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CONSENSUS OF EXPECTATIONS BETWEEN  
FOSTER PARENTS AND CASEWORKERS

Being the Report of a Group Research Project Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Social Work.

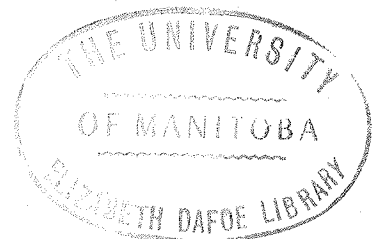
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## INTRODUCTION

For several decades foster parents have served as a vital resource in enabling child welfare agencies to achieve their objectives relating to the protection and care of children. Placement with a foster family has been a desirable alternative to institutional placement for many children who have been removed from their natural families.

Foster family care, ideally, provides an opportunity for the child to have his physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs met within the context of a family environment. Essentially, foster family care involves substituting another family for the child's natural family, for a temporary or extended period of time.

It has been recognized that the role of the foster parent has become increasingly complex with time (Fanshel, 1966; Snyderman, 1967; Wires, 1951; Wolins, 1963). In the early years of foster family care, foster parents took in children and raised them as their own, replacing the natural parents. More recently, foster parents have had to accept the natural parents' presence, the temporariness of the placement, and the ultimate goal of returning the child to his family. Also, foster parents are more often being called upon to care for emotionally disturbed and physically-handicapped children. These altered expectations for the foster parent demand increasing degrees of sophistication and expertise.

Although foster parents do have an increasingly important, socially-recognized function, there are many uncertainties and differing opinions as to what conditions are likely to maximize the quality of care provided by foster parents. Therefore, child welfare practice theory and research on foster parenting has tended to focus on several major areas, as they relate to quality of care. These areas include: method of recruitment and training of foster parents (Gabrovic, 1969; Soffen, 1962; and Taylor et. al., 1969), type and degree of motivation for foster parenthood (Josselyn, 1952; McCoy, 1962; Miller, 1968; and Stanton, 1956), selection of foster parents, more specifically, those factors related to successful and unsuccessful foster parenting, as well as foster parent-child matchings (Bohman, 1957; Etri, 1959; Kinter and Otto, 1964; and Kraus, 1971), and, the dynamics of the role relationships in the child placement setting--foster parent, natural parent, caseworker, foster child (Ambinder et. al., 1962; Fanshel, 1966; Gedanken, 1966; McCoy, 1962a; Williston, 1963; Wires, 1954; Wolins, 1963; and others).

It is important to note that the volume of published articles on foster parenting is reflective of widely different approaches to observing and reporting on this phenomenon. In reviewing the literature Taylor and Starr observed that some authors have taken the approach of "advocating action based on...generalizations from [their] thoughts and feelings", others offered "their informal observations and experiences with foster parents", and still others "reported the results of descriptive and exploratory studies" (Taylor and Starr, 1967, p. 371). There have been very few experimental studies reported. Their observations serve to emphasize the general absence of empiricism

and objectivity in the literature on foster parenting.

The present research project was an attempt to empirically test for the presence of a dynamic variable which may or may not be inherent in the ongoing relationship between foster parents and their caseworkers. More specifically, the purpose was to determine the degree of consensus that exists between foster parents and their caseworkers concerning the expectations held for the foster parent role. The use of social role theory concepts and the development of a strategy to operationalize the consensus variable are central to this purpose.

An underlying assumption in the proposed area of research was the belief that the quality of foster care provided rests in the caseworker-foster parent relationship and the opportunities it offers for a compatible understanding of the rights and responsibilities accorded the foster parent. If understanding and agreement is lacking, this would theoretically suggest the existence of conflict between the foster parent and caseworker (Parsons in Biddle and Thomas, 1966). This factor may prevent the foster home from functioning at its optimum level in helping the child (Close, 1971). However, the limited scope of this research project necessarily excludes the possibility of directly relating the consensus variable to role conflict or the level of care of the foster child. The focus on the expectations held for the foster parent role looks at one side of the foster parent-caseworker relationship. The concept of role reciprocity assumes that caseworkers and foster parents will also have expectations for the role of caseworker. This aspect is outside the parameters of the present study, as well.

## FOSTER PARENT - CASEWORKER RELATIONSHIP

A review of the literature concerning the role of foster parent and its relationship to the role of caseworker reveals a number of sources and possible consequences of role confusion and disagreement. In addition, authors have approached the subject from different role perspectives and have utilized role concepts in varied ways.

Several writers have focused on the differences between natural parenthood and foster parenthood, operating on the premise that a recognition of the differences between the two would increase the understanding of the latter (Kadushin, 1967; McCoy, 1962).

These differences have implications for the relationship between foster parent and caseworker for several reasons. Natural parenting roles are usually learned from infancy onward, in the process of socialization, whereas, the role of foster parent requires learning an additional set of appropriate rights and responsibilities at the time of young adulthood, or later. Prospective foster parents may obtain informal descriptions of the role requirements from community, friends, and relatives, but the formal definitions of the role rest with the child welfare agency (Swindall, 1961; McCoy, 1962a). The agency provides the structure (policies and procedures) out of which the caseworker operates. The caseworker is the link between the agency and foster parent, as well as, the foster child and natural parent. He is basically the person who describes the function of the

agency, and whose ongoing contact and influence will be the greatest in helping foster parents to achieve an understanding of the behavior expected of them (McCoy, 1962). It is probable that the more closely the caseworker and the foster parent work in clarifying the functions of both and developing some common understandings of role expectations for each other, the foster parent would more likely have a clear and congruent conception of his role. However, the caseworker's time is often at a premium and foster-home studies are sometimes perfunctory in nature (McCoy, 1962). These combined factors contribute to the possibility that caseworkers do not provide some foster parents with an accurate conception of the rights and responsibilities of their role.

There are suggestions in the literature that there may be other factors which contribute to inappropriate conceptions for the foster parent role. Williston (1963) undertook a theoretical analysis of the expectations of the foster parent role in relationship to the foster child, natural parents and caseworker. He isolated two incompatible foster parent roles--one as viewed by professional persons and the other as viewed by lay persons. The key factor which differentiated the two roles was related to whether foster parents invested themselves in making the child over into their own image. Some substantiation for this dichotomy has come from an empirical study which found that foster parents and members of the community were more inclined to consider a foster parent as being "most like the child's own parent or adoptive parent" than were social workers (Wolins, 1963, p. 14).

In a similar vein, Weinstein (1960) has made the informal observation that younger foster mothers tended to structure the placement situation in terms of "adoption" and disregarded the agency's

definition of the situation. Older foster mothers (45+) were more likely to structure the situation in terms of "boarding home care" and were more willing to share the child with the agency and his parents. This suggests that foster mothers perceived their roles in different ways.

The practise of foster parents attempting to "shut the agency out" or rejecting agency involvement after a child has been placed may also be related to differing definitions of what is expected of foster parents (Ambinder et. al., 1962; Weinstein, 1960).

To complicate the situation further, the skills and responsibilities required of foster parents specializing in infant care and those caring for non-infants are different. These differences have been shown to be associated with different orientations toward the foster parent role, that is, personal gratification for infant care and a social service orientation for non-infant care (Fanshel, 1966).

When conflicting roles exist for foster parents, the resultant ambiguities and contradictions could seriously hamper the foster parents in arriving at a congruent conception of the expectations held for their behavior. That real differences do exist for some foster parents is supported by the research of Ambinder et. al. (1962).

Through a content analysis of foster parent interviews they found that approximately 25% of the foster parents explicitly stated their role to be that of "natural parent surrogate", about 30% saw themselves as "task-oriented specialists" of various kinds, and the remaining 45% gave uncategorizable replies or were unable to attempt to define their role. The differing perceptions the foster parents had for their role could conceivably influence the way in which they interact with their

caseworkers and their foster children.

To the extent that foster parents and caseworkers have differing expectations for the behavior of foster parents, some misunderstanding, conflict and communication difficulty would be inevitable (Wolins, 1961). The lack of consensus could undermine the trust, acceptance and confidence which would seem basic to a mutual working relationship between the two.

It is evident that professionals, themselves, are not always clear on the caseworkers role in relation to the foster parent. There is general agreement that the relationship is basically not a caseworker-client or treatment relationship, as foster parents are providing a service for the child and his natural family (Babcock, II, 1965; Wires, 1951). But caseworkers are providing a service for the foster child and his natural parents, as well. This has led to a description of the caseworker-foster parent relationship as one which involves a shared responsibility toward the foster child (McCoy, 1962a). Relating to foster parents as equals is one means by which authority problems may be lessened (Rawley, 1950). Nevertheless, the formal authority vested in the caseworker by the agency implies that the caseworker is in a superior position in relationship to the foster parent (Kline and Overstreet, 1956; Radinsky, 1963; Rawley, 1950), rather than on an equal level, as the caseworker has the ultimate power to place or remove a child from the foster parents' care. Also, the caseworker has the responsibility of integrating the total placement setting--natural parent, foster parent, foster child--with the child welfare agency goals. Thus, the relationship between caseworker and foster parent has been defined as being similar to that of an employee--supervisor

and a co-worker on the agency's professional team (Babcock, II, 1965; Gedanken, 1966; Glickman, 1957; Snyderman, 1967, Wolins, 1963).

However, it is maintained that the caseworker-foster parent relationship cannot operate successfully on the worker's authority alone, but that it can be used constructively within the relationship (Meyerowitz, 1955; Wires, 1954).

The issue of varying definitions of the foster parent-caseworker relationship appears to revolve around whether the foster parent is defined in relation to the agency (McCoy, 1962a) or in relation to parenting functions. The most crucial factor in the relationship would not seem to be the choice of one definition over the other, as much as the degree of consistency with which any particular agency's definition of the relationship is enforced by its caseworkers. The questions arise as to whether any one caseworker conveys the agency's definition of the caseworker-foster parent relationship, over time and with all foster parents he interacts with; and whether all agency caseworkers convey the same definition of their relationship with foster parents. If this does not occur, then it is probable that caseworkers and foster parents will not be able to agree on the expectations for the role of the foster parent. The existence of disagreement on this dimension may very well have negative effects on the psychological health of the foster child. One researcher noted that the child's adequate understanding of the placement situation was conducive to the development of personality resources within the child, that is, "adjustment" and "well-being" (Weinstein, 1960, p. 18). If foster parents and caseworkers are not able to convey a consistent and precise conception of the placement situation in their interaction with the

child, or are not communicating with each other, then problems may be likely. Hoffman (1963) has cited poor agency relationships with foster parents as being one of the contributing factors in the development of emotional disturbance in children following agency placement.

Summary: From this review of the literature, the significance of a similar understanding of the expectations held for the foster parent, on the part of caseworkers and their foster parents, appears to be crucial to the smooth functioning of their relationship, the stability of the foster home and the achievement of agency goals. However, the potential for confusion and disagreement seems to exist, in that, the foster parent role is not well-defined. Also, the formal role definers--the casework professionals, as extensions of the agency--may not be in agreement, themselves, as to the expectations they hold for the foster parents they work with. Furthermore, the briefness of the home study process and the possibility of superficial case coverage due to time limitations, may operate to leave foster parents very much on their own to work out the expectations that their role as foster parent entails. These combined factors point to the importance of determining whether or not consensus does in fact exist between caseworkers and their foster parents, in relation to expectations for the foster parent role.

Although the literature suggests that some disagreement exists in this area, in theory and practice, it is difficult to know if this disagreement is manifest in the ongoing relationship between foster parents and their caseworkers. There does not appear to be any published empirical studies which have attempted to test the variable of consensus in the foster parent-caseworker relationship. Therefore, the present researchers were motivated to find some means of determining

the actual degree of consensus that exists between foster parents and their caseworkers on the expectations they hold for the behavior of foster parents.

## CONSENSUS OF EXPECTATIONS

### Definition of Concepts

Much of the literature on foster parenting which has used the term role displays a superficial treatment of it. Some authors have used the term without conceptually defining it (Fanshel, 1966; Swindall, 1961). Such practice is confusing to the reader as there are at least three identifiable usages of this concept (Deutsch and Krauss, 1965; Gross et. al., 1966). Other writers have dealt with role concepts exclusively at a theoretical level (McCoy, 1962a; Williston, 1963). Those who have attempted to operationalize role have done so on the basis of content analysis of interview data obtained from foster parents (Ambinder et. al., 1962). Attempts to explore conceptual strategies have remainder almost non-existent. Gross et. al. emphasized that "theoretical formulations concerned with role analysis must include these three elements--social location [position], behavior and expectation--which are common to most of the definitions of role which have been considered" [by them] (Gross et. al., 1966, p. 18).

**Position:** Position or status are terms which have been employed to characterize and define a person in relation to other people

with whom he interacts. It has been used to designate a socially recognized group of individuals differentiated on the basis of "their common attributes, their common behavior, or the common reactions of others towards them" (Biddle and Thomas, 1966, p.27). Position has been further defined in terms of the physical location of an individual in a system of social relationships. In this definition some have incorporated the normative elements of the relationship structure, whereas others have specified position according to "relational" and "situational" elements, alone (Deutsch and Krauss, 1965; Gross et. al., 1966; Linton, 1936). The latter approach lends itself most appropriately to the present research project. Thus, position is defined as the place an individual, or socially recognized group of individuals, occupies in a system of social relationships. A position incumbent defines one who holds a specified position.

Expectation: An expectation is manifest in the form of a standard, norm or rule for behavior (Biddle and Thomas, 1966). In the actual interaction between related position incumbents, it may be manifest in the form of an internalized value or belief concerning how each should behave. That is, it exists in the minds of the interactants. Therefore, expectation has a cognitive characteristic.

An expectation held for a position incumbent varies both in intensity and direction (Gross et. al., 1966). Essentially, an expectation ranges on a continuum from the totally permissive to the compulsory. It may be a negatively or positively expressed (Biddle and Thomas, 1966). For example, a compulsory expectation may absolutely forbid (negative) or absolutely demand (positive) a specific behavior. The aspects of approval and disapproval are explicit.

Sanctions are implicit. Consequently, the evaluative characteristic of expectation is evident.

An expectation regulates social behavior by prescribing what an incumbent of a specified position "should" or "ought to" do (Biddle and Thomas, 1966). It is dynamic in that it specifies the behavior which one position incumbent may acceptably (or unacceptably) initiate towards a related position incumbent, in a given situation (Deutsch and Krauss, 1965). This represents the prescriptive characteristic of expectation.

Expectation as defined here refers to what an individual or group of individuals believe an incumbent of a specified position should and should not do. It has cognitive, evaluative, and prescriptive characteristics. Included in this definition is the idea that a specified position incumbent may hold an expectation as to what his own behavior should be as incumbent of that position, while at the same time, related position incumbents will also hold an expectation for his behavior in that position.

Associated with every recognized position is not only one expectation, but rather, a set of expectations which govern the behavior of the position incumbent. Social role may then be defined as a set of expectations held for a position incumbent. This is a normative or prescriptive definition of role (Deutsch and Krauss, 1965).

Applying this theoretical framework, the problem area for study may be more precisely defined, as follows:

The position of foster parent in the foster placement system is located and described by its relationship to the positions of foster child, natural parents, and caseworker. The foster parent position is related to that of the foster child through the assumption of a parent-

ing orientation toward the child. Foster parent and natural parent positions are related through their respective ability and inability to care for the child. The foster parent and caseworker positions are related, in that the caseworker and foster parent share overall responsibility for care of the foster child.

The expectations to be examined in this study deal with selected aspects of the foster parent's relationship to natural parents, foster child and caseworker. These aspects do not represent the totality of expectations for the position, therefore, they are not intended to constitute a complete definition of the foster parent role. However, they are intended to be representative of behavioral situations which are basic to being a foster parent. More specifically, expectations here refer to what foster parents as incumbents of a specified position should and should not do in relation to the following areas: goals and objectives of the foster parent role; the child's affectional tie with parental figures; physical care; discipline and limitations with respect to the foster child; and work with the caseworker and the agency (Adapted from Williston, 1963). Thus, these are the areas from which expectations that may be applied to the position of foster parent may be drawn.

The present research objective is to compare the way in which foster parents express the expectations for the position they occupy with the way in which their caseworkers express the expectations that they hold for the foster parent position. Inherent in this comparison is the determination of the degree of consensus of expectations that exist between them.

**Consensus:** Consensus describes an empirical condition of

agreement between a number of people on a given subject. In this study, consensus refers to the expectations applied to the behaviors of a specified position, namely foster parents. Consensus is defined as the degree of agreement between incumbents of the foster parent position and incumbents of the caseworker position regarding expectations for the behavior of the foster parent. This constitutes a very general definition of consensus which is subjected to further refinement through the development of procedures for its operationalization and measurement.

#### Problems in Operationalization

The concept of consensus is of prime importance because the major effort of this research is the attempt to find an effective means of measuring the degree of consensus between one position incumbent (a caseworker) and a number of incumbents of a related position (his foster parents). This objective is complicated by a number of problems.

Gross et. al trace the development of the postulate of consensus on role definitions in the literature of cultural anthropology, social psychology and sociology. This postulate is based on the untested assumption that agreement exists, between individuals whether in a group or society, on the expectations applied to the incumbents of specified positions. Only within the last several decades has there been some recognition by social science theorists that there may be variations in consensus or even dissensus on role definitions. These observations have led Gross et. al. to emphasize that "the degree of consensus in expectations associated with positions is an empirical variable, whose theoretical possibilities until recently have remained

relatively untapped" (Gross et. al., 1966, p. 43). Since the concept of degrees of consensus is a relatively new dimension in social science literature, there is no well-established means of effectively measuring consensus.

If a measure of consensus is an empirical condition of agreement, how does one go about eliciting the expectations of the behavior of foster parents from two distinct population groups in such a way that they are comparable? Asking foster parents and caseworkers what their expectations are poses at least two problems. First, asking a number of persons the same question seldom results in a single answer. Thus, in seeking an empirical demonstration of an expectation held for a specified position one would be led to expect not a single expectation but a number of expectations that may or may not be the same (Gross et. al., 1966). In this sense the degree of consensus on any expectation could be viewed as methodologically problematic. Secondly, in asking respondents what their expectations are for foster parents, it is likely that some respondents will be unable to verbalize them or present them in a coherent way (Gross et. al.). This type of problem is evident in the previously cited study by Ambinder et. al. (1962), in which foster parents were asked to define their role. In this study 45% of the total sample were either unable to do so or gave scattered replies that were uncategorizable.

Given the difficulties involved in measuring consensus of expectations on the basis of answers to interview questions, it would appear that a better method of obtaining a measure of consensus between two different position incumbents would be to control the presentation of the subject matter through a standard questionnaire form. That is,

caseworkers and foster parents would respond to the same subject matter. The subject matter could be presented in the form of statements or descriptive situations concerning the behavior of foster parents. Although this involves a certain amount of arbitrary decision-making on the part of the researchers, the meeting of several basic requirements make it the most useful method.

The subject matter presented to two different groups of position incumbents would have to be sufficiently broad in scope to be familiar to all respondents, that is, they would all have expectations concerning presented aspects of foster parent behavior. However, within this range of familiarity, it would have to be discriminating and precise enough to allow for disagreements in expectations for foster parent behavior to appear, if they exist. Wolins (1963) study on the foster parent role has been criticized for containing items in the interview schedule which were too situation-specific. Thus it was unlikely that all respondents were familiar with the subject matter in some of the items (MacDonald and Ferguson, 1964). This is a pitfall that the present researchers are attempting to avoid.

Similarly, any effort to measure consensus of expectations must take into account that a given expectation varies in intensity and direction (Gross et. al., 1966). Therefore a research instrument which purports to measure expectations must allow respondents to express their reaction to presented subject material along these two dimensions. Hence, asking respondents to react to presented material on the basis of yes-no, agree-disagree takes into account direction but not degrees of intensity. This would be a very crude indicator of expectations on which to base a measure of consensus. A method which would take into account the two dimensions on which expectations may be expressed would

be to ask respondents to react to a continuum composed of gradations of agreement and disagreement. However, by seeking a finer indicator of expressed expectations, the difficulties of obtaining one measure of consensus between two different position incumbents becomes further compounded. A multiplication of response categories increases the number of units that must be included in a measurement of consensus.

The intensity dimension of an expectation must not be confused with the degree of consensus. Although both aspects may be expressed in terms of agreement and disagreement and are interrelated in this study, they are quite different. Intensity of an expectation refers to the degrees by which an expectation may be expressed by one or more individuals. It is an important factor in operationalizing the concept of expectation. Degree of consensus refers to the different types of responses that could occur among a group or groups of individuals, to a given topic or subject. The degree of consensus has been conceptualized as varying from "...near maximum disagreement (dissensus) through polarization (conflict) to virtually unanimous agreement (consensus)" (Biddle and Thomas, 1966, p. 273). Dissensus could be characterized by a situation in which two individuals responded to a given subject by taking positions which are neither opposing extremes nor the same. If they took a position that was diametrically opposite, this would constitute conflict. If both individuals took the same position, it would be indicative of consensus.

This scheme is unsuitable for this research for several reasons. Our research problem is to determine if consensus exists. Also, the aspects of agreement and disagreement add confusion to the operationalization and measurement of expectations. The most important reason for

refuting this conceptualization was that the conditions of consensus and conflict are too rigidly defined whereas conditions of dissensus became a catch-all for those conditions which are not applicable to the other two categories. In short, it is not discriminating enough in terms of the range or relativity of possible responses on a given subject. For these reasons the researchers chose to define degrees of consensus as high, medium and low consensus. Although these categories are arbitrarily defined, they do take in all possible degrees of consensus as defined by Biddle and Thomas (1966).

Another problem is how to measure a single behavioral expectation for the amount of consensus that exists between the response of one position incumbent (caseworker) and the responses of a number of incumbents of a related position (their foster parents). Applying measures of central tendency to the foster parent group is not applicable because they do not account for range of possible responses and variability of actual responses of foster parents, nor do they provide a basis on which to incorporate the caseworker's actual response in obtaining a measure of consensus. Therefore, a measure of the dispersion of foster parents' actual responses in relation to the caseworker's actual response is required. The description of the development and usage of the particular index used for this study is to be included with the data analysis.

Summary: In the previous review of the literature, a number of areas were enumerated which could result in varying degrees of consensus between foster parents and their caseworkers for the role of foster parent. However, there was no indication as to whether these areas result in varying degrees of consensus in the ongoing foster

parent-caseworker relationship. It would seem that if low degrees of consensus exist, difficulties could be created for everyone in the foster placement system of social relationships. Social role theory was used to place the relationship of foster parent and caseworker in focus for study.

The research problem to be empirically tested is stated as follows: To what degree is there consensus of expectations, expressed by foster parents and their caseworkers, for the position of foster parent?

Since no known research in foster parenting has been specifically concerned with this area, a major obstacle was the development of a measure of consensus.

## METHODS

### The Setting of the Study

The agency chosen for this study was a rural child welfare agency which serviced an area of 9,000 square miles. The large service area necessitated an agency structure in which each caseworker carried a generalized caseload in a specific geographical area. A large child welfare agency in a nearby urban area had previously been considered as a possible study setting. However, it was rejected because caseworkers in this agency tended to carry more specialized caseloads and this resulted in a fewer number of caseworkers who worked directly with foster parents. Therefore, the major determinant for basing this study in a rural rather than urban agency, was that the

largest possible sample of caseworkers, working directly with foster parents, could be obtained from the rural agency.

### The Sample

The sample of caseworkers included all caseworkers who carried foster parents in their caseloads. The total sample of caseworkers was twelve.

In order to make the foster parent sample as consistent as possible, foster mothers only were included. Foster fathers were excluded from the research for a number of reasons. First, including foster fathers in the study would have introduced an unnecessary complicating variable. Secondly, the purpose of the study was to compare caseworkers with their foster parents. Thus, it was necessary to ensure a common element in the total sample of foster parents. Had the researchers not stipulated that one foster parent respond to the questionnaire, it would have been possible that in some foster homes one foster parent would respond to the questionnaire, while in other foster homes both would have responded. The easiest way of controlling this was to reduce the sample to foster mothers only. Thirdly, foster mothers were not employed outside the home and therefore had closer contact with the caseworker who visited during the day when the foster father was normally at his place of employment.

So that consensus could be measured, two variables of foster parenting were controlled. These variables were length of time a foster child was in care, and the age of the child in care.

### Length of Time in Care

On the basis of the literature and the comments of the agency in which the study was undertaken, it was believed that there was a difference in expectations for behavior of foster mothers caring for children on a short term basis vis-a-vis a long term basis. Thus, it was necessary to explicitly define what was meant by short term and long term care.

Short term foster care was defined to include homes which were used by the agency to care for children in the following classifications:

i) Children classified as temporary wards of the agency, that is, children for whom the agency had a temporary order of guardianship for a specified length of time. Children in this classification would remain in a foster home until their natural parents were able to assume responsibility for them.

ii) Children for whom the agency had a permanent order of guardianship but who were, at the time of the study, placed in a temporary foster home pending placement in a permanent foster home, an institution, or an adoption home.

iii) Children for whom the agency was assuming responsibility on a non-ward basis. These were children placed in the care of the agency on a non-ward agreement with natural parents until natural parents were able to assume responsibility for the child.

iv) Children under apprehension care of the child welfare agency at the time of the study, pending court hearings.

Long term foster care was defined to include homes in which children, for whom the agency had a permanent order of guardianship

were placed. These were homes in which a child was placed permanently, or until the age of eighteen.

Foster mothers caring for children on a long term basis were excluded from the sample. It was found in theory and practice those foster mothers caring for children on a long term basis, with the understanding that the child would remain with them until the age of eighteen, structured the placement more in terms of an adoption placement than a foster placement. They cared for the child as if he were one of their own children and thus did not rely as heavily on contact with agency or caseworker as did foster mothers caring for a child on a short term basis.

Those foster mothers caring for a child on a short term basis cared for the child with the understanding that the child would be returning to his natural home, or would be placed in another foster home or an institution. In this case, the foster parents would work closely with the caseworker in helping the child adjust to their home, as well as preparing the child for the possibility of relocation. A short term placement foster home necessitates that a caseworker maintain a link between foster home and natural home in serving the needs of the child in care.

Generally, a caseworker would be in close contact with foster parents caring for a child on a short term basis. The role of the foster parent in caring for a child in short term foster care was less clearly defined than in long term care. In short term care the foster mother was responsible for many needs of the child, but had to recognize the rights of the natural parent and work towards maintaining the child's tie with his natural parents. The literature pointed out that

this was a source of role confusion for many foster parents.

In some cases foster homes were used for the care of both long term foster children and short term foster children. These homes were included in the sample. Instructions on the questionnaire requested that respondents answer the questionnaire according to their expectations of short term foster placements.

#### Age of Child in Care

The review of the literature indicated that different expectations existed for foster parents caring for children of different ages. For example, Fanshel (1966) has noted the differences in role orientation between foster mothers caring for infants and foster mothers caring for older children. On the basis of the literature and consultation with the agency, two broad age categories were outlined.

- i) pre-school children (aged five and under)
- ii) children between the ages of six and eighteen

The researchers chose to accept the latter category as the sample on the basis that children between the ages of six and eighteen were similar in that they were school-aged and, therefore, had a larger social environment and degree of independence from foster parents than did pre-school children.

It was recognized that there were differences in expectations for foster parents caring for children of different ages and developmental levels within the six to eighteen year age category. However, in order to maintain a large enough sample size it was not possible to take into account differences within this category by further limiting ages of children. Differences in expectations for children of varying

ages within this category were controlled by constructing items on the questionnaire which were sufficiently broad to be applicable to all children from ages six to eighteen.

Foster homes which were regularly used for short term placement of children between the ages of six and eighteen, but not in use at the time of the study were included in the sample.

In summary, then, the sample of foster parents included foster mothers who had, or have had placed in their homes for a temporary period of time a child, or children between the ages of six and eighteen.

The sample was taken from the case loads of all caseworkers (twelve) working with foster parents. The total sample of foster mothers was ninety-four.

#### Research Instrument

In order to operationalize the consensus variable a research instrument was developed. The research instrument was a twenty-five item questionnaire.

From an extensive review of the literature, a number of dimensions of foster parenting emerged as areas of conflict or lack of clarity between caseworkers and foster parents. Williston (1963) drew these areas together and classified them. The present researchers adapted those areas of conflict, as outlined by Williston, which were pertinent to this study. The areas were then modified using other sources in the literature to form the following categories:

- i) Goals and objectives of foster parent role.
- ii) Child's affectional tie with parental figures. (This

related to the child's identification with and relationship to foster parents as well as to natural parents).

- iii) Discipline and limitations.
- iv) Physical care of the foster child.
- v) Work with caseworker and agency.

Five items specific to behavior of foster parents were developed for each of the above categories. Each item was drawn from various sources in the literature, and refined to be specific to and representative of the category to which it pertained. Precautions were taken to develop items which would elicit behavioral expectations rather than attitudes.

Questionnaire items were identical for foster parents and caseworkers to ensure that responses would be comparable between the groups. Items were stated consistently, all beginning with the phrase "Foster parents should" in order to emphasize normative aspects of expectations. A number of items were negatively worded in order to discourage a possible response pattern of agreement or disagreement to all items.

The questionnaire items were in the form of statements. Six possible response categories ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree were provided for each item. The following example illustrates the general format of the questionnaire items.

Sample item:

Foster parents should use the social worker as an assistant in helping them to care for a foster child.

☐  
Strongly  
Agree

☐  
Moderately  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Disagree

☐  
Moderately  
Disagree

☐  
Strongly  
Disagree

An item which was judged by researchers to be not anxiety provoking was chosen as the first item on the questionnaire. This was done to introduce the questionnaire in a non-threatening manner. The remaining twenty-four items appeared in random order.

The questionnaire was pre-tested with the Executive Director and supervisors in the agency in which the study was carried out, as well as with three foster mothers who were subsequently excluded from the study sample. The purpose of pre-testing was to determine if the items and instructions were clear to the respondents. The interview following the pre-test indicated that some changes were necessary to ensure greater clarity of meaning. Questions were then revised and refined to the final form.

A coding system was developed whereby each caseworker could be matched with his group of foster mothers for the purpose of data analysis, while at the same time maintaining the confidentiality of all respondents. The coding was carried out by a person unrelated to the research in order to ensure absolute confidentiality of caseworkers and foster mothers. A code number was placed on the lower left corner of the first page of the questionnaire.

#### Procedures and Data Collection

During the week prior to the mailing of the questionnaire, a letter was sent to all foster mothers included in the study sample from the Executive Director of the agency in which the study was carried out. The letter introduced the research team, explained the nature of the study, encouraged participation in the study, and assured the confidentiality of all foster mothers. The letter also informed the foster

mothers that the results of the study would be published in the foster parent newsletter. The same information was given to caseworkers.

The material which respondents received with the questionnaire was:

i) Informative letter. A letter enclosed with the questionnaire sent to foster parents introduced the questionnaire, stressed the confidentiality of the study, clearly spelled out that the questionnaire was intended for foster mothers, and thanked the foster mothers for their anticipated participation. The letter was personally signed by one member of the research team. (See Appendix A-1).

A letter enclosed with the questionnaire for caseworkers was essentially the same as that sent to foster parents but slightly altered to be appropriate to caseworkers. (See Appendix A-2).

ii) Instructions. Instructions included with the questionnaire for foster mothers asked that responses be based on their own experience of caring for foster children between the ages of six and eighteen who were placed temporarily in their homes. (See Appendix A-3).

Instructions for caseworkers were slightly altered in wording in order to be appropriate to the caseworker's experience in working with foster mothers. (See Appendix A-4).

iii) Example questions. Two example questions were provided and were identical for caseworkers and foster parents.

iv) Self-addressed stamped envelope.

Two weeks after the questionnaire had been mailed, a reminder notice was sent to all respondents who had not returned the questionnaire.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine whether consensus between foster parents and their caseworkers existed on the expectations applied to the foster parent position.

In order to test consensus between caseworkers and their foster mothers, a twenty-five item questionnaire was developed. Questionnaires were sent to twelve caseworkers and ninety-four foster mothers. Twelve questionnaires (100%) were returned from caseworkers and eighty-four (90%) were returned from foster mothers. This was a very good response for a mail-in type of questionnaire. Two questionnaires returned from foster mothers were excluded because they did not comply with the defined specifications for the foster parent sample. Thus, the total responses analyzed were those of twelve caseworkers and eighty-two foster mothers.

A code number had been placed on each questionnaire prior to mailing. The code number was used in order that each caseworker could be matched with those foster mothers in his caseload for the purpose of analysis. In this way, it was possible to compare the response of each caseworker with the foster mothers with whom he worked. Returned questionnaire responses were separated out into twelve groups. Each group was composed of one caseworker and his respective foster mothers.

In order to test the hypothesis concerning consensus of

expectations, each item on the questionnaire related to specific behavioral expectations of foster parents. As was explained in the section on methods, six response categories were provided ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The six response categories were developed in order that the intensity and direction of behavioral expectations could be expressed. It was necessary to know not only whether the caseworker and foster mothers were in agreement, but how closely they were in agreement.

The concept of consensus referred to the degree of agreement between caseworkers and their foster mothers on given behavioral expectations. Consensus of expectations was operationalized and expressed through a statistical index. Agreement between each caseworker-foster mother group was determined to be best represented by a measure of dispersion of foster mother responses around the category in which the caseworker responded. Within each caseworker-foster mother group dispersion of responses varied from item to item. On some items, responses of caseworker and foster mothers were in close agreement, while on others, responses of caseworker and foster mother were divergent.

It was reasonable to assume that consensus was low if high dispersion of foster mothers' responses occurred around the caseworkers response. If no dispersion or variability occurred, then consensus was judged to be high.

For the purpose of this study, consensus was operationalized as the degree of variability or dispersion of foster mothers' responses around the response category of the caseworker. This is mathematically expressed as follows:

$$\text{CONSENSUS INDEX} = \text{C.I.} = \sum_{i=1}^{i=6} (d_i \cdot r)$$

where d is the number of categories away from the category of the worker's response,

r is the frequency of the response of the foster mother's response,

$\sum_{i=1}^{i=6}$  indicates that the operation in the brackets is

repeated for all response categories.

The formula works in such a way that where high dispersion around a caseworker's response exists, the C.I. value is high. This is defined as low consensus. Where little or no dispersion exists around the caseworker's response, the C.I. value is low, indicating high consensus.

The following two items illustrate the use of the Consensus Index. These items are actual calculations in caseworker-foster mother group twelve. (See Table 1)

#### GROUP 12: ITEM 18

Foster parents should try to understand a foster child's individual problems.

No. of f.m.  
responses in  
each category

Caseworker  
response

6	0	0	0	0	0
X					

Strongly Agree   Mod. Agree   Slightly Agree   Slightly Disagree   Mod. Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Applying the C.I. Formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{C.I.} &= \sum_{i=1}^{i=6} (d_i \cdot r) \\
 &= (1.0) + (2.0) + (3.0) + (4.0) + (5.0) \\
 &= 0
 \end{aligned}$$

On the above item, foster mothers and caseworker were in total agreement on the behavioral expectation. The C.I. value was zero, indicating high consensus.

In contrast, the following item indicates low consensus in the same group, on another item.

GROUP 12: ITEM 20

Foster parents should try to prevent a foster child from becoming like his natural parents, if the natural parents' behavior is known to be undesirable.

No. of f.m.  
responses in  
each category

4	2	0	0	0	0
					X

Caseworker  
response

Strongly Agree    Mod. Agree    Slightly Agree    Slightly Disagree    Mod. Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Applying the C.I. Formula

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{C.I.} &= \sum_{i=1}^{i=6} (d_i \cdot r) \\
 &= (1.0) + (2.0) + (3.0) + (4.2) + (5.4) \\
 &= 28
 \end{aligned}$$

This item indicates that where the foster mothers and caseworker are

not in agreement, in fact are situated at extremes of the scale, the C.I. formula yields a high score, indicating low consensus.

A C.I. score was calculated in the above manner for each of the twenty-five items in each of the twelve caseworker-foster mother groups.

Since the sample sizes of the twelve caseworker-foster mother groups varied from  $n = 3$  to  $n = 14$ , the values of the C.I. score were not comparable between groups. In order to make the C.I. values comparable between groups, it was necessary to standardize all values.

Standardization of C.I. values involved a process of calculating the maximum C.I. value for each caseworker-foster mother group. The maximum C.I. scores (referred to as C.I. max.) were calculated by trial and error. In each group, all possible combinations of caseworker-foster mother responses were calculated in order to arrive at the maximum C.I. value. The following examples illustrate the method used to obtain the maximum C.I. value, using caseworker-foster mother group 12, where  $n = 6$ .

a)

No. of f.m. responses in each category	0	0	1	1	2	2
Caseworker response	X					

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{C.I. max.} &= \sum_{i=1}^{i=6} (d_i \cdot r) \\
 &= (1.0) + (2.1) + (3.1) + (4.2) + (5.2) \\
 &= 23
 \end{aligned}$$

b)

No. of f.m.  
responses in  
each category

0	0	0	0	2	4
X					

Caseworker  
response

$$\begin{aligned} \text{C.I. max.} &= (1.0) + (2.0) + (3.0) + (4.2) + (5.4) \\ &= 28 \end{aligned}$$

c)

No. of f.m.  
responses in  
each category

0	0	0	0	1	5
X					

Caseworker  
response

$$\begin{aligned} \text{C.I. max.} &= (1.0) + (2.0) + (3.0) + (4.1) + (5.5) \\ &= 29 \end{aligned}$$

d)

No. of f.m.  
responses in  
each category

0	0	0	0	0	6
X					

Caseworker  
response

$$\begin{aligned} \text{C.I. max.} &= (1.0) + (2.0) + (3.0) + (4.0) + (5.6) \\ &= 30 \end{aligned}$$

Various other combinations of responses were calculated as above. C.I. max. represents the maximum dispersion which occurs in a given group. Standardization was accomplished by multiplying each of the C.I. values by a ratio of 100 over the C.I. max. This was expressed mathematically, as follows:

$$\text{Standardized C.I. or S.C.I.} = \text{C.I.} \times \frac{100}{\text{C.I. max.}}$$

The use of this formula is illustrated, utilizing the same items as were used to indicate calculation of the C.I.

GROUP 12: ITEM 18

$$\text{C.I.} = 0$$

$$\text{C.I. max.} = 30$$

$$\text{S.C.I.} = 0 \times \frac{100}{30}$$

$$= 0$$

GROUP 12: ITEM 20

$$\text{C.I.} = 28$$

$$\text{C.I. max.} = 30$$

$$\text{S.C.I.} = 28 \times \frac{100}{30}$$

$$= 93$$

The standardization formula was applied to all twenty-five items in each of the twelve groups. The range of values possible for each of the items in all groups was 0-100. Thus on a scale of 0 - 100, 0 = perfect consensus, 100 = no consensus.

The S.C.I. values are shown in Table 1 (p.36). The extreme

left vertical column of Table 1 shows the twelve caseworker-foster mother groups. The extreme right vertical column shows the calculated mean of all items for each group. The top horizontal row of numbers are item numbers. The bottom horizontal row shows the mean standardized C.I. value for each item.

The extreme right column of Table 1 shows the mean C.I. values for all items in each caseworker-foster mother group. The groups were arranged in order from highest mean C.I. value at the uppermost part of the table, to lowest mean C.I. value at the lower part of the Table. The mean standardized C.I. value in the caseworker-foster mother groups (an average of all items within each group) ranged from 17-33. This indicates that some caseworker-foster mother groups, on the average, were in greater agreement than other caseworker-foster mother groups. That is, there was a range of consensus among the groups.

On examining closely the vertical columns of each item as well as the mean standardized C.I. value for each item (bottom horizontal row), it is noteworthy that certain items (e.g. 5, 11, 15, 18, 23) showed consistently high consensus among all caseworker-foster mother groups, while other items (e.g. 9, 16, 17, 24, 25) showed consistently low consensus among all caseworker-foster mother groups.

The content of the items ranged from general to specific. Generality and specificity of items were related to the category to which the items pertained.

It was found that on those items which were quite general, foster mothers and their caseworkers were often in close agreement. The following two items showed high consensus.

TABLE 1  
STANDARDIZED CONSENSUS INDEX VALUES FOR EACH QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM WITHIN EACH  
OF THE TWELVE CASEWORKER-FOSTER MOTHER (CW-FM) GROUPS.

CW-FM Groups	Item Numbers																									Mean SCI Values of Groups.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
1	4	36	8	36	0	16	8	24	32	24	8	8	0	24	0	44	24	0	4	8	12	8	0	36	68	17
2	23	10	11	29	0	21	11	21	30	14	9	7	4	19	0	30	23	1	39	23	24	13	0	63	18	18
3	7	7	0	53	7	13	20	13	53	20	0	0	0	40	7	53	47	0	7	7	13	20	0	20	47	18
4	14	20	0	37	20	31	37	37	14	34	11	11	0	31	0	26	40	3	14	20	14	6	6	57	14	20
5	3	20	17	46	0	26	40	23	23	11	9	3	37	29	3	34	20	0	34	14	14	23	0	49	31	21
6	11	11	20	28	14	17	60	17	40	23	14	9	3	14	0	66	20	6	31	17	46	17	0	54	57	24
7	13	13	27	20	13	47	40	20	20	40	7	13	0	7	7	47	67	7	13	27	13	20	7	47	80	25
8	24	15	7	33	0	27	69	36	60	45	13	19	5	28	0	29	20	0	37	29	40	12	0	21	69	26
9	24	16	0	52	4	20	36	48	84	32	4	0	0	36	0	44	48	4	28	80	12	8	0	48	52	27
10	16	28	16	32	0	28	16	44	20	40	8	4	8	56	4	40	40	4	24	68	48	48	0	40	76	28
11	40	4	4	28	0	48	72	52	96	12	16	0	0	32	0	52	36	0	28	20	68	16	0	64	88	31
12	3	23	3	40	0	50	13	70	80	57	3	13	0	67	0	33	70	0	10	93	43	20	0	43	90	33
Mean SCI of each item	15	17	9	36	5	29	35	34	46	29	8	7	5	32	2	42	38	2	22	34	29	18	1	45	57	

The extreme left column describes the twelve caseworker-foster mother groups.  
The extreme right column shows the mean standardized C. I. value for each caseworker-foster mother group.  
The lower row is the calculated mean standardized C. I. value for each item.

- ITEM 1: Foster parents should act as substitute parents for a foster child.
- ITEM 18: Foster parents should try to understand a foster child's individual problems.

Consensus decreased, however, as specificity of items increased. The following items showed little agreement or low consensus between foster mothers and their caseworkers.

- ITEM 17: Foster parents should accept that a social worker is more knowledgeable in matters of child care than themselves.
- ITEM 24: Foster parents should not allow a foster child to contact the social worker on his own.

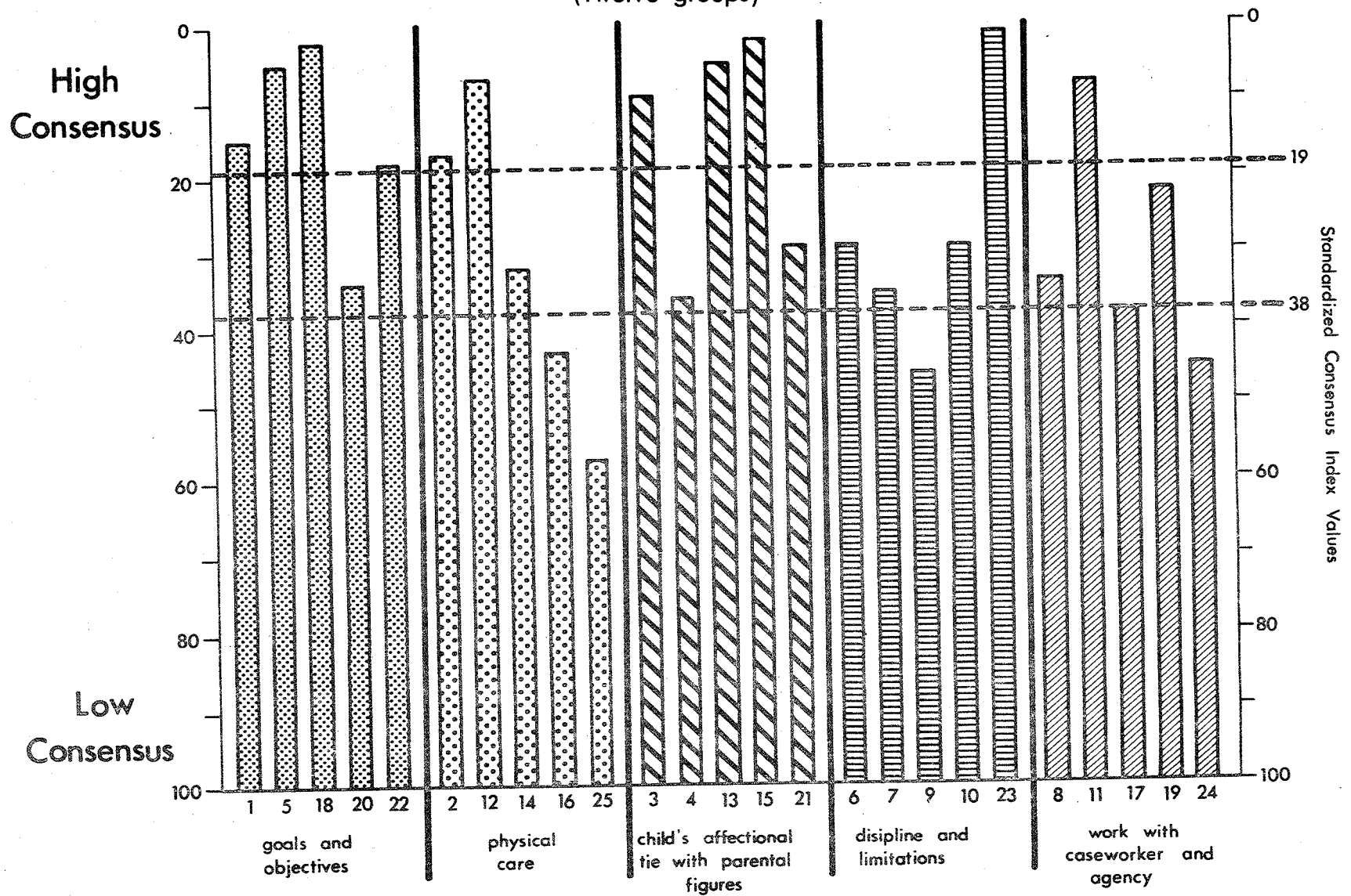
This would indicate that it was easier for foster mothers and caseworkers to agree on general areas of foster parenting than on the more basic and practical aspects.

The range of mean standardized C.I. values for each item (tabulated in Table 1) is illustrated in Figure 1. In this graph, items have been placed into the categories they represent. The five categories are separated by vertical lines on the graph. The names of the categories are inserted below the item numbers on the lower part of the graph.

Mean S.C.I. values on the items ranged from 1-57 on a possible continuum from 0-100. In order to indicate relative values of high, medium, and low consensus, the graph was divided into three segments, as illustrated by the horizontal dotted lines drawn at S.C.I. value 19, and S.C.I. value 38. Mean Standardized values above the value of nineteen were arbitrarily defined as high consensus. Mean S.C.I. values between nineteen and thirty-eight were arbitrarily defined as

FIGURE I

Mean Standardized Consensus Index Values  
between foster mothers and their caseworkers  
(twelve groups)



medium consensus, and mean S.C.I. values under thirty-eight were arbitrarily defined as low consensus.

Figure 1 illustrates that 11 items were in the range of high consensus, 9 items were in the range of medium consensus, and 5 items were in the range of low consensus.

As has been indicated in Methods, the 25 items on the questionnaire consisted of 5 items from each of five different categories or dimensions of foster parenting which were found to be important. In analysis of data, questionnaire items were clustered according to the behavioral category which each item represented. The mean value was then calculated for each category of items as illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
MEAN CONSENSUS SCORES OF FIVE CATEGORIES  
OF FOSTER PARENTING

<u>Categories of Items</u>	<u>Mean Value</u>
Goals and Objectives of Foster Parent Role	14.8
Physical Care	31.0
Child's Affectional Tie With Parental Figures	16.2
Discipline and Limitations	28.0
Work with Caseworker and Agency	29.4

Table 2 shows that some categories of items had higher mean S.C.I. values than others. The results indicate that within the two categories, goals and objectives of foster parent role, and child's

affectional tie with parental figures, a relatively high degree of consensus existed, while in the categories of physical care, discipline and limitations, and work with caseworker and agency, a lower degree of consensus was evident.

Items were carefully developed to be specific to the five categories outlined. However, because of the nature of the categories, some items were more specific than others. The items pertaining to goals and objectives of foster parenting as well as child's affectional tie and identification with parental figures were very general in comparison to items relating to physical care, discipline and limitations, and work with the caseworker and agency which were more specific.

Examination of Table 2, therefore yields essentially the same results as did the examination of Table 1. Those categories which were very specific in nature showed the lowest consensus on Figure 1, and showed the highest Mean S.C.I. values, indicating low consensus. Those categories which were general in nature showed the highest consensus in Figure 1, and showed the lowest Mean S.C.I. values, indicating high consensus.

### CONCLUSIONS

The goals of this research project were two-fold. The first was the operationalization of the variable consensus while the second, the determination of the degree of consensus between foster mothers and their caseworkers, was dependent on the first. Both goals were successfully accomplished through this study.

The research question posed in this study was: To what degree is there consensus of expectations expressed by foster parents and their caseworkers for the position of foster parent?

In order to answer this research question it was necessary to find some method of operationalizing and measuring the consensus variable. In this study consensus referred to the expectations applied to the behaviors of the foster parent position. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a method of determining whether one caseworker and the foster parents with whom he worked were in agreement on the expectations for foster parent behavior. This was accomplished through the development of a twenty-five item questionnaire relating to specific behavioral expectations of the foster parent position. A measure called the Consensus Index was developed to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire. Through this measure, it was possible to compare the responses of each caseworker and his respective foster mother group.

The results of the analysis of questionnaire data indicated that the Consensus Index was sensitive to the range and variability of foster mothers' responses in relation to their caseworkers. Thus the consensus variable was operationalized with precision and yielded an answer to the research question. Standardized Consensus Index values indicated degrees of consensus from total agreement to almost total disagreement between caseworker-foster mother groups. Standardized Consensus Index values ranged from 0-93 on a continuum of 0-100, indicating a range of agreement.

Degrees of consensus were established between each caseworker-foster mother group for each of the twenty-five items of the questionnaire.

The results indicated that variations in high and low consensus were related to generality and specificity of the questionnaire items. Furthermore, variations in high and low consensus were related to generality and specificity of the categories to which the items were appropriate. It was found that the more specific and concrete the category, and the corresponding items, the lower the degree of consensus.

In some items, the Consensus Index values reflected a consistently high degree of consensus for all caseworker-foster mother groups, whereas in other items consistently low consensus was indicated. In addition, some caseworkers were in much closer agreement with their foster mothers than other caseworkers.

Literature relating to role theory has indicated that role conflict can lead to tension and disharmony in social systems. Literature on foster parenting has theorized that conflict or lack of agreement exists between foster parents and caseworkers. This study has empirically illustrated that areas of conflict or low consensus do exist.

These findings have implications for child welfare services to foster children. Low consensus or conflict between foster parents and caseworkers could negatively affect the quality of care the foster child may receive.

In summary, this study has indicated that in this particular child welfare agency certain areas of foster parenting have very low degrees of consensus between caseworkers and foster parents, whereas in other areas a high degree of consensus was manifest. On the basis of these findings concerning the varying degrees of consensus between

foster parents and their caseworkers, it is evident that there are several areas for additional research. Further testing of the Consensus Index and exploration of other methods of analysis should be undertaken. Areas that were characterized by low consensus should be examined in more depth. Also, it would be helpful to compare a measure of consensus with other variables such as quality of care of the foster child. Comparing and contrasting a similar study in a rural and urban child welfare agency would be of value in determining if there are significant differences between the two.

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## APPENDIX A-1

February 11, 1972

Dear Foster Mother,

We trust you have recently received a letter from Mr. \_ \_ \_ \_ (Executive Director of the child welfare agency) explaining that a study is being carried out in \_ \_ \_ \_ (name of child welfare agency). Enclosed you will find the questionnaire which was referred to. As Mr. \_ \_ \_ \_ explained, your response is strictly confidential and will not be made available to the agency or used for evaluation purposes.

This questionnaire is intended for foster mothers only. We would ask that you as a foster mother respond to the questionnaire according to your own personal beliefs without consulting other foster parents or social workers.

Please return your questionnaire promptly in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

We appreciate your taking the time to respond to this questionnaire and thank you sincerely for your co-operation.

Yours truly,

(Mrs.) Linda Church.

## APPENDIX A-2

February 11, 1972

Dear Caseworker,

You will find enclosed a questionnaire on foster parenting which we explained to you on Monday, February 7, 1972. We would like to further emphasize the confidentiality of the information you provide.

We hope that you find the items on the questionnaire interesting and relevant. Should you have any problems regarding the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to call collect to Linda Church (phone number) or Joyce Carlson (phone number). When completed, please return in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. We appreciate your taking the time to respond to this questionnaire and thank you sincerely for your co-operation.

## APPENDIX A-3

INSTRUCTIONS

Based on your experience of caring for foster children, between the ages of 6 and 18 years, we would like you to respond to the following statements. Answer as if the foster child(ren), you have or have had in your home, was placed there for a temporary period of time: that is, it was not a permanent placement.

Please respond according to what you believe foster parents should do, in their role as foster parents.

-----

Please read each statement carefully and then place an X in the box which most nearly represents what you think foster parents should do. It is important that you reply to all statements. There is no right or wrong answer.

EXAMPLE 1

Foster parents should teach a foster child acceptable ways of behaving.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

EXAMPLE 2

Foster parents should use the social worker as an assistant in helping them to care for a foster child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

## APPENDIX A-4

INSTRUCTIONS

Based on your experience in working with short-term care foster parents and temporary placements of foster children between the ages of 6 and 18 years, we would like you to respond to the following statements.

Please respond according to what you believe foster parents should do in their role as foster parents, rather than, what foster parents actually do.

-----

Please read each statement carefully and then place an X in the box which most nearly represents what you think foster parents should do. It is important that you reply to all statements. There is no right or wrong answer.

EXAMPLE 1

Foster parents should teach a foster child acceptable ways of behaving.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

EXAMPLE 2

Foster parents should use the social worker as an assistant in helping them to care for a foster child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1. Foster parents should act as substitute parents for a foster child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Foster parents should, wherever possible, use the clothing a foster child brings to their home.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. Foster parents should insist that a foster child not talk about his natural parents.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. Foster parents should not let themselves get strongly attached to a foster child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. Foster parents should care for a foster child as if he were one of their own children.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. Foster parents should adopt those methods of disciplining a foster child, which have been helpful in the child's natural home or previous foster home. Respond as if the natural home or previous foster home is known.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. Foster parents should have total responsibility for disciplining a foster child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. Foster parents should always follow the instructions of the social worker in caring for a foster child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. Foster parents should make sure that a foster child behave in the same way that their own children would.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. Foster parents should maintain the rules that a foster child's natural parents or former foster parents have set, provided they are within reason (for example, bed-time hour). Respond as if the natural home or previous foster home is known.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. Foster parents should work closely with the social worker in helping a foster child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. Foster parents should be responsible for a foster child's general medical and dental appointments.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. Foster parents should tell a foster child that they are the only people who will love him.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. Foster parents should not try to change a foster child's manner of dress from what he likes to wear.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. Foster parents should criticize (find fault with) a foster child's natural parents in front of the child.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. Foster parents should not have a foster child's hair cut, if the child strongly objects.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

17. Foster parents should accept that a social worker is more knowledgeable in matters of child care than themselves.

☐  
Strongly  
Agree

☐  
Moderately  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Disagree

☐  
Moderately  
Disagree

☐  
Strongly  
Disagree

18. Foster parents should try to understand a foster child's individual problems.

☐  
Strongly  
Agree

☐  
Moderately  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Disagree

☐  
Moderately  
Disagree

☐  
Strongly  
Disagree

19. Foster parents should contact the social worker only when they find they are no longer able to care for a foster child.

☐  
Strongly  
Agree

☐  
Moderately  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Disagree

☐  
Moderately  
Disagree

☐  
Strongly  
Disagree

20. Foster parents should try to prevent a foster child from becoming like his natural parents, if the natural parents' behavior is known to be undesirable.

☐  
Strongly  
Agree

☐  
Moderately  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Agree

☐  
Slightly  
Disagree

☐  
Moderately  
Disagree

☐  
Strongly  
Disagree

21. Foster parents should allow a foster child all possible opportunities to have contact with his natural parents, (for example, letters, phone calls, visits), provided this is alright with the social worker.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. Foster parents should help a foster child to understand that he will live in their home for a temporary period of time.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

23. Foster parents should help a foster child understand that even though they discipline him, they still care about him.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

24. Foster parents should not allow a foster child to contact the social worker on his own.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

25. Foster parents should, first and foremost, make sure that a foster child is clean and tidy in appearance.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree