting marital satisfaction.

Holman and Epperson (1984) purported that leisure behavior affects and is affected by various marriage and family factors. They believe that research in this area has thus far been mainly exploratory and descriptive in nature.

Summary

There is relatively little literature examining the parenting stress of fathers. However, parenting stress has been found to be related to negative parenting in a group of fathers of infants. Specific coping mechanisms such as social support have been found to moderate the negative effects of parenting stress on child development. Findings also indicate that leisure and parenting stress are related and that further research is needed to clarify this association.

Father involvement has been related to several variables including parental employment and child gender. Maternal employment appears to affect type rather than quantity of involvement engaged in by fathers, with husbands of employed wives spending more time in childcare than play, and husbands of nonemployed wives engaging in more play than childcare. Some studies show that fathers of boys are more involved in parenting than fathers of girls.
Findings indicate that families value leisure time spent together, that leisure is positively related to healthy family functioning, marital satisfaction, and less parenting stress. The direction of the effect is not known, however, and it has been speculated that the association may be circular. Furthermore, variables such as parental gender, family developmental stage, and employment are associated with the amount and type of family leisure. Religious activity is often considered to be leisure.
OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this study is to explore the relations between parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure among middle-class fathers with preschool-age children. Other variables including gender of the child, family stage, maternal and paternal employment, and religion will also be examined to determine what relationship, if any, these variables have with parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. The three key variables, parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure, are directly related to each other.

2. The relations between fathers' parenting stress and father involvement are moderated by leisure activities within the family.

3. Gender of the child is related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

4. Parental employment is related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

5. Family stage is related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

6. Religious activity is related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.
METHODS

Design

In this descriptive, correlational study, parents with preschool-age children were interviewed in order to ascertain the association between the following variables: parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure. Child gender, parental employment, family stage, and religion were also investigated to determine whether there was any association with father involvement, leisure, or parenting stress.

Sample

The sample was obtained by contacting several preschool directors in the Ogden area who were previously known to the researcher. The preschool directors were informed of the purpose of the study and asked for referrals to parents of preschoolers. Of the eight preschools contacted, only one declined to participate. Two of the participating preschools were privately owned and the remaining five were child development preschools in high-school settings. Consenting preschool directors were asked to distribute a letter (see Appendix A) describing the study and requesting participation of the parents. Although this was a convenience sample, it suited both the budget, staffing, and
time constraints of this project, while still allowing an exploratory view of fathering in relation to the variables selected for this study.

Parents were contacted by telephone and, after a brief introduction of the nature of the study, were asked to participate in a telephone interview. Interview appointments were set up with those parents consenting to participate.

The sample was comprised of 46 predominantly white, middle-class families with preschool-age children (26 girls and 20 boys). (See Tables 1 and 2 for demographic data on participating families.) Parents in this sample were well-educated; all parents had a high-school diploma, with 46% of fathers and 30% of mothers having a bachelors degree or higher. All fathers were employed, 74% worked more than 40 hours per week, and 26% worked 40 hours per week or slightly less. The majority of the fathers worked days (83%) and the rest worked shiftwork (17%). Sixty-three percent of mothers were employed, with 69% working days and 31% working varying shifts. The modal income category for participating families was $40,000 to $50,000 per year. Twenty-four percent of the families had four members, 39% of the families had five members, 28% had six members, and 9% had seven or eight members. Family stages were determined by the age of the oldest child. Twenty-four percent of the
families were in the preschool stage, 52% of the families were in the school-age stage, and the remaining 24% were in the adolescent family stage. Eighty-nine percent of the families were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), and 11% were either members of other faiths or had no religious affiliation.

Table 1
Demographic Data of Fathers and Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (highest level)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/trade school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate school</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonemployed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiftwork</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Demographic Data of Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,001 - $20,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,001 - $30,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001 - $40,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001 - $50,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 - $60,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001 - $70,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,001 - $80,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,001 - $90,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,001 - $100,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/no answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number in Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolage</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

Telephone interviews were scheduled with participating parents at their convenience. Telephone interviews were chosen over mailed questionnaires to ensure clarity, consistency, and completion of the questions. The telephone interviews also served to protect the confidentiality of the data and privacy of the participants. The interviews lasted approximately 10-15 minutes for fathers. Mothers' interviews were somewhat longer, approximately 20-25 minutes, due to the inclusion of demographic questions. The interview was rehearsed with eight nonparticipant volunteers in order to identify any problems with the interview procedure. In addition, the interviewer was trained by role-playing the interview in order to provide consistency and reduce error variance due to the interview procedure.

Measurement

Demographic data was obtained per the demographic questions prepared for this study (see Appendix B). Information in this portion of the interview covered marital and familial status, child gender, parental education level, income, and employment. Because the Ogden area has a predominant religion that encourages family togetherness and plans leisure activities to promote this value, respondents were asked to state religious preference and frequency of
attendance at church and church-related activities (on an individual and familial level) that the respondent considered to be leisure-like. These questions about frequency were then summed to form a composite religious activity score.

The following measures were chosen for use because they were determined to be the best available measures to answer the questions proposed in this project based on previous use, the ability to be utilized in interviews, and demonstrated reliability. Both the measures of parenting stress and of father involvement have been used widely in prior research. The Family Play Scale constructed by Roggman et al. (1994) was developed because there was no other measure available with which to study family leisure. In addition to the following reported reliability coefficients of these measures, alpha coefficients were assessed for this particular sample.

Parenting stress was measured by using the Parenting Stress Index Short Form (PSI-SF). This 36-item instrument was developed by Abidin (1990) and is based on the Parenting Stress Index Long Form (PSI-SF). Items are coded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Abidin (1990) reported that the test-retest reliability of the long form is .95, test-retest reliability for the short form is .84, and the alpha
Coefficient is reported to be .91 for the total scores. Pearson correlations between the PSI-SF and the PSI-LF were cited at $r = .94$. Cronbach's alphas computed for this sample were high, .90 for fathers and .92 for mothers.

Father involvement was assessed using the Paternal Involvement in Childcare Index (PICCI). This instrument consists of 16 questions divided into five areas that assess the father's physical caretaking involvement, social involvement, paternal availability to the child, and amount of father involvement in decision making about the child, as well as an overall father involvement rating. Following instructions by the authors of the scale, scores were computed in each area for mothers and fathers individually and then summed for a total score of father involvement. This measure has been used in prior research and has been found by researchers to be reliable and valid (Radin & Harold-Goldsmith, 1989). A correlation between scores at two times of measurement was reported to be $r = .52$, $p < .001$ for families with boys, and $r = .88$, $p < .001$ for families with girls (Radin & Goldsmith, 1985). Radin and Goldsmith (1985) reported that the concurrent validity of this measure was supported by a significant correlation between father and mother scores, $r(58) = .76$, $p < .001$. The Pearson correlation between father and mother PICCI scores computed for this sample was $r(46) = .52$, $p < .01$. 
Although summed scores were used, Radin and Harold-Goldsmith (1989) used separate Cronbach's alpha values for the father and mother total scores in their study, .62 and .72, respectively. Cronbach's alpha values computed for the father and mother total scores for this sample were .52 and .72, respectively. The lower alpha coefficient for fathers in this sample may be due to responses of fathers in the portion of the questionnaire assessing the degree of father involvement in decision-making about the child. A correlation between mothers' and fathers' responses to this question was found to be $r(45) = .24$, $p > .05$. It is possible that strong local cultural beliefs emphasizing fathers' decision-making roles may account for this low correlation. The Chronbach's alpha generated for the total PICCI (fathers' and mothers' scores summed) was found to be .75.

Family leisure activities were measured by using the Family Play Scale developed by Roggman et al. (1994). Eight questions, consisting of three parts each, address the frequency of leisure and who participates in these activities. Questions are grouped according to who is involved in the leisure activities: parent alone, parent with child, parent with child and spouse, parent with spouse only, family with relatives, family with other families (nonrelatives), and parent with other adults (no children). Each group of questions contains the same basic queries:
1. Do you ever participate in this type of leisure?
2. List three such activities, and 3. How often do you do each of these activities? Response categories are based on a five-point Likert format, from "never" to "daily." This measure was found to be reliable with coefficient alpha reported to be .77 and .81, respectively, at two times of measurement in the original study. Coefficient alphas computed for this study were .72 for mothers' leisure and .73 for fathers' leisure. Reliability coefficients computed for each of the following subcategories were parent-leisure alone, .46, parent-child leisure, .78, family leisure, .65, and spousal leisure, .59. When respondents indicated they engaged in less than three activities in any leisure category, zeros were assigned. With zeros included the alphas were .70, .74, .48, and .68, respectively.

Data from the Parenting Stress Index, Paternal Involvement in Childcare Index, and Family Play Scale were previously coded on the measurement forms. In the event that some participants preferred not to answer specific questions, missing values were assigned. Descriptive analyses were generated on the key variables, parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure in order to determine whether the appropriate assumptions for the following statistical tests were met, and to identify outliers and incorrectly entered data.
Ethical Considerations

This research proposal was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Utah State University (see Appendix C). Preschool directors and participating parents were informed upon contact of the purposes and procedures of the study. Confidentiality was maintained by assigning participants identification numbers with a file connecting names to identification numbers kept in a locked cabinet. Furthermore, parents were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and that their responses would be reported only in group form. Participants were also informed that they were free to decline to answer any question(s) that they preferred not to answer.
RESULTS

Although results from two-tailed tests of statistical significance are reported, "a test of statistical significance used without randomization . . . does not yield valid information about the probability of a result under the null hypothesis" (Shaver, 1993, p. 299). Because the sample used in this research was a convenience sample rather than random, tests of statistical significance are of limited value. Furthermore, results from tests of statistical significance give no information about the magnitude of an association or practical significance (Carver, 1978; Shaver, 1993). Therefore, effect sizes, which describe the magnitude of an association, are included, and attention should be focused on these and not exclusively on p-values. For correlational tests, the absolute value of the correlation provides an indication of the magnitude of the association. However, for analyses of variance, effect sizes are computed separately using the eta statistic. In addition, all results generated from statistical testing of the hypotheses in this project are reported in either text or tables, whether they reach conventional statistical significance or not.

Hypothesis 1: The three key variables, parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure, are directly
related to each other.

Parenting Stress and Father Involvement

To test the relations between parenting stress and father involvement scores, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed. The magnitude of the association between father involvement and fathers' parenting stress scores was extremely low, \( r(45) = .09, p = .53 \), showing virtually no direct association.

Parenting Stress and Leisure

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between fathers' parenting stress scores and each of the leisure subcategories (see Table 3). Fathers' parenting stress scores and most areas of leisure were only slightly negatively related and did not reach statistical significance, with fathers' play alone and overall maternal play having virtually no association with fathers' parenting stress scores. However, mothers' reports of family play were found to have a moderate inverse association with fathers' parenting stress scores.

Father Involvement and Leisure

To explore the relations between father involvement and leisure, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed
Table 3
Correlations Between Fathers' Parenting Stress Scores and Categories of Leisure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>All fathers (n = 46)</th>
<th>Fathers of boys (n = 20)</th>
<th>Fathers of girls (n = 26)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.54*</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

between father involvement scores and each of the dimensions of leisure (see Table 4). Father involvement appears to be moderately correlated with leisure in the family in the context of mothers' play alone. The negative association suggests that as mothers' play alone goes up, father involvement scores go down, or vice versa. Findings indicate that father involvement is not related to father-child play or overall maternal play, and only slightly, but
Table 4
Correlations Between Father Involvement Scores and Categories of Leisure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>All fathers n = 46</th>
<th>Fathers of boys n = 20</th>
<th>Fathers of girls n = 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>-.50*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.49*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

not statistically significantly, related to overall paternal play, fathers' play alone, mother-child play, and fathers' and mothers' reports of family play.

Results from correlational analyses testing Hypothesis #1 indicate that parenting stress and father involvement are not directly related among fathers in this study. Furthermore, parenting stress and most areas of leisure show little or no association, although parenting stress and family play have a moderate inverse association, suggesting
that as family play goes up, fathers' parenting stress scores go down, or vice versa. An $r^2$ of .11 indicates that 11% of the variance in fathers' parenting stress is associated with family play. It also appears that there is little evidence of a strong association between father involvement and most categories of leisure, although mothers' play alone is moderately inversely related to father involvement, with an $r^2$ of .14 suggesting that 14% of the variance in mothers' play alone is shared with father involvement.

**Hypothesis 2**: The relations between fathers' parenting stress and father involvement are moderated by leisure activities within the family.

Parenting Stress, Leisure, and Father Involvement

In order to test for the possible moderating association of leisure, partial correlations were computed between parenting stress and father involvement while controlling for each of the play subcategories (see Table 5). Test results revealed no statistically significant associations between parenting stress and father involvement when controlling for each of the leisure categories; therefore, there is no support for the hypothesis that
Table 5
Partial Correlations Between Fathers' Parenting Stress and Father Involvement While Controlling for Leisure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Category</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Leisure</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

leisure moderates the association between fathers' parenting stress and father involvement.

Hypothesis #3: Gender of the child is related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

Gender, Parenting Stress, and Father Involvement

Direct tests of gender revealed no statistically significant differences in parenting stress or father
involvement scores among fathers of boys and fathers of girls. Results of t tests are shown in Table 6.

In order to determine whether child gender interacts with the relations between parenting stress and father involvement, separate analyses were generated for each gender group. Because gender is a dichotomous, rather than a continuous variable, fathers were separated into two groups based on child gender and Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for each group. Parenting stress scores for fathers of preschool-age boys were found to be negatively related to father involvement scores, $r(19) = -0.56$, $p = .01$. Conversely, parenting stress scores for

Table 6

Results of T Tests for Gender, df(44)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Parenting Stress</td>
<td>65.77</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>69.62</td>
<td>14.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>69.67</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>68.14</td>
<td>11.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall father</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>14.85</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-child</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-family</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-family</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father alone</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fathers of girls were found to be positively related to father involvement scores, \( r(25) = .38, p = .05 \).

Although \( t \) tests indicate little difference between the parenting stress scores or father involvement scores of fathers of boys and fathers of girls, child gender appears to interact in the association between parenting stress and father involvement. For fathers of girls, parenting stress increases as father involvement increases, but for fathers of boys, parenting stress decreases as father involvement increases. Furthermore, an \( r^2 \) of .31 suggests that 31% of the variance in parenting stress scores among fathers of boys is associated with father involvement, and the \( r^2 \) of .14 indicates that 14% of the variance in parenting stress scores among fathers of girls is associated with father involvement.

Gender, Parenting Stress, and Leisure

Results of \( t \) tests revealed no statistically significant difference in leisure activity between gender groups (see Table 6). Again, correlations were also computed separately for each gender group (see Table 3). Results from these correlations reveal that leisure within the family is related to parenting stress in the context of fathers' reports of family play, and that this association is stronger for fathers of boys. An \( r^2 \) of .29 for fathers
of boys suggests that 29% of the variance in fathers' reports of family play is associated with parenting stress, whereas for fathers of girls, the $r^2$ is .004.

Gender, Father Involvement, and Leisure

Although $t$ tests revealed no significant gender difference, the associations between father involvement and each of the leisure subcategories were computed while controlling for child gender. Correlations were again computed separately for each of the gender groups (see Table 4). It appears that father involvement is positively related to family play in fathers of boys, but not among fathers of girls. An $r^2$ of .25 suggests that 25% of the variance in father involvement is associated with fathers' reports of family play among fathers of boys. Findings also indicate that father involvement scores are moderately related to mothers' play alone among fathers of girls, with an $r^2$ of .24 indicating that 24% of the variance in father involvement is shared with mothers' play alone. However, among fathers of boys, only 7% of the variance is shared. In addition, although not statistically significant, a moderate inverse association was found between father involvement and fathers' play alone among fathers of boys, with an $r^2$ of .16.

In summary, it appears that although child gender has
few direct relations with parenting stress, father involvement, or leisure, child gender interacts in the relations among them. It appears that child gender moderates the association between parenting stress and leisure, with fathers of boys experiencing lower parenting stress with higher family play levels. Furthermore, child gender appears to play a role in the relations between father involvement and leisure, with family play related to father involvement among fathers of boys, and mothers' play alone related to father involvement among fathers of girls.

**Gender, Father Involvement, and Parenting Stress, with Leisure as a Moderator**

Multiple regression analyses with gender, father involvement, and leisure categories as predictors and parenting stress as the outcome variable were computed. However, these tests revealed no statistically significant results (see Table 7).

**Hypothesis 4:** Parental employment is related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

**Parental Employment, Parenting Stress, Father Involvement, and Leisure**

To test the hypothesis that parental employment, in terms of type and amount of hours worked, is related to
Table 7

Multiple Regression Analyses of Parenting Stress, Father Involvement, Leisure, and Child Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall father play</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-child play</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-child play</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' reports of family play</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' reports of family play</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' play alone</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' play alone</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parenting stress, father involvement, or frequency of leisure activity, analyses of variance were conducted to compare fathers working days with fathers working other shifts. All fathers in this study were employed and worked close to 40 hours per week; therefore, no analyses were conducted for fathers' work hours. Because only 18% of fathers worked varying shifts (swingshift, graveyard, and other), fathers were divided into two categories: those who worked shiftwork and those who worked days. Analysis of variance testing was then conducted using the work dichotomy as the independent variable with father involvement,
paternal parenting stress scores, and leisure categories as dependent variables (see Table 8). There is little evidence suggesting that parenting stress, father involvement scores, and most areas of leisure are different for fathers who work days or shiftwork. A slight, but not statistically significant association was found between fathers' work schedule and family play. Computations for $\eta^2$, which is analogous to $r^2$, in that it describes the magnitude of an

Table 8
Results of Analyses of Variance for Fathers' Work Schedule, df(1,43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Days$^a$</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Parenting Stress</td>
<td>66.13</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>69.62</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>.8065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>73.81</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>222.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father overall</td>
<td>14.89</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>8.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-child</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-family</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-family</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father alone</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$Days refers to fathers who work days.

$^b$Shiftwork refers to fathers who work either swingshift or graveyard.
association, revealed an $\eta^2$ of .08, suggesting that 8% of the variance in family play is associated with work schedule.

Mothers in this sample were divided into three different categories—mothers who were not employed, mothers who were employed part-time, and mothers employed full-time—and analyses of variance were then computed (see Table 9). There appears to be little difference among the groups in fathers’ parenting stress, father involvement, or leisure.

Table 9
Results of Analyses of Variance for Mothers’ Hours, df(1,43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Non-employed</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’ Parenting Stress</td>
<td>64.47, 15.77</td>
<td>69.25, 12.35</td>
<td>65.44, 13.81</td>
<td>114.33</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>66.00, 10.66</td>
<td>68.99, 8.86</td>
<td>74.72, 11.21</td>
<td>223.58</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father overall</td>
<td>14.80, 3.89</td>
<td>14.62, 3.46</td>
<td>14.63, 3.28</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-child</td>
<td>3.12, 1.55</td>
<td>3.07, 1.32</td>
<td>2.89, 1.57</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-family</td>
<td>2.52, .91</td>
<td>2.48, .75</td>
<td>2.67, 1.26</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-family</td>
<td>2.72, 1.00</td>
<td>2.93, .91</td>
<td>2.78, 1.17</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father alone</td>
<td>2.49, 1.44</td>
<td>2.92, 1.73</td>
<td>2.59, 1.52</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Non-employed refers to mothers who are not employed.
Part-time refers to mothers who work part-time.
Full-time refers to mothers who work full-time.
Mothers who were employed were also divided into two work schedule categories, days and shiftwork, and analyses of variance were computed (see Table 10). Results found little confirmation that fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, or leisure were different in families with mothers working days or shiftwork. In summary, it appears that there is little evidence to support the hypothesis that parental employment is associated with parenting stress, father involvement, or leisure.

Table 10

Results of Analyses of Variance for Mothers' Work Schedule, df(1,27)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Days*</th>
<th>Shiftwork*</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Eta²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Parenting Stress</td>
<td>69.55</td>
<td>14.02</td>
<td>64.78</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>141.36</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>70.46</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>71.46</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>42.95</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father overall</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>13.48</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>16.94</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-child</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-family</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-family</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father alone</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Days refers to mothers who work days.

*Shiftwork refers to mothers who work either swingshift or graveyard.
Hypothesis 5: Family stage is related to fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

Family Stage, Parenting Stress, Father Involvement, and Leisure

To test the relations of family stage with fathers' parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure, families were divided into three family stage categories, in which the oldest child was preschool-age, school-age, or adolescent. Analyses of variance used parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure as the dependent variables and family stage as the independent variable.

There were no statistically significant differences in fathers' parenting stress or father involvement scores in relation to family stage. However, analyses of variance revealed differences in fathers' reports of family play (see Table 11). The Scheffe test for significant differences between groups indicated that fathers in the preschool family stage engage in significantly more play with their family than fathers in the adolescent family stage, with 18% of the variance in family play associated with family stage.

In summary, there is little evidence that parenting stress or father involvement scores vary among fathers in differing family stages. However, fathers in the preschool
Table 11

Results of Analyses of Variance for Family Stage, df(2,43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Preschool(^a)</th>
<th>School-age(^b)</th>
<th>Adolescence(^c)</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>eta(^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Parenting Stress</td>
<td>70.73</td>
<td>13.64</td>
<td>64.75</td>
<td>14.99</td>
<td>67.09</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>135.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>72.35</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>66.01</td>
<td>10.38</td>
<td>72.20</td>
<td>10.03</td>
<td>225.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father overall</td>
<td>15.47</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>15.26</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>12.65</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>30.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-child</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-family</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-family</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father alone</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Oldest child is younger than 6 years old.
\(^b\)Oldest child is between 6 and 12 years old.
\(^c\)Oldest child is between 13 and 18 years old.

Family stage spend more time in family play than fathers in the adolescent family stage.

**Hypothesis 6**: Religious activity is related to parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure.

Religious Activity, Parenting Stress, Father Involvement, and Leisure

Eighty-nine percent (n = 41) of the families in this study were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; therefore, it was inappropriate for religious affiliation to be tested for associations with parenting stress, father involvement, or leisure. However,
correlations were computed between parents' religiosity (religious activity) scores and parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure (see Table 12). There appears to be no evidence of an association between religiosity and fathers' parenting stress; however, findings indicated that mothers' religiosity was moderately inversely related to fathers' reports of family play. Fathers' religiosity was negatively related to father involvement, with an $r^2$ of .20, indicating that 20% of the variance in father involvement is associated with religiosity. Fathers' religiosity was also

Table 12
Correlations Between Fathers' Parenting Stress, Father Involvement, Leisure, and Religiosity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mothers' Religiosity</th>
<th>Fathers' Religiosity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 46</td>
<td>n = 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Parenting Stress</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Child</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.30*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01
found to have a moderate positive association with overall father play, father-child play, and fathers' play alone.
DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the associations between parenting stress and father involvement are dependent on child gender. Researchers often erroneously treat a group as homogeneous when, in fact, it is heterogeneous as in this case. Although t tests showed no statistically significant difference in father involvement or parenting stress scores between fathers of boys and fathers of girls, it is clear that different associations between father involvement and parenting stress are revealed when child gender groups are considered separately.

Findings from this study indicate that father involvement scores of fathers of boys are negatively related to paternal parenting stress scores. That is, fathers who report more involvement also report less parenting stress. Conversely, father involvement scores of fathers of girls are positively related to paternal parenting stress scores. In other words, fathers who report more involvement report more parenting stress.

There may be many explanations for this phenomenon. One possibility is that fathers feel more comfortable with their sons because they are the same gender and, therefore, share similar and more compatible interests. Conversely, fathers may feel more stressed as parents when involved with
their daughters because they are of the opposite gender and may have fewer interests in common.

Another explanation may lie in a father's perception of his control over the choice of being involved. It is possible that, due to societal expectations, fathers may perceive that they are choosing to be more involved with their sons. For example, our society promotes "father-son" activities, and it is a cultural expectation that fathers educate, train, and serve as role models for their sons. It is possible that fathers may feel that they are more involved with daughters due to necessity, rather than as an expected part of their role as a father. In fact, researchers have suggested that fathers who spend time in leisure or other types of activity with their sons are conforming to societal expectations (Katzev et al., 1994).

Results from this study indicate that higher levels of family play are associated with lower levels of parenting stress in fathers. However, when gender groups were examined separately, these findings held true only for fathers of boys. It appears, then, that family play is an important correlate of paternal parenting stress in families with preschool-age boys but not girls. In fact, 30% of the variance in parenting stress among fathers of boys was related to family play.

Although results indicate that family leisure is
related to fathers' parenting stress in the context of family play among fathers of boys, findings from this study do not lend any support to Roggman et al. (1994), who reported a negative association between father-child play and parenting stress, and between fathers' play alone and parenting stress. This may be a result of the demographic differences in the two samples, with the present sample having higher income and education and lower levels of stress.

When the relations between father involvement and leisure were examined within each child gender group, father involvement was found to be positively correlated with family play among fathers of boys but not among fathers of girls. It is possible that father involvement for fathers of boys occurs in the context of family leisure activities, whereas it does not for fathers of girls. It is also likely that fathers of boys who are more involved in caregiving are also more involved in family play in addition to their involvement in caregiving.

Leisure within all families, with either boys or girls, appears to be related to father involvement only in the context of maternal play alone. Findings suggest that maternal play alone has a moderate inverse association with father involvement, in that mothers report less play when fathers are more involved in caregiving. It is also
possible that as mothers spend more time in leisure away from the family, fathers become less involved in caregiving.

Although it would seem likely that fathers' increase in caregiving would allow mothers time for leisure, it appears that this is not true for families in this sample. These findings conflict with those of LaRossa and LaRossa (1981), who suggested that fathers who are more involved allow mothers time off from their children. However, it may be that mothers use this time off for activities other than leisure. It is also possible that mothers engage in leisure activities when fathers are not available to care for the children due to their work schedule, when children are in preschool, or when fathers are also engaging in personal leisure activity.

Previous research has suggested that a father's work schedule has been found to be associated with his level of involvement with his children (Brayfield, 1995). Results from this study do not support this hypothesis. There also appears to be little difference in parenting stress scores or leisure among fathers who work different schedules or who have wives who work varying hours or different schedules.

There appears to be no evidence to support the hypothesis that parenting stress or father involvement is related to family stage. However, family leisure and family stage appear to be related in the context of fathers'
reports of family play. Fathers in the preschool family stage engage in more family play than fathers of adolescents, perhaps because as children get older they are often more involved in outside activities and there is less opportunity for family play.

Although testing for religious affiliation was not appropriate due to the large number of LDS families, the relations among religious activity level and parenting stress, father involvement, and leisure were explored. There appears to be very little evidence of an association between religiosity and parenting stress among fathers in this sample. However, there appears to be a moderate association between fathers' religiosity and father involvement. As fathers' religiosity scores go up, father involvement scores go down. It is possible that fathers who are highly active in their religion have less time available for child caregiving. It is also possible that specific cultural beliefs held by members of the LDS church, such as a more traditional view of gender roles, may influence this association.

Religiosity was found to be related to specific areas of leisure. Fathers' religiosity was positively related to fathers' overall play, father-child play, and fathers' play alone, whereas mothers' religiosity was negatively related to fathers' reports of family play. In light of the
findings of Carlson (1976), which suggest that mothers in the preschool family stage are responsible for organizing family leisure activities, it is possible that mothers with high religious activity levels have less time available to plan and implement family play.

The relatively small size of the sample did not allow for the testing of some hypotheses. For example, including a larger number of families would allow the testing of all of the hypotheses while controlling for child gender. Because there was such a distinct differentiation between fathers of boys and fathers of girls, it is possible that the moderating relation of leisure between father involvement and parenting stress might also have been clarified by examining separate child gender groups.

While the results of this study indicate that elements within the system are related and should not be studied apart from the other elements in the system (i.e., gender, father involvement, parenting stress, and leisure), limitations of this study hindered the examination of the ways in which systems (i.e., work, family stage, and religion) outside the family system affect the relations within the system. Although the sampling procedure fit both budget and time constraints, the lack of randomness hindered applicability of tests of statistical significance as well as generalizability. Furthermore, this sample is highly
homogeneous in religious affiliation, which further limits generalizability. Care should be taken in the future to ensure heterogeneity in this area; one possible solution to this problem would be sampling stratification.

In addition, stratifying for fathers' hours worked would also have allowed for the testing of the hypothesis that the number of hours worked is related to father involvement, parenting stress, and leisure within the family. Because only a limited number of fathers worked shiftwork, fathers who worked swingshift or graveyard were combined into one group. However, it is possible that there are differences between the fathers who work swingshift and those who work graveyards. Using a larger sample, and stratification if necessary, would allow a more accurate view of the effects of working different shifts.

Although the PSI short form was found to be reliable, some questions arose when examining the fathers' parenting stress scores. It appears that in this study, most fathers had relatively low parenting stress scores. It is possible that these fathers are, in fact, less stressed than most fathers. It is also possible that these men were somewhat reluctant to report negative feelings. Because this measure has been utilized mostly with mothers, it would prove useful to continue to test its use with men. In addition, because the Family Play Scale is a relatively new measure,
researchers studying leisure activity in the family should be encouraged to utilize the Family Play Scale in order to further test the reliability and validity of this measure.

In light of the findings of this study, it is clear that there is an association between father involvement and parenting stress when controlling for child gender, and that the association is in the opposite direction for fathers of boys and fathers of girls. Furthermore, higher levels of family play were related to lower levels of parenting stress among fathers of boys only. This is an interesting example of the differential effects that child gender may have on parenting. It is not clear whether leisure has a moderating association between father involvement and parenting stress, and future research should continue to examine the relations between these variables as well as other variables that may moderate the association between father involvement and parenting stress.

As the trend continues for more fathers to become involved in sharing in the caregiving of their children, it is important that researchers and family educators become more aware of the variables that might reduce parenting stress and alleviate the negative effects that parenting stress has on the parent-child relationship.
REFERENCES


Olson, S. L., & Banyard, V. (1993). "Stop the world so I can get off for a while": Sources of daily stress in the lives of low-income single mothers of young children. Family Relations, 42, 50-56.


Appendix A
April 20, 1995

Dear Parents:

I am currently working on a research project for my Master's Thesis. As part of this research, I need to interview parents of children who will be going to kindergarten next fall. The topic of my research is how fathers deal with the stress of being a parent and what kind of effects recreational activities have on that stress. I'm attempting to locate mothers and fathers who would be willing to participate in a 20 minute telephone interview.

Questions in the interview will be about what types of parenting activities fathers engage in, what types of things parents do for fun with their family, as well as some questions that assess parenting stress. There will also be questions about your level of education and general income that will help determine whether or not the results of the study apply to most families. Questions about frequency of religious attendance will be asked to see if religion affects leisure activities within the family. All participants will be assigned a number and any information gathered will be kept confidential.

If you would be willing to participate in this research project, please fill out the form below and return it to your child's daycare or preschool teacher. I will then contact you to set up an appointment for the telephone interview. I would really appreciate your help on this project!

Sincerely,

Patti Brown, Graduate Student
Utah State University

We would be willing to participate in a telephone interview for a research project about fathers and the stress they experience due to being a parent.

Parents' Names: ________________________________

Phone Number: ________________________________

The best time to reach us is: ______________________
I'd like to begin with some questions about yourself and the other members of your family. Let's start with you.

1. What is your relationship to your preschooler?
   - Biological parent ........................................ 1
   - Adoptive parent ........................................ 2
   - Step-parent ............................................. 3
   - Foster parent ........................................... 4
   - Grandparent ............................................. 5
   - Other relative ........................................... 6
   - Other legal guardian ................................... 7
   - No biological/legal relationship ..................... 8
   - Other (specify) ......................................... 9

2. How many people live in your household, including yourself?
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more than 10

3. How many children (less than 16 years of age) live in your household?
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 more than 8

3a. What are the ages/genders of your children?

4. What is your current marital status?
   - Single, never married ................................. 1
   - Legally married ........................................ 2
   - Cohabiting .............................................. 3
   - Separated ............................................... 4
   - Divorced ................................................ 5
   - Widowed ............................................... 6

5. Do you have a spouse or partner who currently lives with you?
   - Yes ...................................................... 1
   - No ...................................................... 2
6. Tell me which of these you consider yourself to be:

- Asian or Pacific Islander ...................................... 1
- Hispanic, regardless of race ................................. 2
- Black, not of Hispanic origin .................................. 3
- White, not of Hispanic origin .................................. 4
- American Indian or Alaskan native ............................ 5
- Other, (Specify) .................................................. 6

7. Now I’d like to ask you about your education. What is the highest grade you completed in school?

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<th>Grade</th>
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</table>
| Attended technical, trade, or business school after high school graduation .................. 13
| 1 year of college ............................................ 14
| 2 years of college ........................................... 15
| 3 years of college ........................................... 16
| 4 years of college ........................................... 17
| Graduate school .............................................. 18
| No formal schooling ........................................... 0 (Skip to Q 10)

8. Do you have a high school diploma:

- Yes ......................................................... 1
- No ......................................................... 2

8a. Do you have a GED certificate:

- Yes ......................................................... 1
- No ......................................................... 2

9. Do you have any other certificates, diplomas, or degrees? (Read list and circle "yes" or "no" for each item.)

a. Business school diploma ................................... 1 2
b. Trade license or certificate ................................ 1 2
c. Associate’s Degree ......................................... 1 2
d. Bachelor’s Degree ......................................... 1 2
e. Other (Specify) ............................................. 1 2
10. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about work. In the last 12 months, did you do any work for pay?
   Yes .................................................. 1
   No .................................................. 2

11. Are you currently employed?
   Yes .................................................. 1 (Skip to Q14)
   No .................................................. 2

12. If not, are you currently looking for work?
   Yes .................................................. 1
   No .................................................. 2

13. Have you ever been employed?
   Yes .................................................. 1
   No .................................................. 2

14. How many hours per week are you working for pay?
   Less than 10 hours per week ............... 1
   More than 10 and less than 20 ............ 2
   More than 20 and less than 30 .......... 3
   More than 30 and less than 40 ........ 4
   Forty hours per week ...................... 5
   More than 40 hours per week ............ 6

15. Do you work . . .
   Days ................................................ 1
   Swing shift .................................... 2
   Graveyards.................................... 3
   Other (Specify)_______________________ 4

16. Do you feel that if you worked a different schedule you would spend more time in leisure activities by yourself?
   Yes ................................................ 1
   No ................................................ 2

16a. With your family?
   Yes ................................................ 1
   No ................................................ 2
17. Now I'd like to ask you about your income. This information will be confidential and will not be reported to any agency. What was your total household income last year:

- Less than $3,000 ........................................... 1
- $3,001 - $6,000 ........................................... 2
- $6,001 - $9,000 ........................................... 3
- $9,001 - $12,000 .......................................... 4
- $12,001 - $15,000 ......................................... 5
- $15,001 - $20,000 ......................................... 6
- $20,001 - $30,000 ......................................... 7
- $30,001 - $40,000 ......................................... 8
- $40,001 - $50,000 ......................................... 9
- $50,001 - $60,000 ......................................... 10
- $60,001 - $70,000 ......................................... 11
- $70,001 - $80,000 ......................................... 12
- $80,001 - $90,000 ......................................... 13
- $90,001 - $100,000 ....................................... 14
- Over $100,000 ............................................. 15
- Don't know .................................................. 16

18. Has your household received services from any of the following agencies in the past 12 months:

   a. AFDC .................................................... 1
   b. Unemployment Insurance ......................... 1
   c. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)............ 1
   d. Social Security, Retirement or Disability Insurance ................. 1
   e. Food Stamps .......................................... 1
   f. Medical assistance or Medicaid ....... 1
   g. Public housing or housing assistance .......... 1
   h. Other (Specify): ___________________________ 1
19. How I'd like to ask you a few questions about religion. Of the following religions, do you consider yourself to be:

- Protestant .......................... 1
- Catholic ........................... 2
- Jewish .............................. 3
- LDS .................................. 4
- Other (Specify ___________________) 5
- No Preference .......................... 6

20. How often do you attend church meetings?

- More than once a week ............... 5
- About once a week .................... 4
- Two or three times a month .......... 3
- Less than once a month ............. 2
- Not at all ............................ 1

21. How often do you attend other church related activities with your family which you consider to be leisure like?

- More than once a week ............... 7
- About once a week .................... 6
- Two or three times a month .......... 5
- About once a month ................... 4
- Less than once a month ............. 3
- A few times a year .................... 2
- Not at all ............................ 1

22. How often do you attend other church related activities by yourself which you consider to be leisure like?

- More than once a week ............... 7
- About once a week .................... 6
- Two or three times a month .......... 5
- About once a month ................... 4
- Less than once a month ............. 3
- Once or twice a year .................... 2
- Not at all ............................ 1
23. Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your spouse's education and work. What is the highest grade your spouse completed in school?

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<th>Grade</th>
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24. Does he/she have a high school diploma?

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24a. Does he/she have a GED certificate?

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</table>

25. Does he/she have any other certificates, diplomas, or degrees?

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<tr>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Business school diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Trade license or certificate</td>
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<td>c. Associate's degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Bachelor's degree</td>
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<td>e. Other (specify)</td>
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26. Is your spouse currently employed?

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27. Has your spouse ever been employed?

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</table>
28. How many hours does your spouse work?
   Under 10 hours per week .................. 1
   More than 10 and less than 20 hours a week.. 2
   More than 20 and less than 30 hours a week.. 3
   More than 30 and less than 40 ............. 4
   More than forty ....................... 5

29. Does your spouse work
   Days ....................................... 1
   Swing shift .............................. 2
   Graveyard ............................... 3
   Other (specify) _____________________ 4

30. Do you feel that if your spouse worked a different schedule, you would spend more time in leisure activities by yourself?
   Yes ........................................ 1
   No ........................................ 2

30a. With your family?
   Yes ....................................... 1
   No ........................................ 2
MEMORANDUM

TO:       Dr. Lori Roggman and Patti Brown
FROM:     Sydney Peterson
DATE:     July 12, 1994
SUBJECT:  Proposal titled, "The Relationship Between Leisure and Fathers' Involvement with their Preschool-age Children"

The above-referenced proposal has been reviewed by this office and is exempt from further review by the Institutional Review Board. However, the IRB strongly recommends that you, as a researcher, continually recognize the importance of ethical research conduct. Further, while your research project does not require a signed informed consent, you should consider (a) offering a general introduction to your research goals, and (b) informing, in writing or through oral presentation, each participant as to the rights of the subject to confidentiality, privacy or withdrawal at any time from the research activities.

The research activities listed below are exempt from IRB review based on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human research subjects, 45 CFR Part 46, as amended to include provisions of the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, June 18, 1991.

1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (a) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (b) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
3. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (2)(b) of this section, if: (a) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (b) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

4. Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

5. Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (a) public benefit or service programs; (b) procedures for obtaining benefits of services under those programs; (c) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (d) possible changes in methods or levels of payment or benefits or services under those programs.

6. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (a) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or (b) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Your research is exempt from further review based on exemption number 2.

Sydney Peterson
Staff Assistant