

SYSTEMATIC TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTING:
EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOR CHANGE
OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

by

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EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOR CHANGE OF PARENTS AND
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a new Adlerian-based parent study group program by Dinkmeyer and McKay. Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) published by American Guidance Services in 1976, is a nine session, multimedia program which blends communication skills with basic Adlerian principles. The dependent variables of the study were (1) mothers' perceptions of their Target Child's behavior, and (2) the mothers' verbal behavior.

The instruments used in this study were:

1. Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale (APACBS). This is a seven point, 32 item Likert-type interval scale developed by the investigator. The scale was developed to assess parents' perceptions of typical child behaviors dealt with in STEP and other Adlerian-based programs.
2. Mother-Child Interaction Exercise (MCIE). This is a decision making task developed by Goula and McKay. Observers rated the number of facilitating and non-facilitating statements made by the mothers to their Target Child during the audio taped exercise. The content of the exercise was neutral in nature.

The Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design was used in this study. The following hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

1. Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will perceive their Target Child's behavior as significantly more positive than the mothers of the Control Group.

2. Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly more facilitating statements during the MCIE than the mothers of the Control Group.

3. Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly fewer non-facilitating statements during the MCIE than the mothers of the Control Group.

4. There is a positive relationship between the scores on the APACBS and the number of facilitating statements made during the MCIE.

5. There is a negative relationship between the scores on the APACBS and the number of non-facilitating statements made during the MCIE.

The sample involved volunteer mothers from a middle to upper middle socioeconomic area of Tucson who had a child between the ages of 4 and 13 with whom they wished to improve their relationship (Target Child). Fourteen mothers were randomly assigned to the STEP Group and 12 to the Control Group. Those mothers who attended at least seven of

the nine sessions were included in the data analysis. This resulted in 10 mothers in each group.

The leader was not a counselor but was skilled in leading Adlerian parent study groups. This was her first STEP group.

ANCOVA showed that STEP was effective in changing the mothers' perceptions of their Target Child's behavior ($p = .022$). The results of ANCOVA of the number of facilitating and non-facilitating statements were not significant ($p = .999$; $p = .195$). The Pearson r coefficients were mostly non-significant. ANCOVA further showed that the pretest of the APACBS was a significant covariate ($p = .001$). The pretests of facilitating and non-facilitating statements made during the MCIE were not significant ($p = .082$; $p = .086$).

A reliability study of the APACBS was conducted prior to and during the research. The studies yielded coefficients in the .80's and .90's.

Some recommendations for further research are: studies involving various populations, the relationship between parents' perceptions and the actual observed behavior of the child, observations of parent behavior, and the use of STEP by leaders of varying skill levels.

Suggestions for redesigning the MCIE are (1) not counting one-word responses, and (2) designing conflict situations for discussion.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The role of parent is often shrouded in confusion and bewilderment. Parenting is generally left to chance and thus becomes a process of trial and error, often resulting in a compounding of errors. Parents are often blamed for the problems the school and society experience with today's youth. However, until recently, parents seldom received training in practical methods for rearing children. Ironically, our society not only provides, but also requires training for professionals who work with children. Teachers, counselors, psychologists, and other professionals spend years in preparation for their work. Yet it is assumed that anyone can be a parent. Thus many parents repeat the parenting patterns they experienced as children. Many of these patterns are based upon superior-inferior relationships between parents and children. They reflect an autocratic era in which father was the boss, mother was subservient to him, and children were subservient to both.

The movement toward social equality has produced many changes in our society, making the task of parenthood even more difficult. The struggle for individual rights has characterized every stratum of our society. Groups

formerly thought to be inferior became dissatisfied with their status. Workers banded together in unions to protect themselves from unscrupulous management practices. Minority groups demanded equal opportunity. The women's movement has produced stress on the relationships between men and women. Children have been affected by these changes in human relationships. Our children are growing up in a time when human rights and dignity are crucial issues. They naturally assume that they too have rights. Autocratic child-training methods do not fit in a society where children demand equal rights.

Some parents have attempted to meet the challenge of rearing children by becoming permissive. They set no limits and allow their children to behave as they please. This has produced problems because the survival of society requires limits, and children from permissive homes often have difficulty accepting limits.

Many parents vacillate between autocracy and permissiveness. The inconsistency of this approach often produces confusion and insecurity; children never know where they stand.

Both autocratic and permissive methods of child-rearing have produced the same result--rebellion. While some children in a family choose to cooperate, almost every family has its rebel. Many parents today are dissatisfied with the results of their efforts. They are seeking information on

how to improve their relationships with their children. The shelves of bookstores are crowded with numerous books on child-training. This array of advice reflects the growing interest in developing new parent-child relationships.

Yet books alone have not met the needs of many parents. Some of the advice needs clarification and input from other parents who are struggling to apply the new ideas. Thus groups have been formed to study the points of view of particular authors.

Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971, p. 287) discuss the value of the group process for helping parents.

The parent group provides a unique opportunity for all involved to become more aware of the parent-child relationship and to experience feedback regarding the effect that their parent practices have upon their children. This is derived through feedback from other parents about their procedures. The opportunity for mutual therapeutic effect is constantly available. At the same time, there is the opportunity to create a strong interdependence which takes advantage of the universal problems that confront parents. There is an opportunity for parents to contribute to each other and to develop new approaches to parent-child relationships. The corrective process of feedback from contemporaries has tremendous effect upon the group dynamics.

The potential for helping parents by involving them in group experiences and providing them with child-training information, has influenced both experts and informed lay persons to develop programs in parent education. For example, Parent Effectiveness Training groups based on Gordon's work exist in many areas of our country (Gordon 1970). The

philosophy of Alfred Adler has gained popularity through the works of Dreikurs and others (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1973, Dreikurs and Soltz 1964). Study groups have been formed to study Adlerian parent-child books. Behavioral modification programs (Becker 1971, Krumboltz and Krumboltz 1972, Patterson and Gullion 1968) and transactional analysis groups are also prevalent (James 1974).

While these programs have made contributions to improving parent-child relationships, there are certain limitations which need to be overcome. With the exception of Adlerian parent study groups, these programs usually require professional leaders. This limits the number of groups which can be offered. The delivery systems are also limited, consisting mostly of "read and discuss" methods. With some exceptions, the approaches are generally one-sided, omitting compatible concepts and techniques from other philosophies which enrich the basic approach.

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) is a parent study group program which attempts to overcome the pitfalls mentioned above (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1976). STEP differs from the other programs in the following ways.

1. The program is designed for professional, trained, or inexperienced lay leadership.
2. The program consists of a variety of materials designed to enhance an understanding and application

of the concepts of the program, and to provide for individual learning styles through reading, discussing, listening, practicing, and viewing visual materials. The program contains a leader's manual, parent's handbook, cassettes, exercises, posters, charts, and specific task assignments for application of the principles taught in each session.

3. STEP is an Adlerian-based program blended with communication skills.

Purpose of the Study

While field test data indicated general positive leader and parent reactions to the STEP program, until this study, no scientific research had been done. There was a need to study the effectiveness of STEP to assess its value in helping parents improve their relationships with their children. This study attempted to validate STEP. The investigator studied whether participation in a STEP group resulted in positive changes in both mother and child behavior.

Theoretical Rationale

The central philosophy of STEP is based on the work of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs. The Adlerian philosophy views faulty relationships between parents and children as

the lack of (1) parental understanding of children's behavior, and (2) child training methods which facilitate mutual respect.

Adler saw humans as social beings whose main goal in life is to belong. Behavior and emotions are seen as purposive or goal directed and are best understood by observing their consequences. Adler's philosophy, termed individual psychology, considers humans from a holistic frame of reference. The term individual psychology ". . . was not meant to describe the psychology of the individual. It referred rather to Adler's holistic stance, that man could be understood only as a whole, that man was an indivisible unity" (Mosak and Dreikurs 1973, p. 36).

Humans were viewed by Adler as creative, decision making beings responsible for their own destinies. While they may not always choose what happens to them, individuals do choose how they respond to circumstances. Humans use their creativity to design a plan for achieving a place for themselves in the world. This plan, which Adler called the life style, is the unifying aspect of personality (Dreikurs 1958). The life style includes convictions about oneself, others and the world. It also includes the long range goals individuals choose to support their convictions. Individuals are usually not aware of their convictions and goals, yet they are aware of the consequences of their behavior.

Within each life style lies a wide range of behavior choices to support convictions and goals. Individuals may choose to express their life styles through useful or use-less behaviors.

When children believe they cannot achieve their long range goals through useful behavior, they become discouraged and misbehavior (defined as uncooperative or irresponsible behavior) is often the result of this discouragement. Dreikurs classified children's misbehavior into four broad categories or immediate goals: attention, power, revenge, and display of inadequacy. Resultant social consequences of these goals (reinforcement of significant adults, in this case, parents) bring immediate satisfaction and assurance of belonging (Dreikurs and Soltz 1964).

The Adlerian philosophy is well suited to the movement toward social equality. The concepts of (1) choice, (2) responsibility for one's own behavior, (3) mutual respect, and (4) social interest underly democratic social relations.

The climate of our times suggests a democratic child-training philosophy which permits children to make choices within limits, allows them to be responsible for the consequences of their decisions, fosters social interest (a willingness to cooperate and participate in the give and take of life), emphasizes mutual respect, and provides encouragement for coping with the difficulties of life. The Adlerian

philosophy is one of the child-rearing systems which provides a foundation for building democratic relationships between parents and children.

STEP (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1976) attempts to help parents learn democratic child-training procedures, and understand themselves and their children from an Adlerian perspective. The basic Adlerian principles and procedures taught in STEP are:

1. Understanding the nature of democratic relationships based on mutual respect and social equality.
2. Understanding the purposive nature of behavior and emotions.
3. Understanding the four goals of misbehavior and their positive counterparts.
4. Understanding how an individual's life style is formed, and the major influences on one's life style--with special emphasis on the family constellation and methods of training.
5. Understanding parental beliefs and behaviors which foster misbehavior, and alternate beliefs and behaviors which promote responsible goals and behavior in children.
6. Learning the process of encouragement. Learning how to focus on assets and strengths, and understanding the differences between praise and encouragement.

7. Understanding natural and logical consequences. Learning how to give children choices and allow them to assume responsibility for the consequences of their behavior.
8. Learning about the family meeting. Learning how to involve children in planning and problem solving by fostering democratic discussions.
9. Developing parent self confidence. Learning how to respond to criticism of their child-training beliefs and procedures, and learning to focus on their own strengths as parents.

While the Adlerian philosophy emphasizes the concepts of acceptance, mutual respect, and encouragement, it overlooks specific techniques in the area of communication which enhance these concepts. Gordon (1970) points out that when parents take the time to listen to children's concerns, and learn to feedback the feelings they hear, they demonstrate acceptance and respect. This feedback (termed reflective listening in STEP) helps children clarify their feelings and feel understood. Reflective listening encourages children once parents learn to refrain from imposing solutions, and demonstrate faith in the children's ability to solve their own problems.

Effective communication also involves the way in which parents talk to their children, and how they conduct problem solving discussions. Parents demonstrate acceptance of the child as a person, and respect for themselves when they learn to communicate their own feelings and intentions in non-blameful ways. This type of parent talk, termed "I" messages, encourages children through trusting them to respect the parent's rights and feelings. When problems require discussion, parents need to know how to listen and talk effectively. They also need to be familiar with procedures for reaching consensus.

The communication skills help facilitate the Adlerian four point conflict resolution process as described by Dreikurs and Grey (1970).

1. Establishing mutual respect: As mentioned above, reflective listening demonstrates respect for the child. When parents send "I" messages, they are respecting themselves.

2. Pinpointing the real issue: When the parent clarifies the feelings and intentions of family members, he or she is pinpointing the real issues. Example: "We all seem to be discouraged at this point. It is possible we aren't reaching agreement because we're all interested in getting our own way?"

3. Reaching agreement: The technique of brainstorming aids in generating possible solutions for the family to

consider. The parents and children then agree upon which solution they think will work the best and are willing to accept.

4. Participating in decision making: Reflective listening, "I" messages, and brainstorming all help parents and children become involved in making decisions together.

Recognizing the value of communication skills and their contributions to the Adlerian processes, STEP teaches parents effective listening and talking skills. The program also assists parents in learning how to help children explore alternative solutions to problems they face. STEP teaches parents the skill of brainstorming to aid them in conducting effective family meetings.

Review of Literature

The literature on Adlerian parent study groups and related parent training methods is somewhat confusing and contradictory. Both informal investigations and experimental investigations will be reported.

Informal Investigations

Agati and Iovino (1974) used a questionnaire composed of a rating scale and open ended responses to evaluate a five week introductory parent study group. They found a very positive reaction on the part of the participants. As a result of the program, on-going family counseling demonstration

groups were generated. A public relations effect also resulted. Many community organizations have asked to have programs for their members. Teacher discussion groups have started as an outgrowth of participation of teachers and administrators in parent study groups.

Tindall (1974) administered a questionnaire to her parent study group participants which indicated many positive changes in family atmosphere.

In an informal study of the effects of a Parent-Teacher Education Center on parents and teachers, Hillman (1968) administered a questionnaire to the participants asking them to indicate their feelings about the overall effectiveness of the program, and to assess positive changes in their children. A total of 72.1 percent of the participants who completed the questionnaire rated the effectiveness of the program as "excellent", 27.9 percent rated the experience as "good", none rated the program as "fair" or "poor." The participants rated the growth of children attributed to the center's program as follows: 33 percent indicated "much growth", 64.7 percent said "some growth", and only 1.4 percent reported "no growth." The delivery system consisted of lecture-discussion and family counseling demonstration sessions.

Experimental Investigations

Dinkmeyer (1959) explored the effects of Adlerian child guidance through the process of family counseling in an audience setting. He found no significant improvement in children's adjustment. The mothers generally felt satisfied with their experience. Some of the mothers indicated that they felt the need for some private counseling. There was no evidence that Adlerian counseling was effective with certain specific areas of child adjustment. The evidence did not indicate that the mothers could empathize with their children as measured by their ability to observe changes in their children's perceptions of their problems.

Haley (1963) found significant changes in certain parental attitudes at the conclusion of a parent counseling program. He found no significant interaction between pre-test and treatment. Change in children's perception of parental attitudes (family control of behavior) was non-significant. A follow-up assessment revealed no significant changes in parental attitude or children's perception of parental attitudes.

Swenson (1970) studied changes in parental attitudes, children's adaptation to school as rated by their teachers, and children's level of adjustment as rated by their parents. He compared an Adlerian parent discussion group with an eclectic film discussion group for their effects on the

above variables. Swenson found only one significant change. Teachers' ratings of one group of pupils in the "middle level of adaptation to school" indicated significance in the pre to post analysis. The author concluded that parental participation in a parent discussion group was associated with a significant gain in the teachers' ratings of children who begin the school year with an approximate average rating.

Platt (1971) explored the effects of Adlerian counseling and consultation with children, teachers, and parents on behavior change in children as perceived by their parents and teachers. The children of the experimental group met in counseling groups once a week while the teachers and parents met in separate consultation groups. The teachers also received individual consultations or viewed demonstrations of classroom discussions. The parent group experience consisted of a combination of viewing family counseling demonstrations and discussing topics from assigned readings. Platt used a placebo group as well as a control group. In the placebo group, the children met once a week with a counselor to listen to records or study. There was minimal interaction with the counselor. The study revealed positive changes in all children of the experimental group as rated by their parents. The teachers rated all but two children as showing improvement. The behavior of most of the children in the placebo

and control groups was rated by teachers and parents as remaining about the same or deteriorating.

Downing (1972) studied the effects of an eclectic approach consisting primarily of Adlerian, Rogerian and behavioral approaches. He found significant changes in parental attitudes toward controlling techniques, awareness of emotional needs of their children, expression of trust and respect for their children, and parent confidence in their child-rearing practices.

In a study to determine the effects of an Adlerian parent study group used in combination with special reading instruction for pupils with several reading and adjustment problems, Runyan (1973) found that there were positive changes in parental attitudes. There were no significant differences between groups in the parents' and teachers' perceptions of change in children's behavior. No changes in locus of control of the children were found.

Berrett (1973) studied the effects of an Adlerian parent study group on mothers' attitudes, child-rearing practices, and perception of their children's behavior. The subjects included mothers of both hearing impaired and non hearing impaired children. The mothers who participated in

the groups obtained a score on the attitude assessment which indicated they expressed a more liberal attitude toward their children than the mothers who had not yet experienced a group. The parent group mothers also showed changes in child-rearing practices. The hearing impaired children of the mothers who attended a study group displayed a lower occurrence of negative behaviors than the children of mothers who had not yet attended a group. Concerning the non-hearing impaired children; only the children of the mothers who were pretested and then experienced treatment, were rated as displaying a lower occurrence of negative behavior. The parents were also asked to indicate if their child's behavior bothered them. The parents who participated in study group reported fewer occurrences of children's bothersome behavior than the parents of the control group.

Laine (1974) studied the impact of a Dreikurs parent study group on parental attitudes toward school as well as their interaction with the school. The results of his study indicated that parental attitudes did not change but that their intentions toward interacting with the school were more positive. However the actual translation of intentions into behavior was not studied.

In a study of parental disciplinarian attitude and overprotectiveness, Mahoney (1975) discovered that these

factors did not change significantly as a result of Adlerian parent study group procedures.

Hillman and Perry (1975) studied the influence of a Parent-Teacher Education Center on parent and teacher attitudes toward adult-child relations, and their perceptions of behavior change in the child with whom they were most concerned. The ten week treatment series consisted of three segments: a parent discussion group, a family counseling demonstration--viewed by all participants, and a discussion group for teachers. The instruments were administered before and after treatment. Analysis of the pre- and posttest scores of the attitude instrument revealed that the participants were significantly less overprotective and less over-indulgent. There were no significant changes in the acceptance and rejection scales. The participants' perceptions of child behavior also showed significant changes in self, social, school, home, and total adjustment. The attitude study was replicated with different populations during two subsequent series. The first replication yielded the same results as the initial study. The second replication showed significant positive changes in all four attitudes.

Freeman (1975) compared an Adlerian mothers' study group with a traditional mothers' study group for changes in child-rearing attitudes, child-rearing practices, and perceptions of children's behavior. He found that the Adlerian

mothers showed a significantly more liberal attitude toward children than the control group mothers. An analysis of child-rearing practices showed that the mothers of the Adlerian group spanked, withdrew privileges, bribed, and confined children significantly less than the mothers in the traditional or control group. Adlerian mothers did fewer of their children's chores than the traditional group mothers. Mothers in the Adlerian group used suggestion significantly less than the traditional group mothers. Adlerian mothers also played less with their children than both the traditional group and control mothers. The Adlerian mothers checked significantly fewer of their children's behaviors as bothersome than did the control mothers.

Frazier and Matthes (1975) compared the Adlerian and behavioral approaches in a study of child-rearing attitudes, child-rearing practices, and parents' perception of their children's behavior. They found that the Adlerian parents held a significantly less restrictive attitude toward their children than the behavioral or control group parents. Concerning significant differences in child-rearing practices, the Adlerian parents disciplined directly in line with misbehavior significantly more than the parents of the behavioral or control group, used suggestion to influence their children more than the control group, and played and talked with their children more than the behavioral parents. There were no

significant differences among all three groups in the parents' perception of child behavior. The authors suggested this may be due to the control group responding in what they considered to be a socially appropriate manner, whereas parents involved in the treatment groups were more willing and able to identify misbehavior.

Several extraneous variables may be noted in each experimental study earlier cited herein:

1. There were varied definitions of the components of an Adlerian parent study group.
2. There was a low level of external validity and thus limited generalizability in some studies due to the restriction of the sample of parents to one school only (Swenson, Haley, Berrett, and Laine).
3. There were several apparent violations of randomization thus reducing the generalization value (Platt, Dinkmeyer, Swenson, Downing, Runyan, and Berrett).
4. Some studies used no control group (Dinkmeyer, Swenson, Laine, and Hillman and Perry).
5. Other studies used non equivalent control groups (Platt, Downing, Runyan, and Frazier and Matthes).
6. Two studies apparently used inappropriate statistical analyses (Runyan and Platt).
7. Freeman used a posttest only design which provides no assessment of change.

8. Several studies used instruments of questionable validity for assessing the effectiveness of Adlerian training (Dinkmeyer, Haley, Swenson, Platt, Downing, Mahoney, and Hillman and Perry).
9. Three studies used the Child-Rearing Practices Scale which is designed to assess Adlerian principles, but it was filled out by an informant designated by the parent as being familiar with his or her parenting practices. The chance of bias rating is extremely high with this procedure (Berrett, Freeman, and Frazier and Matthes).
10. These same three studies plus Runyan's study used the Children's Behavior Checklist which may have produced inaccurate results due to increased sensitivity of parents to children's misbehavior as a result of increasing awareness through involvement in the group experience. Only Freeman showed significant results with this instrument. Frazier and Matthes reported no change among groups. Runyan and Berretts' designs and, or analysis were too questionable to trust the results.
11. All results were obtained through self-report instruments or biased observers and thus no behavioral observations were noted.

This investigation attempted to overcome the above limitations through the following procedures:

1. Specifically defined the nature of a certain type of Adlerian parent study group through strict adherence to the leader's manual of STEP (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1976).
2. Insured equivalence of groups through randomization.
3. Utilized a Likert-type scale which adequately tested the concepts of STEP related to responsible child behavior, and reduced the possibility of sensitization to misbehavior due to participation in a parent study group.
4. Used a control group which received no treatment.
5. Used a behavioral assessment procedure for measuring parental verbal behavior toward the Target Child.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study can be stated as follows:
Will parent participation in a STEP group result in measurable changes in the mothers' ratings of the behavior of the children with whom they are most concerned, and changes in the observed verbal behavior of the mothers?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at the .05 level.

Hypothesis 1: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will perceive their Target Child's behavior as significantly more positive than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by their ratings on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale.

Hypothesis 2: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly more facilitating statements during the audio taped Mother-Child Interaction Exercise than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by observer ratings.

Hypothesis 3: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly fewer non-facilitating statements during the audio taped Mother-Child Interaction Exercise than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by observer ratings.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the scores on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of facilitating statements made by the mothers during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise.

Hypothesis 5: There is a negative relationship between the scores on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of non-facilitating statements made by the mothers during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise.

Definition of Terms

Below is a definition of each term used in the above hypotheses.

STEP: A nine session parent study group program taught in weekly two hour meetings. The topics and format of the program are determined by the STEP leader's manual.

Target Child: A child between the ages of 4 and 13 whom the mother identified as a child with whom she would like to improve her relationship.

Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale (McKay 1976): A thirty-two item seven point interval Likert-type rating scale which assesses the mothers' perceptions of their Target Child's behavior. The scale was constructed by the investigator to test change in specific behaviors which are dealt with in STEP. The mothers are asked to rate each behavior on a continuum from "Always" to "Never". Both responsible and irresponsible child behaviors are represented in the items. This scale can be found in Appendix A.

Mother-Child Interaction Exercise (Goula and McKay (1976a): A decision making task which was performed by each mother and her Target Child. The exercise is based on the work of Ferreira and Winter (1969). The interaction was audio tape recorded and analyzed by observers for facilitating and non-facilitating statements. Form A of the exercise was performed as a pretest, and Form B was used for the posttest. This exercise can be found in Appendix B.

Facilitating Statements: Statements made by the mother which foster cooperative verbal responses from the Target Child. That is, the child makes a voluntary on-task verbalization to the content of the mother's statement. For example, Mother: "Where shall we go?" Child: "Washington." Those statements made by the mother which promote a cooperative response through coercion are not included in this category. Coercive statements are those verbalizations which command, e.g., "Shut up!", "Sit down!", "You have to!"; threaten, e.g., "You better. . .", "If you do that once more I'll. . ."; ridicule, e.g., "You're lazy", "You're (that's) stupid" moralize, e.g., "You should (should not)."

Non-facilitating Statements: Statements made by the mother which foster uncooperative verbal responses from the child. That is, the child makes an off-task verbalization to the content of the mother's statement. For example, Mother: "Where shall we go?" Child: "Give me bubble gum." This category also includes those statements made by the mother which promote a cooperative response through coercion (see above).

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES

This chapter will be concerned with the procedures involved in testing the hypotheses of this study. Sampling procedures, the research design, research and treatment procedures, methods of measurement, the analysis of the data, and the limitations of the study will be discussed.

Sampling Procedures

This study was conducted in cooperation with the Parent Discussion Group program of the Pima County Developmental Career Guidance Project (herein called the Project). A letter announcing the formation of discussion groups (Appendix C) was distributed to several schools in Areas B and C of Tucson School District Number One. Mothers who filled out and sent in the enrollment blank contained in the letter were contacted by phone for an explanation of the research. Those mothers who met the following criteria and indicated their willingness to participate were the subjects for this study: The mothers selected for this study, (1) resided in Areas B and C of School District Number One which consists of persons of the middle and upper-middle socioeconomic strata (as determined by Project personnel familiar with the

population), (2) had at least one child between the ages of 4 and 13 whom they had designated as a child with whom they would like to improve their relationship (Target Child), and (3) attended at least seven of the nine treatment sessions. These subjects were randomly assigned to the STEP and Control Groups. Both groups contained ten subjects each.

Research Design

The Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design was used in this study (Campbell and Stanley 1963). Figure 1 illustrates the design.

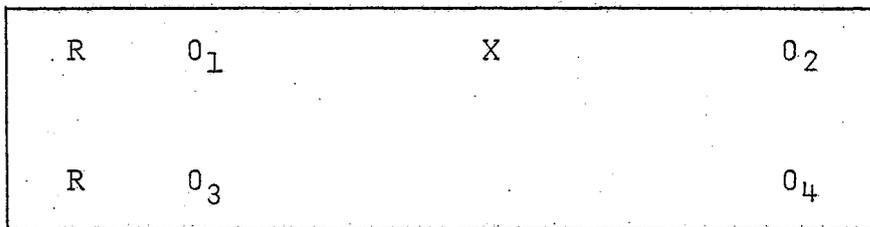


Figure 1. Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design

- R - Randomization
- O₁, O₃ - Dependent variable measures before treatment
- O₂, O₄ - Dependent variable measures after treatment
- X - Independent variable (treatment)

The independent variable was the materials and the delivery system of Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1976). The dependent variables were:

1. Each mother's perception of her Target Child's behavior as measured by the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale.
2. The verbal behavior of each mother during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise as measured by observer tallies of the number of facilitating and non-facilitating statements made by the mother.

The following are known extraneous variables which may have effected the results of this study:

1. Contamination of the Control Group. Some of these subjects may have read parent-child materials, received counseling, attended lectures on child training techniques, etc., during the ten week waiting period.
2. History of each mother's experience with similiar methods.
3. Mothers taking the course whose spouses cooperated with the new parenting procedures the subjects were learning as compared to mothers who took the course without cooperative spouses.

4. Sensitivity of mothers and children to being tape recorded.
5. Interaction of pretest and treatment.

Research Procedures

This study was conducted in the following way:

1. During the week prior to the first treatment session the subjects were pretested by the instruments. An appointment was made for each mother-child dyad to perform Form A of the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise, (Goula and McKay 1967a). Prior to performing the exercise, each mother rated her Target Child's behavior on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale (McKay 1976).
2. During the week following the last (ninth) treatment session, the subjects were posttested by the instruments according to the procedure outlined in number 1. Form B of the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise was used in the posttesting.

Treatment Procedures

The mothers of the STEP Group participated in nine weekly sessions of a STEP parent study group. Each session was two hours in length.

The treatment procedures involved specific topics for each session, various kinds of materials, a set lesson format

and sequence, and a leader. A detailed discussion of the treatment procedures follows.

Session Topics

Each session of the STEP program is organized around one or more topics. Below is an outline of the sessions.

Session 1--Understanding Behavior and Misbehavior. This initial session discusses the effects of the movement toward social equality upon parent-child relationships. It also presents popular beliefs about the nature of behavior and introduces the parents to the concept of purposive behavior. The parents learn about the four goals of misbehavior, the goals of positive behavior, and the ingredients necessary for building a positive relationship with children.

Session 2--How Children Use Emotions to Involve Parents/ The "Good" Parent. In this session the parents learn about the purposive nature of emotions, and how children use emotions in negative ways to achieve the four goals of misbehavior. They also become familiar with the concept of life style formation. The family constellation and methods of training are emphasized. The remainder of this session is concerned with helping parents become aware of how many typical parent beliefs and behaviors are discouraging to children. The parents begin to learn more appropriate beliefs and behaviors which facilitate the development of responsibility in children.

Session 3--Encouragement. This session is concerned with helping parents learn how to encourage children. The parents become aware of attitudes and behaviors which discourage children as well as those attitudes and behaviors which encourage them. The crucial differences between praise and encouragement are emphasized. The parents also become familiar with the special language of encouragement.

Session 4--Communication: Listening. In this session participants become aware of the traditional roles parents play when children express their feelings. They learn how playing these roles often blocks children's willingness to share feelings, creates resistance, and fosters an ineffective relationship. They learn an alternative method of responding to children which helps children feel understood, and facilitates mutual respect.

Session 5--Communication: Exploring Alternatives and Expressing Your Ideas and Feelings to Children. The first part of this session deals with a method for helping children explore alternative solutions to problems they face. The second part of the session deals with two concepts: (1) how to recognize who--parents or children--are responsible, or "own" a problem, and (2) ineffective and effective methods for expressing feelings to children when they interfere with the parent's rights.

Session 6--Developing Responsibility. Session 6 discusses the differences between the autocratic, permissive and democratic parent. The parents learn that reward and punishment as a means of disciplining children don't help the children become responsible for their own behavior. The parents learn an alternative method of discipline--natural and logical consequences--which helps children learn responsibility. The differences between punishment and logical consequences is stressed. The parents learn the basic principles and the steps for applying natural and logical consequences. The participants discover how to apply natural and logical consequences to typical daily parent-child problems.

Session 7--Decision Making for Parents. In this session the parents learn more about natural and logical consequences. They also become familiar with how parents reinforce children's misbehavior by reacting in ways the children expect. They learn that doing the unexpected usually fosters more cooperative behavior. The session concludes with helping the parents learn how to select the appropriate approach to child-training concerns from among the approaches they have learned in previous sessions.

Session 8--The Family Meeting. In this session the parents become aware of the benefits of establishing regular family meetings where the family makes plans and solves problems together. Guidelines for establishing and maintaining

family meetings, leadership skills, and alternative approaches for initiating family meetings are among the topics discussed.

Session 9--Developing Confidence and Using Your Potential.

This final session is concerned with aiding parents in developing confidence in themselves and their new child-training procedures. They will learn how to respond effectively to criticism and pressure from other adults concerning their new parenting methods. The participants will become familiar with self-defeating patterns in parent-child relationships, and examine their strengths for becoming an effective parent.

Materials

STEP contains the following materials designed to enhance the teaching and learning of the above topics and concepts.

1. Leader's Manual: The manual provides specific suggestions for implementing the program. Included in the manual are: how to organize and conduct a parent study group, leadership skills, methods for dealing with problem members, understanding the child, and lesson guides for each session.
2. Parent's Handbook: The handbook contains reading materials pertaining to the topic(s) of each session.

The handbook is illustrated with color cartoons.

Included in the handbook are:

- a. Points to Remember: These are summary statements of the basic concepts of each lesson. There is one "Points to Remember" page for each of the nine sessions. Each page is perforated so that the parents can remove it and post in a convenient place as a reminder.
 - b. My Plan for Improving Relationships: This is a method which encourages parents to privately evaluate their progress from session to session. These are also perforated for removal and posting.
 - c. Instructional Charts: Each chart is a reproduction of the large instructional charts used by the leader. Each of these charts serves as a quick reference for the session it pertains to.
3. Cassettes: Each cassette presents a brief summarization of the reading material in the handbook that is relevant to the topic(s) of the session. The cassettes also extend the concepts through brief presentations, examples, and exercises in typical parent-child relationship problems. Some sessions contain one taped program, others contain two--depending upon the number of topics taught in the session.
 4. Posters: A major concept of each session is illustrated on a full color poster.
 5. Instructional Charts: Each chart presents a major theme of the lesson in a summarized form. The charts are also printed in color.

6. Discussion Guide Cards: These cards provide guidelines for productive group discussions. The cards are introduced in the first session and displayed in each succeeding session to serve as reminders. Each card is illustrated with a color cartoon.

There are two parts of the STEP program which weren't used in this research due to the Project's method of generating parent study groups. The Introductory Tape: Description and Invitation and the brochure are both designed to be used with large gatherings of parents to stimulate interest in joining a STEP group.

Lesson Format and Sequence

As mentioned above, there is a lesson guide for each session which provides the leader with specific directions for the session. The first lesson begins with an introduction to the objectives of STEP and outlines the procedures which will be used. This is followed by a get-acquainted exercise, an assessment of the parents' expectations, an introduction to the Discussion Guide Cards, and a presentation of the first lesson. The following outlines a typical lesson sequence.

1. Presentation of the Poster and an overview of the topic(s).

2. Discussion of the Activity for the Week (beginning second session). The Activity for the Week is a specific task assignment made each week to help the parents put the session's concepts into practice in their own families.
3. Discussion of the Reading Assignment from the parent's handbook. The reading is to be done between sessions except for the first reading which is read during the first session. Each lesson guide provides two discussion options for the leader. He or she can conduct an open discussion of the material, or use the specific questions provided.
4. Discussion of the Instructional Chart. (In some sessions the chart is discussed following the tape because the particular chart pertains more to tape content than to reading content.)
5. Introduction and presentation of the cassette. The parents do the exercises and discuss the concepts presented on the recording.
6. Discussion of the Problem Situation. This is a brief unfinished situation which is designed to help parents integrate and expand the concepts of the session. Problem situations may also be role played.

7. Summary of the session. Together the leader and parents summarize the session to give the leader feedback, and help the parents remember and clarify what they are learning.
8. Assignment of the Activity for the Week and the Reading Assignment for the next session.

Leader

The leader was Mrs. Barbara Barkenbush, one of the Project's Parent Involvement Specialists. Mrs. Barkenbush has led several Adlerian parent discussion groups for the Project and has trained other lay leaders. This was Mrs. Barkenbush's first STEP group.

The investigator met with the leader to give her the following instructions:

1. The sessions were to be limited to two hours in length.
2. She was to keep weekly attendance records.
3. She was to study the manual thoroughly and familiarize herself with the materials.
4. She was not to deviate from the manual.

Methods of Measurement

The mothers were tested by instruments which measured (1) mother's perception of the Target Child's behavior, and

(2) the verbal behavior of the mothers. The following instruments were used.

1. Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale (McKay 1976). The Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale is a seven point interval Likert-type rating scale constructed by the investigator to measure the mothers' perceptions of their Target Child's behavior. The instrument was judged for content validity by three judges familiar with the STEP program (Appendix D). A reliability test of the instrument was conducted in a pilot study and also during the research project. The pilot study results were as follows. The Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach 1951) test for internal consistency ranged from .90 to .91. The Pearson r test for stability over time yielded a coefficient of .97. The Cronbach's alpha range during the research project was .81 to .89. The Pearson r test yielded a coefficient of .83.
2. Mother-Child Interaction Exercise (Goula and McKay 1976a). The Mother-Child Interaction Exercise is a decision making task based on the work of Ferreira and Winter (1969). The exercise was performed by each mother and her Target Child. Each dyad was given sixteen minutes to perform the task. An audio recording was made of the mother-child interactions. The examiner gave the subjects instructions and then

left them alone in the recording room in order to avoid adding to any tension or nervousness which may have been associated with the testing.

3. Three two-minute segments of each subject's tape were randomly selected for the purposes of analysis. The observers counted the frequency of facilitating and non-facilitating statements made by the mothers during the selected segments. Two observers, trained by the investigator, rated the mothers according to the Rater Instructions for Mother-Child Interaction Exercise (Goula and McKay 1976b). These instructions can be found in Appendix E. The percent of inter-rater reliability was 81. The percent of agreement was determined by dividing the least f count by the greatest f count.

The hypotheses of this study were analyzed according to the following procedures.

Hypothesis 1: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will perceive their Target Child's behavior as significantly more positive than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by their ratings on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale.

The adjusted means of the posttest for the STEP Group and the Control Group were analyzed by an analysis of covariance with the pretest as a covariate.

Hypothesis 2: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly more facilitating statements during the audio taped Mother-Child Interaction Exercise than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by observer ratings.

The statistical procedure used for testing Hypothesis 1 was also used for testing this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly fewer non-facilitating statements during the audio taped Mother-Child Interaction Exercise than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by observer ratings.

The statistical procedure used for testing Hypothesis 1 was also used for testing this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the scores on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of facilitating statements made by the mothers during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise.

A correlation of the summated ratings of the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of facilitating statements made during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise was calculated. The scores for all mothers were pooled into one group as well as arranged separately by groups for this analysis.

Hypothesis 5: There is a negative relationship between the scores on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of non-facilitating statements made by the mothers during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise.

The statistical procedure used for computing the correlations for Hypothesis 4 was used for testing this hypothesis.

Limitations

The investigator notes the following limitations of this study.

1. The study was restricted to mothers because of the availability of the sample and randomization requirements. No assessment was made of the impact of STEP on fathers or couples.
2. The sample was selected from mothers who volunteered, resided in a middle and upper-middle class area, and could attend the group on the designated time and day.
3. The research investigated change in the perception of the mothers of the Target Child only--other children of the family were excluded.

4. The n of 20 was small but adequate to perform the necessary statistical procedures. Replication will be necessary to establish the reliability of the results.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if participation in a STEP (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1976) group would result in positive changes in (1) mothers' perceptions of their Target Child's behavior as measured by the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale (McKay 1976), and (2) observed verbal behavior of the mothers as measured by observer ratings on the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise (Goula and McKay 1976a).

Results

The statistical analysis of the data obtained for each hypothesis is presented below.

Hypothesis 1: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will perceive their Target Child's behavior as significantly more positive than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by their ratings on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale. As presented in Table 1, analysis of covariance yielded an F ratio of 6.23 which is significant at the .022 level. The STEP Group had a pretest mean of 150.20 and a posttest mean of 171.20, while the

pretest-posttest means of the Control Group were 147.50 and 159.10 respectively. The results are significant at the .05 level and thus Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Table 1. Analysis of Covariance, Mothers' Scores on Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale with Pretest as Covariate

Analysis of Covariance: Total $n = 20$					
Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Between	553.15	1	553.15	6.23	.022
Within	1509.29	17	88.78		
Total	4488.55	19	236.24		

Pretest and Posttest Means:			
Treatment	<u>n</u>	Pretest Means	Posttest Means
STEP	10	150.20	171.20
Control	10	147.50	159.10

Hypothesis 2: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly more facilitating statements during the audio taped Mother-Child Interaction Exercise than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by observer ratings. As presented in Table 2, analysis of covariance yielded an F ratio of .64 which has an alpha level of

.999. The STEP Group had a pretest mean of 19.60 and a posttest mean of 15.00, while the pretest-posttest means of the Control Group were 16.00 and 15.40 respectively. The results are not significant at the .05 level and thus Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Table 2. Analysis of Covariance, Number of Facilitating Statements by Mothers on Mother-Child Interaction Exercise with Pretest as Covariate

Analysis of Covariance: Total <u>n</u> = 20					
Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Between	16.96	1	16.96	.64	.999
Within	448.15	17	26.36		
Total	553.20	19	29.12		

Pretest and Posttest Means:

Treatment	<u>n</u>	Pretest Means	Posttest Means
STEP	10	19.60	15.00
Control	10	16.00	15.40

Hypothesis 3: Mothers who participate in the STEP Group will make significantly fewer non-facilitating statements during the audio taped Mother-Child Interaction Exercise than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group as measured by

observer ratings. As presented in Table 3, analysis of covariance yielded an F ratio of 1.80 which has an alpha level of .195. The STEP Group had a pretest mean of .40 and a posttest mean of .60, while the pretest-posttest means of the Control Group were 2.60 and 2.30 respectively. The results are not significant at the .05 level and thus Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Table 3. Analysis of Covariance, Number of Non-facilitating Statements by Mothers on Mother-Child Interaction Exercise with Pretest as Covariate

Analysis of Covariance: Total $n = 20$					
Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Between	5.63	1	5.63	1.80	.195
Within	53.14	17	3.13		
Total	68.95	19	3.63		

Pretest and Posttest Means:			
Treatment	<u>n</u>	Pretest Means	Posttest Means
STEP	10	.40	.60
Control	10	2.60	2.30

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the scores on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of facilitating statements made by the mothers during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise. The correlations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation, Scores of Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and Number of Facilitating and Non-facilitating Statements by Mothers on Mother-Child Interaction Exercise

Correlations:			
Facilitating Statements with Scale Scores		<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Pooled Subjects	(<u>n</u> = 20)	-.03	.445
STEP	(<u>n</u> = 10)	-.01	.484
Control	(<u>n</u> = 10)	-.02	.475

Non-facilitating Statements with Scale Scores		<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Pooled Subjects	(<u>n</u> = 20)	-.38	.050
STEP	(<u>n</u> = 10)	-.34	.171
Control	(<u>n</u> = 10)	-.25	.248

The correlation between the scale scores and the number of facilitating statements for pooled subjects was $-.03$ which is not significant at the $.05$ level ($p = .445$). The correlation between the scale scores and the number of facilitating

statements for the mothers of the STEP Group was $-.01$ which is not significant at the $.05$ level ($p = .484$). The correlation between the scale scores and the number of facilitating statements for the Control mothers was $-.02$ which is also not significant at the $.05$ level ($p = .475$). Since none of the correlations were significant at the $.05$ level, Hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Hypothesis 5: There is a negative relationship between the scores on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of non-facilitating statements made by the mothers during the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise. The correlations are presented in Table 4. The correlation between the scale scores and the number of non-facilitating statements for pooled subjects was $-.38$ which is significant at the $.05$ level. The correlation between the scale scores and the number of non-facilitating statements for the mothers of the STEP Group was $-.34$ which is not significant at the $.05$ level ($p = .171$). The correlation between the scale scores and the number of non-facilitating statements for the Control mothers was $-.25$ which is also not significant at the $.05$ level ($p = .248$). Since only one significant correlation was found, Hypothesis 5 is rejected.

Discussion

This study investigated the effects of STEP on mothers' perceptions of their Target Child's behavior, and

the mothers' verbal behavior. The results indicate that participation in a STEP group does change the mothers' perception of their Target Child's behavior, i.e., mothers who participated in the STEP Group viewed their Target Child's behavior in a significantly more positive way than the mothers of the no-treatment Control Group. The validity of the data obtained from the study of mothers' perceptions is strengthened by the high reliability of the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale, and the significance of the pretest as a covariate ($p = .001$).

Although the data indicated that changes in the verbal behavior of the mothers were not significant, the investigator questions the validity of the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise for assessing the verbal behavior of the mothers. The pretest assessments for both facilitating and non-facilitating statements were not significant covariates of the posttest assessments at the .05 level (facilitating statements, $p = .082$; non-facilitating statements, $p = .086$). Thus the results obtained from this instrument are suspect.

The preceding discussion also applies to the mostly non-significant correlations between the scores on the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale and the number of facilitating and non-facilitating statements made by the mothers on the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise. That is, if the validity of the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise is suspect, the correlations are also suspect.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter will be concerned with the interpretation and implications of the results of this study for further research.

This study is one of the few which shows significant changes in mothers' perceptions of children's behavior resulting from participation in an Adlerian-based parent study group. In the previous studies comparing the effects of an Adlerian parent study group on parents' perceptions of child behavior with an equivalent control group (Berrett 1973 and Freeman 1975), only Freeman showed significant results. However, Freeman used a posttest only control group design which provides no assessment of change. Thus, the present research is the only study, to this investigator's knowledge, (1) involving a comparison of the effects of an Adlerian-based parent study group to an equivalent control group, and (2) using a pre to post assessment, which showed significant changes in mothers' perceptions of their children's behaviors.

The results of this research seem to indicate that STEP (Dinkmeyer and McKay 1976) is a valid program which can

contribute to helping parents relate more positively with their children.

The investigator recommends the reader remember the small n (20) and the limited population of this study when considering the results. The population was restricted to mothers from the middle and upper-middle socioeconomic strata of Tucson, Arizona. The children of these mothers ranged from 4 to 13 years in age. Furthermore, no assessment was made of the effects of STEP on fathers or couples. Also, perceptions of the behavior of children in the family other than the Target Child were not included in the study. Thus replication and studies with other populations is suggested.

Finally, there was no assessment of actual changes in children's behavior. Only the perceptions of the mothers regarding their Target Child were investigated.

This study also validated the use of a new instrument to measure changes in parents' perceptions of child behavior. The Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale (McKay 1976) was found to be an extremely reliable instrument. However, it too needs to be tested with other populations.

The non-significance of the Mother-Child Interaction Exercise (Goula and McKay 1976a) as a valid assessment of the mothers' verbal behavior may have been due to the following factors. The nature of the assigned task appeared to be too neutral to adequately assess facilitating and non-facilitating

statements. That is, the task may not have been important to all participants. Perhaps a task centered around a specific problem of importance to each mother may have produced more typical interactions and thus may have elicited different results.

The definition of facilitating and non-facilitating statements produced problems in the ratings. Mothers whose children produced one-word on-task responses received higher scores on facilitating statements than those mothers whose children replied in sentences: that is, the more one-word responses from the child, the more opportunity for the mother to talk, thereby inflating her score. Perhaps not counting statements which produced one-word responses would have provided a more accurate representation of the mother-child interaction. Also, there was no assessment of the tone of voice in the ratings. The raters indicated that had tone of voice been taken into consideration, their ratings would have been different.

There are several variables not investigated in this study which could be the basis for further research on STEP. A study involving larger numbers of subjects would be in order. The program should be tested with different populations such as fathers and couples, minority parents, inner city and rural populations, parents of preschoolers (only one Target Child was below the age of 5), and parents of

teenagers (only two mothers chose teenagers as their Target Child). STEP could be tested for use in study groups for teachers as well as in high school preparation-for-parenthood classes.

The effects of STEP on all children in the family needs to be investigated. Also, the relationship between parents' perceptions of their children's behavior and unbiased observers' ratings of the children's behavior could be investigated. In addition, the parents' behavior could be observed and rated.

Although the leader of this STEP group was not a certified counselor, she was highly skilled. The investigation of the effects of a STEP group led by a less skilled leader needs to be conducted. Also, a comparison of leaders of varying skill levels could be undertaken.

The subjects of this study were willing to participate in a research project. It would be interesting to investigate the effects of STEP where pre- and posttesting were considered as part of an ongoing parent education program, and not in the interests of research.

The interaction between the pretest and treatment needs to be investigated. A follow-up study could use the Solomon Four Group Design to assess the significance of this interaction.

The Mother-Child Interaction Exercise needs to be modified through utilizing conflict situations for an interaction assessment. Also, one-word responses need to be removed from the definition of facilitating statements.

Finally, a follow-up study needs to be conducted several weeks after the conclusion of treatment to determine if improvements are sustained over time.

Conclusion

The objective of this dissertation was to investigate whether participation in a STEP group--a recently published Adlerian-based parent study group--would result in positive changes in (1) mothers' perceptions of their Target Child's behavior, and (2) observed verbal behavior of the mothers.

The subjects were volunteers who were randomly assigned to STEP and Control Groups. The Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design was used in this research.

Significant positive changes in the mothers' perceptions were found ($p = .022$). The measure of changes in verbal behavior was found to be insignificant. The Mother-Child Interaction Exercise, an instrument used to assess changes in verbal behavior was of questionable validity due to the pretest's insignificance as a covariate of the posttest.

The results of this study suggest that STEP is useful for assisting parents in relating more positively with their children. Furthermore, this study validated a new instrument

the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale, for assessing changes in parents' perceptions of child behavior.

Some suggestions for further research are: studies involving various populations, the relationship between parents' perceptions and the actual observed behavior of the child, observations of the parents' behavior, investigations of the use of STEP by leaders of different skill levels, the use of STEP with parents who are not aware that research is being conducted, an investigation of the effect of the interaction of the pretest and treatment, and follow-up studies to determine the permanence of changes.

APPENDIX A

CHILD BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT SCALE

<u>Your identified child:</u>	ALWAYS	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	VERY SELDOM	NEVER
14. Interrupts you at inappropriate times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Is on time for meals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Eats most foods offered <u>without</u> being coaxed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Has table manners which are acceptable to you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Tattles on other children (for example: brothers or sisters, or children in the neighborhood).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Throws temper tantrums.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Shares problems (s)he is facing with you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Is considerate of your feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Requests help on tasks (s)he can do independently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Cleans up after snacking <u>without</u> being reminded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling annoyed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling discouraged, believing that the child <u>cannot</u> improve.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Behaves in such a way that you find yourself feeling angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Stays with difficult tasks until they are completed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Disturbs you when you are driving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Remembers where (s)he puts personal belongings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Has to be told more than once to go to bed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Is quiet after going to bed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX B

MOTHER-CHILD INTERACTION EXERCISE*

*Goula and McKay (1976a)

Directions

Please discuss the following situation with your child for the next sixteen minutes. Please try to reach agreement for each of the questions. If for some reason you finish before time is called, please continue by discussing anything that you would like to talk over with your child. Please do not leave the room until the tester signals that time is up. It is important that you continue for the entire sixteen minutes.

Form A

Tell your child that you and he/she have just been given a free ticket for a one week trip. Together, please plan the following. Please remember to try to reach agreement on each question.

1. Where will we go? Why?
2. How will we travel? Why?
3. What will we do when we reach our destination?
Why?
4. What will we take with us? Why?
5. Only three people, in addition to us, can go with us on this trip? Who will go with us?

Form B

Tell your child that you and he/she have just been given a free gift certificate for a shopping trip to any shopping center that the two of you choose. Together, please plan the following. Please remember to try to reach agreement on each question.

1. Which shopping center will we go to? Why?
2. What stores will we go to? Why? Which of these stores will we go to first?
3. Only three people, in addition to us, can go with us on this shopping trip. Who will go with us?
4. How much time shall we spend at the shopping center?
5. What will we buy at the shopping center? Why are we choosing these items?
6. If we get lost from each other in the shopping center, how will we find each other?

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO MOTHERS



In the Schools of Pima County

DEVELOPMENTAL CAREER GUIDANCE PROJECT

Dr. Norman F. Bloss
Director

Barbara Barkenbush, Jody Burns
Parent Involvement Specialists

Gary McKay, John Gould
Cooperating Doctoral
Students, Un. of AZ.

ANNOUNCING A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR MOTHERS!

Benefit yourself and help us too.

Have you heard about Parent Discussion Groups? A Parent Discussion Group is a place to go if -- You wish to learn to cope more effectively with everyday problems of parent-child relationships. In our culture we train for practically every kind of job, but we often neglect training for our most important job -- that of parenthood. This program is designed to help give training to parents in practical and more effective methods for family living.

The group leaders are lay people who have had training and experience in leading Parent Discussion Groups. The program is free of charge, and the materials will be supplied by the Developmental Career Guidance Project. Adaptations of the writings of Dreikurs or Dinkmeyer and McKay will be used in the groups.

These particular groups will be part of a research project designed to evaluate the program's effectiveness. The information obtained from this study will assist the Project in determining if Parent Discussion Groups are meeting the needs of Tucson area parents in improving their relationships with their children. In order to conduct this research participants will be asked to complete two tasks which will not involve more than one hour's time the week prior to the first meeting, and the week following the last meeting. Individual information obtained from this study will be confidential.

Due to research restrictions, these groups will involve mothers only. Volunteer mothers from eight local elementary schools will be asked to participate in five groups which will meet at a central location. Four of these groups will begin on Monday, Jan. 12 from 7:30 - 9:30 PM, for nine weekly meetings. One group will be delayed for research purposes until March. All groups will be asked to participate in the evaluation of the program at the same time. (Whitmore parents: this program will not interfere with your Community School night.)

We hope this letter has sparked your interest since we need about 100 mothers to complete this project. Your participation will benefit us all. Please call Barb or Jody -- 795-0504 -- if you have any questions. Also, if these groups don't meet your needs, you are always welcome to call for placement in an ongoing group.

PARENT DISCUSSION GROUP ENROLLMENT FORM

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ SCHOOL _____

AGES OF CHILDREN _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS TO YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL BY DECEMBER 15. You will be contacted by phone before Jan. 5.

APPENDIX D

ADLERIAN PARENTAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILD
BEHAVIOR SCALE--JUDGES

Don Dinkmeyer, Ph. D.
President, Communication and Motivation Training Institute
Coral Springs, Florida

Coordinator, Counseling Psychology Program
Heed University
Hollywood, Florida

Co-author of Systematic Training for Effective Parenting

Jon Carlson, Ed. D.
Director, Statewide Foundation Guidance Project
Honolulu, Hawaii

Reviewed field test edition of Systematic Training for Effective Parenting

Sally Laufketter, M. S.
Counselor, Marvin School
St. Ann, Missouri

Field tested and reviewed field test edition of Systematic Training for Effective Parenting

The judges' comments were taken into consideration in developing the final version of the Adlerian Parental Assessment of Child Behavior Scale.

APPENDIX E

RATER INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOTHER-CHILD
INTERACTION EXERCISE*

*Goula and McKay (1976b)

Directions

Please rate each mother's statements according to the following criteria:

Facilitating Statements: Statements made by the mother which foster voluntary cooperative verbal responses from the child; that is, the child makes a voluntary on-task verbalization to the content of the mother's statement.

Examples: Mother, "Where shall we go?" Child, "Washington."

Those statements made by the mother which promote a cooperative response through coercion are not included in this category. Coercive statements are those verbalizations which . . .

Command: e.g., "Shut up!", "Sit down!", "You have to!"

Threaten: e.g., "You better. . .", "If you do that once more I'll . . ."

Ridicule: e.g., "You're lazy", "You're (that's) stupid."

Moralize: e.g., "You should (should not)."

Non-Facilitating Statements: Statements made by the mother which foster uncooperative verbal responses from the child; that is, the child makes an off-task verbalization to the content of the mother's statement. Example: Mother, "Where shall we go?" Child, "Give me bubble gum."

This category also includes those statements made by the mother which promote a cooperative response through coercion; i.e., those statements which command, threaten, ridicule or moralize (see above for examples).

Neutral Statements: Some statements will not fit either category and are neutral. Do not rate neutral statements. Examples: Laughter, "I don't know", "Ah".

Additional Rating Instructions: The child must make a response before you rate the mother's statement. If the child remains silent, do not rate the mother's statement which precedes the silence.

Wait until the child completes his/her response before rating mother's preceding statement.

Be careful not to rate child's statements instead of mother's. If the child initiates a statement to which the mother responds, rate the mother's statement according to the child's next response.

If you can't hear or understand the child's response, don't rate the mother's statement.

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