

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

CHILD REARING PRACTICES

A study of the levels of permissiveness in relation to factors of education, age and ethnicity, in the child rearing practices of families known to five greater Winnipeg social agencies.

BEING A REPORT OF A RESEARCH
PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
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ABSTRACT

This research project was designed to study the patterns of child rearing practices and the relationship to factors of age, education and ethnicity of the mothers of families known to five of greater Winnipeg's major social agencies.

The study was based on data obtained in face-to-face interviews with 83 families, selected according to stratified systematic random sampling procedure.

The findings revealed that one-fourth (25.3 per cent) of the families were permissive, approximately one-fifth (19.3 per cent) were non-permissive, approximately one-tenth (9.6 per cent) were extremely permissive, and that almost one-half (45.8 per cent) were inconsistent in their child rearing practices.

It was found that the proportion of mothers permissive in their child rearing practices increased as the educational level increased. Age of the mother was not found to be a significant factor and ethnicity of the mother was also found to be relatively insignificant in relationship to

child rearing practices.

The findings showed an increasing progression of inconsistency in the areas of infant feeding, toilet training, and sex training respectively, with the latter area showing up as a particularly sensitive aspect of child rearing. It was found that a high proportion of the families inconsistent in the sex training area were also inconsistent in one other area of child rearing practices.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research project was to study the levels of permissiveness in the child rearing practices of the client group served by five¹ of the major social welfare agencies in greater Winnipeg, to determine how these varied and with what these variations seemed to be associated.

Concern has been expressed, both by members within and outside the profession of social work, whether the system of social welfare services has been encouraging or creating dependency in recipients of social agency services.² It has been observed that second and third - and sometimes more - generation families are known to one or another of the social agencies. It has been suggested that this may be due to inadequacy of treatment methods employed by social agencies or due to rates of financial assistance combined with the nature of rehabilitation methods. On the other hand it is also

¹These agencies were: The City of Winnipeg Department of Public Welfare, the Manitoba Department of Public Welfare (Mothers' Allowances Branch), the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Juvenile and Family Court, and The Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg.

²Helen Harris Perlman, "Are We Creating Dependency?" Social Service Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 (September, 1960). pp. 323-333.

known that clients whose parents have not been known to social agencies are in need and apply for social services as well.

As it was not feasible to study the agencies' functions or methods of providing services to determine if a relationship with the encouragement or creation of dependency existed, another approach seemed to be indicated.

It is recognized that there are many factors that will influence and serve to determine whether a person will mature emotionally to the degree where he is able to function in socially ascribed and acquired roles without marked inclination to rely on others for advice, guidance or support. Theory about the emotional, physiological and social developmental process shows that one of the prime factors relating to dependency is the child rearing practices to which the child is subjected or in which he participates at various stages of his or her development.³

Clinical observations and theory reveal that child rearing practices expressed in behaviour which expects either too much or not enough of the child at a

³This is detailed in Chapter II.

specific chronological age or level of development may predispose or cause dependency and/or attitudes towards others which lead to hostile and/or anti-social behaviour.⁴ It was thus thought that a study of the child rearing practices of these families would provide information regarding the possible creation of emotional dependency and as such it would serve both to provide social workers with information helpful in their practice of serving families and also add to the development of knowledge on which the practice of social work is based.

The study encompassed families which were in receipt of services from one or more of the five major family agencies serving greater Winnipeg. It was carried out by a group of fifteen students in their Master's year at the School of Social Work at the University of Manitoba during the 1963-64 academic year. The study formed part of a more comprehensive project in which two other aspects of family functioning were studied, namely economic and kinship practices. This study thus represents one of three aspects of family functioning which were of concern to the whole research group consisting of forty-five students. To study the family functioning

⁴See for example Josselyn, Erikson, Finch, documented in Chapter II.

of the client group in these three areas was seen as significant in terms of adding to current social work thought which is based on the notion of family-centred diagnosis and treatment. Members of the child rearing research section saw child rearing practices as an important area of study because the early socialization period of the child within the family role network is regarded by authorities as providing the basis for determining whether the child will develop in the direction of emotional independence or in the direction of dependency.⁵

Prior to embarking on the research project, group members heard a lecture from an instructor in casework dealing with prevailing social work concepts of the family and the interaction of its members within the family unit. In subsequent group discussions, group members became increasingly aware that knowledge from courses of the social work curriculum proved to be of immense value in formulating and outlining the area to be studied. The course on behaviour disorders of children and adults, and the sequence of courses dealing with normal development of individuals, proved to be of great help in delineating the focus and scope of the study. The group was also fortunate in having members with experience in

⁵Refer to Erickson and Josselyn, Chapter II.

social work practice in the family social welfare fields.

Group discussions led to the conclusion that the study would focus on the degree of permissiveness observed in the child rearing practices of the families studied. Permissiveness was considered to exist on a continuum with non-permissive behaviour at one end and extremely permissive behaviour at the other end of the continuum. It was defined in terms of the quality of the demand that is made upon the child to encourage him or her to respond in the desired way in an area where change in behaviour is sought. For example, demands are made on the child to change his behaviour in the manner of taking food, in the mode of elimination etc. One parent might make only very light or no demands on the child to engender change, whereas another might be very demanding in encouraging change. The median point was defined for our purposes as making the demands for self control in accordance with the child's development level. It was decided to study the degree of permissiveness with respect to three specific areas of child development occurring in the period from birth to six years, namely:

- 1) infant feeding, 2) toilet training and 3) sex training.

This period of child rearing was chosen because theory regarding child development shows that this formative period of life is most significant in influencing

the personality of the child.⁶ Determinants of behaviour are largely limited during this period to interaction with members of the family unit. The three specific areas of child rearing were chosen because changeworthy behaviour is possible and is expected from the child on the part of the parents. Thus the parent in our society, primarily through the relationship between mother and child, expect that the child will change his or her mode of taking in food, of eliminating body waste products and in dealing with sexual curiosity. Mothers will react and behave in a variety of ways toward the child in attempting to bring about a desired change in the child's behaviour in these areas.

Further considerations and discussions led members of the group to postulate that the majority of the families to be studied would probably be either very permissive or non-permissive in their attempts to induce changeworthy behaviour in the child. Many of the families were expected to be emotionally dependent as they themselves were in need of emotional support.

Their need for social services was thought to imply that they had been operating under considerable stress as a family unit and this could be expected to be reflected in child rearing practices.

⁶Irene M. Josselyn, Psychosocial Development of Children (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1948), p. 19.

These considerations led to formulation of the following hypothesis: A greater proportion of the families studied will show non-permissiveness or extreme permissiveness rather than permissiveness in their child rearing practices, and these will vary with education, age and ethnicity of the families.

"Permissiveness" for purposes of this study is defined as making the demands for self-control placed upon the child to correspond with his or her developmental level.

"Non-permissiveness" in this study means making the demands for self-control placed upon the child greater than can be expected of the child at his or her developmental level.

"Extreme permissiveness" in this study refers to making the demands for self-control placed upon the child less than can be expected of the child at his or her developmental level. Thus, for example, if a mother began to toilet train the child before the child was able to walk unaided, and thus before he or she was able to exercise muscular control of sphincter muscles, the mother was regarded as non-permissive in this regard, because she was making a demand for self-control greater than what could be expected of the child at his or her developmental level.

Sub-hypotheses were then formulated with respect

to each area in which child rearing practices were studied. This was undertaken because the three areas under investigation are fairly distinct stages of a child's development and it was conceivable that a parent might be non or extremely permissive in one area of development and not in another. Furthermore, it was expected that the results would be of interest to future researchers and to practitioners in the profession of social work.

The following sub-hypotheses were accordingly postulated:

1. A greater proportion of families studied will show non-permissiveness or extreme permissiveness rather than permissiveness in their feeding practices of their children under two years of age.
2. A greater proportion of families studied will show non-permissiveness or extreme permissiveness rather than permissiveness in their toilet training practices of their children.
3. A greater proportion of families studied will show non-permissiveness or extreme permissiveness rather than permissiveness in the sex training of their children.

"Feeding practices" for purposes of this study are considered to be the reactions of the parents toward the

behaviour of the child relating to the child's intake of food.

"Toilet training" is considered as the reactions of the parents toward the behaviour of the child relating to the transition from the involuntary to the voluntary mode of elimination.

"Sex training" refers to the reactions of the parents to the inquisitiveness about sex and the masturbatory activities of children aged three to six years.

It was recognized that a number of variable factors would have a bearing on the pattern of child rearing practices. A number of these, such as ethnic origin, educational level of parents, size of family, child's ordinal position within the family, occupational or class level, were considered. However, from these only three were selected: educational level of the mother, age of the mother at time of giving birth to the child in relation to whom child rearing practices were studied, and the ethnic origin of the families. Other factors were either considered to be less indicative of variations in child rearing practices or were expected to be constant. It was assumed for example that the socio-economic or social class level would be fairly constant and any variations would not be significant to the study.

Additional sub-hypotheses were thus formulated as

follows:

4. Education: The proportion of families who are permissive increases as the educational level of the mother increases.
5. Age: Among the families studied which fall into the non-permissive and extremely permissive group, the greater proportion of mothers will be found to be younger or older than the mothers in the permissive group.
6. Ethnic Origin: Child rearing practices will be found to vary among different ethnic groups.

Regarding the relationship between educational level of the mother and child rearing practices, it was thought by group members that with better education, mothers are likely to have read more widely about popularized scientific concepts of child rearing and hence would have translated these into child rearing practices. Articles in widely distributed magazines, child development information distributed by public health agencies, books by Dr. Spock⁷ and other authorities in the child development field would be expected to influence child rearing practices.

The mother's age at the time when she began rearing the child was seen as an important factor bearing on child

Benjamin Spock, Baby and Child Care (Montreal: Pocket Books of Canada, Ltd., 1962).

rearing practices. It was thought by group members that the immature, adolescent or very young parents were less able to appreciate the emotional and physical needs of the child and thus tend to be non-permissive or extremely permissive. On the other hand it was expected that an increase in rigidity would be associated with increased age and thus likely to make the mother non-permissive in her behaviour toward the child.

The ethnicity of the family was expected to have influenced the pattern of child rearing practices. The values brought from specific cultural orientations were regarded as a factor relating to the level of permissiveness expressed in rearing practices. As it is the mother who is primarily involved in mediating these values through the mother-child relationship, the families' ethnicity was established on the basis of the mother's ethnic origin.

The family, for the purpose of this study, consisted of at least a mother and one child between the ages six and ten and presently in the home, the mother having reared the child from birth. If the family had more than one child in the six to ten age group then the mother was interviewed with respect to the child nearest age six. A retarded or handicapped child, so regarded by the parent, was not a suitable candidate for this study.

It was assumed for purposes of this study that child

rearing practices would not have been significantly affected by social welfare services extended to the families. The length of time that the families studied had been in receipt of social services, and the extent of services received, varied considerably and hence the effect on child rearing practices could not be ascertained.

The method of the study was to interview a sample of social agency clients involving five of the major family agencies in greater Winnipeg. A schedule of open-end questions relating to the child rearing practices of each of the three areas was completed in an interview conducted by a member of the total research group. The interview method was chosen because it was deemed most likely to yield accurate information. It was also important that rapport be established with the respondent as some of the areas covered by the schedule might be regarded as personal. Furthermore, it was thought important that the respondents be assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The schedule also required certain explanations by way of preambles to assure frank and non-defensive responses. It was assumed that individual personality differences of the interviewers would not significantly affect the responses elicited. An attempt was made to safeguard this by thoroughly familiarizing each interviewer with the schedule, and discussing

the results and experiences encountered in a pilot-test of the schedule. This was of particular importance, the questions being of the open-end variety.

The responses to each area of child rearing practices were then classified into three major categories, namely: non-permissive, extremely permissive or permissive. These major categories were then in turn cross-classified with the independent variables of educational level of mother, age of mother, and ethnicity.

It was hoped that the study would add to the knowledge of patterns of child rearing practices and thus of family functioning of a segment of our society. It was hoped that the findings might be helpful to practicing social workers and possibly serve to improve services to this particular group in the area of furthering the families' independence. In view of the current trend to family-centred treatment, it was hoped that the study might point to areas where treatment might be intensified or refocussed, and on the other hand possibly indicate further areas of needed study.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

A review of the literature and studies of family life shows that there is an increasing interest in the significance of child rearing practices as they relate to the development of personality. This interest is relatively recent. Pre-Freudian psychiatry and concepts of personality were formulated chiefly on the notion that heredity determined behaviour. According to this view, personality was predetermined by constitutional factors, by the nature of the genes transmitted through the parents. According to this concept for example, the criminal personality was recognizable by inherited physical attributes such as a protruding jaw, receding forehead, shape of the head, etc. Freud and his followers contributed to the scientific recognition and precise study of the formative influence of early family life. Under the influence of these studies, not only heredity but also the conditions of infancy determined personality. Many of the principles which Freud and his followers stressed were utilized in time by child psychiatrists, educators, psychologists, pediatricians, social workers, and others in studying and formulating concepts of personality development.

The controversy of heredity versus environment in personality development has thus given way to a more balanced view which recognizes the relative significance of

these factors. Current theory supports the view that inherent capacities represent potential or limitations for psychosocial development where the manner of adaptation to the environment is influenced by the interaction of inherent capacities with physical, emotional and social factors. Josselyn states that:

The constitutional factor itself, however, must be considered in the broadest of terms. Thus a constitutionally sensitive child may ultimately become one of many types, depending upon the particular environmental experiences that play upon that sensitivity during life.¹

The child's environment at birth consists almost solely of the mother. The relationship is characterized by a complete dependence of the child upon the mother, the child later undergoing gradual change in the direction of physical independence and emotional maturity. Winch and McGinnis, in an introduction to selected studies dealing with development and growth of personality state:

One of the major beliefs in the psychology of personality is that the way in which a child's personality develops is determined (in whole or, at least in part) by the way in which his parents - and especially the mother - interact with him.²

¹Irene M. Josselyn, Psychosocial Development of Children (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1948), p. 15.

²Robert F. Winch and Robert McGinnis, Selected Studies in Marriage and Family (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1957) p. 171.

The importance of the quality of the relationship has been dramatically demonstrated by studies conducted by Spitz.³ He studied two groups of infants in an institutional setting to determine the effect of maternal deprivation on the child. The conditions for both groups were similar with the exception that the children in the control group were in the care of their mothers while the children of the other group were in the care of hospital nurses. The single factor differing in the two groups was the amount and quality of emotional interchange between the child and person caring for the child. The response to this variable showed itself in various ways. The developmental trend was not only reversed but thirty-seven per cent of the children of the experimental group died during the two year observation period whereas none of the children in the control group succumbed.

The high mortality is but the most extreme consequence of the general decline, both physical and psychological which is shown by children completely starved of emotional interaction.⁴

Bowlby distinguishes between complete and partial

³Rene A. Spitz, "Motherless Infants," Selected Studies in Marriage and Family, ed. Robert F. Winch and Robert McGinnis (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1957), pp. 185-194.

⁴Ibid., p. 198.

deprivation of maternal care.⁵ He states that a child is deprived even though he is living at home, if the mother is unable to provide an adequate relationship. The quality of the relationship and the effects of the relationship are presented as a matter of degree which predisposes the child to varying states of emotional, physical and social well-being.

Freud's work produced and led to the refinement of the concept that personality was formed during the child's formative years. The child passes through several stages of psychosocial development that have been recognized and defined by modern psychology. Healthy emotional maturation or growth depends on meeting the needs characteristic of the phase satisfactorily. These phases are not clearly separated from each other but if the child does not resolve the tasks of one particular phase then the process of emotional development will influence the resolution of subsequent phases, and thus interferes with orderly emotional growth. Josselyn states that:

Maturation proceeds smoothly from one level to the next under situations meeting two conditions: adequate emotional gratification at the lower level and experiences both actual and emotional that indicate it is safe to leave one level of adjustment and explore a higher one.⁶

⁵John Bowlby, Child Care and The Growth of Love (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961), p. 12.

⁶Josselyn, loc. cit.

This maturation process as outlined above depends largely on the relationship which the mother is able to give the child during the phases of development. If the process is not smooth, marked either by fixation at a level or regression to an earlier level, then the likelihood that the child will develop into an emotionally mature adult is lessened.

Erikson⁷ deals with the three phases of the first six years, from the point of view of tasks that have to be completed. Basic trust, autonomy and initiative have to be established as enduring patterns, in that order, if the process of emotional growth is to proceed optimally.

The child is capable of changeworthy behaviour during these phases. Thus during the first phase, referred to as the oral period by most authorities, the child's primary need is for nourishment. The child may be fed either by breast or bottle, or according to strict schedule or upon demand. During this period he will also be expected to adapt from the mode of taking in liquids to taking in solids. The mother will attempt to inculcate certain eating habits. In general, demands placed upon the child during the first period of development are in an attempt to change behaviour in relation to the intake of food. Since the child is dependent on the mother for gratifying his

⁷Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1950).

oral needs, the mother can also control the child's conduct by relying on the giving or withholding of food. On the other hand the mother may not make a demand for change-worthy behaviour to a degree where it corresponds with the child's capacity for growth commensurate with his developmental level. The giving of food becomes associated with love and approval and if food is withheld the child may become anxious and develop a dependent attitude toward the world. If little or no demand is made to induce change then the child may also remain dependent and consequently poorly prepared for tasks incidental to other stages of development. If the demands placed upon the child are too severe he may establish an adaptive pattern of rebellion and on the other hand if few or no demands are made the child may also react submissively or dependently toward others.

Settlage states that "rigid child training tends to beget either a stifling of initiative or rebellion".⁸ Limits conveyed in the sense of "freedom within limits" foster the development of personality strength. The author sees these as helping to establish identity, to provide inner and social control and to stimulate the urge toward mastery. He notes further that if the control is too strict the child will abuse freedom whenever he gets

⁸Calvon F. Settlage, "The Values of Limits in Child Rearing," Children, V (Sept., 1958), p. 176.

a chance. If on the other hand, the control is too lenient, the child will soon get into difficulty with the social order.

Kugelmass comes to a similar conclusion regarding rigid controls.

A child brought up in rigid surroundings becomes submissive, docile and courteous. He loses the capacity to think through things for himself, and is dependent on your judgment. He becomes incapable of advancing his own independence. Bewildered by your strictness he may turn against you with resentment and rebellion.⁹

The optimum parental behaviour toward the child in engendering changeworthy behaviour has been defined as "placing the demands for self control placed upon the child to correspond with his developmental level".¹⁰ Breckenridge and Murphy note that "it is important to time the feeding of a baby according to his own physiological rhythm"¹¹ and the wise parent seeks a judicious balance which allows for prompt gratification of real needs and reasonable desires and at the same time, with equal firmness and promptness denies unreasonable and dangerous wants.¹²

⁹I. N. Kugelmass, Complete Child Care (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1959), p. 205

¹⁰Robert F. Winch and Robert McGinnis, Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1957), p. 238.

¹¹M. E. Breckenridge and N. M. Murphy, Growth and the Development of the Young Child (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders and Co., 1958), p. 247.

¹²Ibid., p. 253.

Ilg and Ames also support this finding.

If the constitutional indicators are ignored in the interest of an inflexible schedule, there ensues a contest between infant and adult with unnecessary losses and emotional disturbances on both sides.¹³

They recommend individualization of feeding which is an experience that nourishes a sense of security in the child. The central problem of the infant as they see it is to strike a sensible balance between doing for the child and letting him do for himself. They state that if his own individuality and his own initiative are not given a chance to function he cannot acquire a healthy sense of his growing powers.

Ilg and Ames report similar findings with respect to toilet training, which is the primary task during the anal period of development.

Carefully controlled research studies have shown that training in an ability is not effective until the child is almost ready to do the thing in question. Training the child to perform toilet functions at a suitable time and place is not really effective until the child's organism is almost ready to succeed.¹⁴

Josselyn states that the cortical control of the sphincter muscles of the rectum and the beginning of toilet training should go together. According to this criterion toilet training should be started only when the child is able to

¹³F. L. Ilg and L. B. Ames, Child Behaviour (New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1955), p. 118.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 120.

walk unassisted.¹⁵

Finch states with respect to toilet training that the child from whom too much is expected or for whom too little understanding is given will respond by trying to the best of his limited ability to meet the demands, and turn into an inhibited pseudomature person or else he can rebel. Either way the parental request is not carried out and the child does not learn to meet demands.¹⁶ Mussen and Conger state this positively:

The mother who creates a sympathetic permissive, relaxed environment while her child is undergoing toilet training would be more likely to complete the training without unduly upsetting the child.¹⁷

Erikson¹⁸ states that if control is too rigid or if training commences too early then the child is robbed of his attempt to gradually control his bowels and other functions as well. He will then either regress and fail to master the task, or become hostile and willful. The same point is made by Josselyn.¹⁹ She states that with overdemanding parents the child gains token control or mastery through his negativism rather than through mastering training. The

¹⁵Josselyn, op.cit., p. 52.

¹⁶Stuart M. Finch, Fundamentals of Child Psychiatry (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1960), p. 88

¹⁷P. M. Mussen and J. J. Conger, Child Development and Personality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 198.

¹⁸Erik H. Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," Psychological Issues Vol. I, No. I (1959), p. 68

¹⁹Josselyn, op.cit., p. 64.

extremely permissive parent on the other hand does not provide help in taking steps toward maturation and does not indicate that achievement is expected. English and Finch²⁰ point out that it is during the anal period that the growing personality has its first experiences with authority. If the maternal demands are just and kind the child will later have the ability to both give and take in relation to authority. If early authority on the other hand is harsh and inconsistent the child's future reaction to authority will be distorted and characterized by hate or fear or both.

The genital period, approximately ages three to six, is characterized by sexual curiosity and inquisitiveness about such questions as differences between male and female and where children come from. Curiosity about sexual organs leads to masturbation and general overpreoccupation with the genitals. According to Symonds²¹, mothers who are permissive in their attitude about feeding or toilet training may be specially sensitive to manifestations of sexual behaviour and will seek to repress curiosity or auto-erotic practices.

²⁰O. E. English and S. M. Finch, Introduction to Psychiatry (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1954), p. 19

²¹Percival M. Symonds, The Dynamics of Parent-Child Relationships (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949), p. 8

Cultural mores regarding sexual behaviour generally censure excessive or openly practiced masturbation. Modesty is encouraged in young children and generally insisted upon in older children. Greenberg²² notes that parents need to realize that a certain amount of sex play is part of normal development and that if they are anxious about this themselves or punish harshly that they may do unnecessary harm. He advises that questions about sexual matters should be answered in accordance with the child's level of comprehension. He further states that wise parents reduce the opportunities to sublimate sexual activity - such as play or learning experiences.

Faegre and Anderson also state that a child's questions should be answered at his level. They state that if the child's knowledge about sex is at variance with the stage of his development he "becomes an easy prey of self-distrust and weakness".²³

Simpson sums up the importance of the mother-child relationship and child rearing practices:

....all great emotional stresses and strains in the periods of infantile orality, anality and genitality, will leave their mark on personality and show up in overt behaviour later on or in unconscious motivation of overt behaviour.²⁴

²²S. M. Greenberg, The Encyclopedia of Child Care and Guidance (New York: Doubleday and Co. 1944), p. 495.

²³M. L. Faegre and J. E. Anderson, Child Care and Training (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1947), p. 199.

²⁴George Simpson, People in Families (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1960), p. 231.

A study of child rearing practices among low-income families reported by the Family Service Association of America showed that there is a striking incidence of parental shame and embarrassment about sex. Sex education was found to be almost lacking in the families. What was found consisted chiefly of vague warnings and prohibitions with verbalizations reminiscent of a victorian attitude.²⁵ The above findings are of interest also because the study populations consisted in large part of low-income families.

In comparative analysis of the results of sixteen studies of child rearing practices over a twenty-five year period to 1955, Bronfenbrenner found that American mothers of all social class levels have become more flexible with respect to infant feeding and weaning.²⁶ This corresponds with findings of Celia Strendler who reviewed articles which had appeared in the Ladies' Home Journal, Good Housekeeping and Woman's Home Companion since 1900 regarding recommendations of child rearing practices. In 1910 cotton gloves were recommended to prevent thumb sucking. By 1920 the recommendation was to bring children up strictly. By 1930 the

²⁵Hylan Lewis, "Child Rearing Practices Among Low-Income Families," Casework Papers (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1961), p. 9.

²⁶Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Socialization and Social Class Through Time and Space," Readings in Social Psychology, ed. E. E. Maccoby, T. M. Newcomb and E. W. Hartley (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winton, 1958), pp. 400-425.

recommendation was harsh scheduling and training. In 1940 the recommendations focused on meeting emotional needs of children.²⁷ These findings indicate that shifts in the pattern of infant care show a striking correspondence to changes advocated in these articles and similar sources of expert opinion. This again agrees with Bronfrenbrenner's findings that changes in infant care practices are most likely to be altered in those segments of society which have most ready access to such information. Education of the mother is thus important from this point of view.

Sears, in a study of child rearing practices in two New England suburbs found that better educated mothers were more permissive in their practices. They were less severe in toilet training and more permissive about sex behaviour of their children.²⁸ A study by Zuckerman²⁹ also reports that the mother's education was a significant factor in influencing authoritarian and controlling attitudes. Furthermore the current child rearing ideal communicated to mothers stresses democratic and permissive techniques

²⁷Proceedings of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth. Edward A. Richards ed. (Raleigh, N.C.: Health Publications Institute, 1950), p. 270.

²⁸R. R. Sears, E. E. Maccoby and H. Levin, Patterns of Child Rearing (Evanston, Ill: Row, Peterson, 1957), pp.434-435.

²⁹M. Zuckerman, B. H. Barrett and R. M. Brazier, "The Parental Attitudes of Parents of Child Guidance Cases," Child Development, XXXI (1960), p. 414.

rather than controlling techniques. This communication is much more likely to reach the better educated mothers because they are more frequently exposed to it in schools and the communication media. This study concluded that the major determinant of maternal attitudes was the socio-economic level of the mother as defined by her educational level. The less educated had the more authoritarian controlling attitudes.

Sears³⁰ also found that the age of the mother had a significant bearing on severity of child rearing practices. Younger mothers were found to be more irritable and hence quick to punish, more likely to quarrel with their husbands and somewhat more likely to express an underlying feeling of hostility toward children. Josselyn³¹ states that it appears valid to assume that the capacity for the act of mothering and the emotional response of motherliness are related to the degree of psychological maturity of the woman, which in turn has a bearing on age. The very young mother is often still confronted with emotional problems of her own adolescence.

The results of this literature and studies indicate that permissive child rearing practices provide the

³⁰Sears, Maccoby and Levin, op.cit., p. 437.

³¹Irene M. Josselyn, "Maternal Forces, Motherliness and Fatherliness", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 26 (1956), p. 264.

encouragement and opportunity for optimal emotional growth providing that the demands on the child are made in accordance with his capacities in the phases of psychosocial maturation. These studies also suggest some of the characteristics such as age and education of the mother which provide significant information relevant to a descriptive study such as the present one in which child rearing practices of families receiving services from social agencies were explored.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The research group resorted to face-to-face interviews for purposes of obtaining the necessary data. This was felt to be the most reliable method of determining the child rearing practices of the population to be studied. The respondents were selected from the five major family agencies¹ according to the stratified systematic random sampling method. A schedule consisting of clusters of open-end questions to elicit responses with respect to the areas of infant feeding, toilet training and sex training was then administered by members of the total research group. The schedule as used in its final form is to be found in Appendix A.

As child rearing practices were only part of the over-all study regarding three aspects of family functioning, certain limitations were imposed as to the comprehensiveness of the schedule and the representativeness of the sample selected.

The total sample selected consisted of 369 families, with a distribution among the agencies and the proportion of their respective caseloads as follows: City of Winnipeg Welfare Department, 146 (11%); Province of Manitoba Welfare Department, 45 (11.5%); Children's

¹Please refer to Page 1.

Aid Society of Winnipeg, 70 (16.5%); Family Bureau, 45 (33.3%); and Family Court, 63 (14.3%). The sample population represented families known to at least one of these agencies in December, 1963 and January, 1964, who were residents of Winnipeg proper. Families were included if the agency listing did not distinguish clearly that there were no children. The size of the sample was governed by the number of families that could reasonably be interviewed in the time available.

Of the 369 families in the sample, 77 refused to participate in the study. It was requested by the workers that 54 not be interviewed. A total of 62 families had moved away from the addresses listed at the agencies and were unable to be located. A total of 176 families were interviewed. Of these, a large number did not meet the definition of family for our particular aspect of the study because they had no children between the ages six and ten living at home. Only 83 mothers were interviewed in regard to their child rearing practices. The fact that so many families were eliminated from the sample population makes it difficult to ascertain whether the group interviewed for the purposes of our study was representative of the client population we were studying.

An attempt was made to invite the participation of every family in the sample. Families active with the City

Welfare and Mother's Allowance Branch received a letter from the School of Social Work. Families associated with the Children's Aid Society and Family Bureau were to have received a letter signed by their social worker. However, some may have been phoned. A letter, signed by the senior counsellor of the Family Court, was sent to families active with that agency. Seventy per cent of the number contacted were willing to participate in the study and the method of contacting them did not appear to affect their willingness to participate.

A composite schedule was administered by the 45 students participating in the over-all research project. The schedule consisted of four sections. Section A consisted of the objective data, or identifying information, required by the three research groups. Section B consisted of questions regarding the kinship practices of the families and Section D consisted of questions regarding their economic practices. Section C consisted of a series of open-end questions about the child rearing practices of the mother. The order in which each section of the schedule was administered enabled us to move from the least to most sensitive questions. By having a composite schedule we were able to have a larger sample than otherwise possible.

The interview schedule was first drafted and tested

in December, 1963, on a group of 39 families. Thirty of the schedules were completed in regard to child rearing practices. After the testing of the schedule, each research group examined and analyzed the collected data for its section and revised its schedule. In the child rearing section some questions were eliminated and others were reformulated to ensure clarity and objectivity of response. Instructions for the interviewers were added to help them elicit appropriate and relevant responses. A preamble was added to each part of the child rearing schedule to enable the mother to share her specific child rearing practices freely.

Our section of the interview schedule consisted of both the relevant objective data obtained from Section A and a series of open-end questions directed toward determining what the child rearing practices of the mother were in the areas of infant feeding, toilet training and sex training. Objective data consisted of the birth date of the mother and the age of the child, the highest grade in school completed by the mother and what she considered to be her ethnic origin. These questions provided data for the sub-hypotheses regarding age and education of the mother and also provided data for determining ethnicity of the mother.

The interviewer was given instructions to record the responses to the open-end questions as fully as possible

in the words of the mother so that they could, at a later date, be rated by this group as to whether the mother was permissive, non-permissive or extremely permissive. Each section in this part of the schedule was preceded by a preamble which the interviewer read to the mother. Its purpose was to help the mother feel free to share with the interviewer her specific child rearing practices without feeling that there was a "right" or "wrong" way which she should have handled each situation. Without the preamble the mother might give the interviewer the responses she thought the interviewer wanted.

The specific questions asked regarding the three areas of child rearing practices were worded so as to determine the mother's response to particular activities of the child, the extent to which she made demands on the child for change. In determining which questions were to be asked we perused previous studies with the same focus. Questions were ordered so that the least sensitive would be asked first.

The first section, related to infant feeding practices, consisted of four questions. The first related to whether the mother had a rigid or flexible schedule for feeding her child in his early infancy. The other questions were directed to the demands the mother made on the child in his feeding habits when he was about one and a half years old.

The section relating to toilet training consisted of five questions. The first question was asked to determine what age the child was when the mother began toilet training as related to the age at which the child walked unaided and therefore had the physical maturity to meet the demands for self-control in this area. The other questions related to the demands the mother made on the child for self-control in his bowel and bladder activities, and how she responded when he failed to meet these demands.

The section on sex training consisted of four questions related to how the mother reacted to the three to six year old child's questions and behaviour resulting from his or her inquisitiveness regarding the differences between sexes and his or her origin.

Before the schedule was administered a group meeting was held and it was explained to the interviewers why we were asking specific questions and what information we wished to gather by asking the questions. Each question was examined and clarified for the interviewer to ensure his obtaining an appropriate response and to ensure standardization of application. We were limited in the number of questions we could ask because each student was administering the schedules of the other research groups. This method of obtaining data limited our findings to the extent that we were asking the mother questions about events

which had occurred a number of years earlier and which she could not always remember.

The schedule was not administered if the child with respect to whom the questions were being asked was either physically or mentally retarded as these factors were thought to have a significant influence in affecting the mother's child rearing practices.

Our data for analysis consisted of information obtained from the interview schedule. The fifteen members of the group met and rated the individual responses to questions according to the following definitions.

1. Infant Feeding.

- (a) A Non-permissive response was one where the mother rigidly adhered to a schedule of infant feeding; never fed the child between mealtimes; and punished the child for spilled food.
- (b) A permissive response was one where the mother fed according to a flexible schedule; allowed the child to eat between meals but not to impair appetite for regular meals; encouraged child when necessary to eat at meal time but did not attempt to force the child; indicated disapproval but was not punitive when food was spilled but encouraged better

better performance in handling the food.

- (c) An extremely permissive response was one where the mother fed the infant whenever he cried; fed the child without regard to meal times; was indifferent if the child refused to eat at meal-times; and ignored the child when he spilled food.

2. Toilet Training.

- (a) A non-permissive response was one where the mother began toilet training before the child was able to walk unaided; adhered to an inflexible schedule of toilet training and punished or scolded the child for not producing on the pot; punished the child for wetting during the night after he was regarded as toilet trained; severely scolded or punished the child for soiling his pants.
- (b) A permissive response was one where the mother began toilet training at the time the child walked without the help of someone else or without holding on to objects, or any time during the next six months; encouraged the child to produce when placed on the pot but was flexible in this demand;

recognized the child's inability to control bladder functions during the night but indicated to him that in time change was expected; showed disapproval when the child soiled his pants but encouraged the child to perform this function on the pot.

- (c) An extremely permissive response was one where the mother began toilet training six months or more after the child began to walk unaided; did not encourage the child to perform on the pot; was indifferent to the child's bed-wetting after she considered him toilet trained; ignored or was indifferent to the child's soiling his pants.

3. Sex Training.

- (a) A non-permissive response was one where the mother punished or scolded the child or gave a dishonest answer when he asked questions about the difference between boys and girls or how babies originate; punished or scolded the child for showing curiosity in own or other children's bodies; punished or scolded for removing clothes during play or engaging in masturbatory behaviour.
- (b) A permissive response was one where the mother

showed understanding and provided guidance in answering the child's questions about sex truthfully at his level of comprehension; encouraged the child who had removed his clothes in response to sexual curiosity to put them on again and discouraged this type of behaviour; discouraged the child and diverted his attention from sex play with other children and himself.

- (c) An extremely permissive response was one where the mother provided too many facts or dwelled on, exploited or was seductive about questions about sex; ignored or encouraged the child to run about without clothes on; ignored or encouraged sex play with himself and others.

The incomplete responses were those where the respondent's reply did not answer the question or where the respondent stated that the child had never engaged in certain behaviour. The latter response was found to be very prevalent in answers to questions about the child's sexual behaviour - he or she "never did this".

The next step in the analysis consisted of determining whether the families were non-permissive, extremely permissive, permissive or inconsistent within each of the three areas of child rearing. This classification was made

on the basis of the greatest frequency of a particular response to the questions within the area. Thus for example, two permissive responses and one each of non-permissive and extremely permissive constituted a permissive family. Or if the family did not provide a rateable response to two of the four questions in an area, and if the other two responses were rated as non-permissive, then the family was rated as non-permissive in that area. In cases where a majority did not emerge or where none of the questions within an area could be rated, then the family was classified as inconsistent in their rearing practices with respect to the particular area.

Following the classification of each of three areas, the rule of simple majority was again employed to determine the classification of non-permissive, permissive, extremely permissive or inconsistent, regarding the over-all practices of each family. For example, if a family was found to be permissive in infant feeding and toilet training but operated at another level of permissiveness in sex training then the family was classified permissive. If no agreement existed among two of the three areas, or if the sex training questions were all incomplete and the other two areas did not agree, then the family was classified as inconsistent in over-all child rearing practices.

The categories of rearing practices were then

cross-classified with the factor of age and education of the mother. The age of the mother was categorized as follows: 21 and under; 22 to 35 inclusive; and 36 years and over. The proportion of respondents who were permissive in each of these categories was thus determined to show the relationship between age of mother and the incidence of permissiveness.

The education of the mother was categorized according to three levels: grade school, 0 - 6; junior high, 7 - 9; and high school and above, 10 or more. The proportion of families classified as permissive was determined for each educational level and the relationship between education and permissiveness ascertained.

It was anticipated that the variety of ethnic origins among respondents and the size of the sample would preclude classification of each of the ethnicities separately. Certain ethnicities were therefore grouped into sub-categories according to similar cultural values. The details of the ethnic origins appearing in each sub-category are as follows:

- (a) Anglo-Saxon: English, Irish and Scottish.
- (b) West-European: Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Icelandic, German and French.
- (c) East European: Ukrainian, Hungarian, Polish and Russian.
- (d) North American Indian: Indian and Metis.

- (e) Others: One each of South African, Italian, Canadian and Jewish.

The proportion of the respondents in each of the sub-categories was compared in terms of the categories of child rearing practices.

The findings, and the analysis of the data in tabular form, are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The first major step in the analysis consisted of tabulating the data pertinent to the questions posed by the three sub-hypotheses, namely that a greater proportion of families would be found to be non-permissive or extremely permissive rather than permissive in each of the three areas of child rearing.

The first analysis shows the distribution of families into categories of permissiveness for each of the three areas, i.e. infant feeding, toilet training and sex training practices. The findings are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION BY NUMBER AND PER CENT, OF FAMILIES
ACCORDING TO CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS IN
THE THREE AREAS OF CHILD REARING

	Infant Feeding		Toilet Training		Sex Training	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Total	83	100	83	100	65 ^a	100
Permissive	34	40.9	20	24.1	27	41.5
Non-permissive	13	15.6	33	39.8	20	30.8
Extremely Permissive	24	28.9	14	16.8	4	6.0
Inconsistent	12	14.4	16	19.3	14	21.5

^aThe responses of 18 families to questions about sex training practices were incomplete or not rateable.

Data from which the above table was derived may be found in Tables II, III and IV in Appendix B, where the responses to each question in each of the three areas were tabulated.

It will be noted that in each of the three areas of child rearing, the families of the non-permissive, extremely permissive and inconsistent categories, when combined, constitute a proportion greater than the families in the permissive category. That is to say, the majority of families are something other than permissive in each of the areas of child rearing.

In the areas of infant feeding and toilet training practices, the families in the non-permissive and extremely permissive category, when combined, constitute a proportion greater than the families in the permissive category. The findings are most conclusive with respect to toilet training practices where the families of the combined non-permissive and extremely permissive categories are in ratio of more than two to one relative to families in the permissive group. The proportion of families in the non-permissive category, by itself, is greater than families in the permissive category.

In the sex training area, 18 families could not be rated, as no responses were obtained from them to any of the questions in that area. Table IV, in Appendix B

shows the tabulation of responses to individual questions. It will be noted that the number of families not responding to any or not giving a rateable response exceeds 50 per cent for any one question and is as high as 67.5 per cent or more than two-thirds for one of the questions. In most cases these families responded to the effect that their children did not show sexual curiosity, engage in masturbatory behaviour or ask questions about sex.

Two other trends worthy of note are indicated in Table 1. The number of families who are extremely permissive in their rearing practices is highest in the infant feeding area (28.9%), lower in the toilet training area (16.8%), and lowest in the sex training area (6.0%). With respect to inconsistency in child rearing, the smallest number of families is found in the infant feeding area (14.4%), with more inconsistent families in the toilet training area (19.3%), and the most inconsistent families in sex training area (21.5%). Both these findings and the number of incomplete responses to questions regarding sex training, indicate that sex training practices were a sensitive aspect of child training.

The second step in the analysis consisted of tabulating the data pertinent to the question posed by the main hypothesis, namely that a greater proportion of families

would be found to be non-permissive or extremely permissive rather than permissive regarding their over-all child rearing practices.

These findings are presented in Table I, Appendix B. Of the 83 families constituting the total sample, 21 or 25.3 per cent of the families were found to be permissive. This compares with 24 or 28.9 per cent of the families which were found to be non-permissive and extremely permissive. When the families in the non-permissive, extremely permissive and inconsistent categories are combined and viewed in relation to the families in the permissive category, the ratio is slightly less than three to one. Again it is stated that the majority of families are something other than permissive in their over-all child rearing practices.

The larger proportion of families evidencing inconsistent child rearing practices (45.8%) will be noted. The families in this category were classified as inconsistent when agreement as to the category of permissiveness did not exist with respect to two or more of the three areas of child rearing. The 38 families which were inconsistent were distributed according to categories of permissiveness, in the three areas of child rearing. These findings are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION BY NUMBER AND PER CENT OF FAMILIES
INCONSISTENT IN THE OVER-ALL RATING, ACCORD-
ING TO CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS, IN
THREE AREAS OF CHILD REARING

	Infant Feeding		Toilet Training		Sex Training	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Total	38	100	38	100	26 ^a	100
Permissive	8	21.5	7	18.4	9	34.6
Non-permissive	5	13.2	12	31.5	4	15.4
Extremely Permissive	14	36.8	7	18.4	1	3.8
Inconsistent	11	28.9	12	31.5	12	46.2

^aTwelve families did not respond or gave unrateable answers to all questions about sex training practices.

It will be noted that of these 38 families which evidenced inconsistent child rearing practices in the over-all rating, only a small proportion were permissive with respect to any of the three areas of child rearing. Within the infant feeding area the number of families in the extremely permissive category exceeds the number of families in the permissive category. Within the toilet training area the number of families which are extremely permissive equals the number of families which are permissive and the number of non-permissive families exceeds the number of families which are permissive. The number of families which are inconsistent

exceeds the number of families which are permissive in each of the three areas.

The progression in the extremely permissive category again shows the highest incidence of extreme permissiveness in the infant feeding area (38.6%), reduced to half in the toilet training area (18.4%) and sharply reduced in the sex training area (2.6%).

Of the 38 inconsistent families, 11 were inconsistent in two out of three areas of child rearing. One family was inconsistent in all three areas of child rearing. Of the 12 families which did not respond or which gave unrateable responses to all questions about sex training, 9 were also inconsistent in one other area of child rearing.

The apparent disparity between the 18 not rateable respondents within the sex training area of the 83 families and the 12 not rateable respondents within the sex training area of the 38 inconsistent families will be noted. This arises due to the fact that for purposes of the global rating families might be inconsistent in the sex training area itself, but when combined with a permissive, non-permissive or extremely permissive rating in the other two areas, some of the families were thus classified in a category other than inconsistent.

In looking at the factor of age an attempt was made to determine if the proportion of mothers in the non-permissive and extremely permissive categories would be younger or older

than the proportion of mothers in the permissive category. These findings are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHERS BY NUMBER AND PER CENT,
INTO CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS

Age	Total	Permissive		Non-Permissive		Extremely Permissive		In-Consistent	
		No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
	82 ^a	20	100	16	100	8	100	38	100
21 and Under	17	6	30.0	4	25.0	0	0.0	7	18.5
22-35	52	11	55.0	7	43.7	7	87.3	27	71.1
36 and Over	13	3	15.0	5	31.3	1	12.5	4	10.5

^aOne mother of the total sample of 83 mothers did not respond to the question of age.

The findings indicate that the age of the mother does not show a significant correlation with the category of permissiveness.

The educational level of the mother was cross-classified with the categories of permissiveness to determine if the proportion of families in the permissive category would increase as the educational level of the mother increased. The findings are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHERS BY NUMBER AND PER CENT,
 ACCORDING TO CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS
 IN THREE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

	Total	Elementary 0-6		Junior High 7-9		High School 10 Plus	
		No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
	83	18	100	44	100	21	100
Permissive	21	3	16.7	10	22.7	8	38.1
Non-permissive	16	2	11.1	11	25.0	3	14.3
Extremely Permissive	8	2	11.1	6	13.6	0	0.0
Inconsistent	38	11	61.1	17	38.7	10	47.6

It will be noted that the proportion of the mothers in the permissive category increases from 16.7 per cent for mothers with an elementary education, to 22.7 per cent for mothers with a junior high education, to 38.1 per cent for mothers with a high school education. However, it will also be noted that the greatest proportion of mothers in the non-permissive category are of the junior high educational level, whereas it would have been expected that the mothers in the

lowest educational group would show the greatest proportion of non-permissiveness. The high proportion of inconsistent families at the elementary educational level is noteworthy however it would have been expected that a progression from greater incidence of inconsistency for mothers of low educational level to a smaller incidence of inconsistency as educational level increased would have been found.

Ethnicity was considered to be a possible factor in the child rearing practices of the families. It had been anticipated on the basis of the initial testing of the schedule that a larger sample would be obtained. When only 83 families were interviewed, it was realized that the respondents would fall into a large number of different groupings. For analytical purposes the various ethnicities were thus grouped together in cultural groups according to geographic regions.

These findings are presented in tabular form in Table V of Appendix B. It would appear on the basis of these findings that ethnicity is not significantly related to the child rearing practices of the mothers constituting the sample.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

A group of families known to five of greater Winnipeg's major family agencies was studied in an attempt to determine the nature of their child rearing practices and to investigate some of the factors with which the practices were thought to be associated.

A sample of eighty-three families was studied. Members of the research group obtained the necessary information and data by completing a schedule in face-to-face interviews with the families selected from the study. The families were then rated and distributed into categories of child rearing practices, namely permissive, non-permissive, extremely permissive or inconsistent. This distribution was made first for each of the three areas of child rearing, i.e. infant feeding, toilet training and sex training and then an over-all distribution of families was made according to these categories. The families were then distributed according to categories of permissiveness, respecting the factors of age, education and ethnicity of the mother.

The main hypothesis tested was that a greater proportion of families known to the five major Winnipeg family agencies would be found to be non-permissive or extremely permissive rather than permissive in their child rearing practices. The findings would appear to be inconclusive.

Although it was found that only 25.3 per cent of the families were permissive in their child rearing practices, neither those which were non-permissive (19.3%) nor those which were extremely permissive (9.6%) exceeded the percentage in the permissive category. However, when the latter two categories were combined then the proportion of families non-and-extremely permissive was greater than those in the permissive category. This difference was again however not significant in view of the size of the sample.

When the large proportion of families which were inconsistent (45.5%) in their over-all child rearing practices was considered in relation to the above, then it could be said that three out of four families were something other than permissive in their child rearing practices. The question arises however if the large proportion of families found to be inconsistent was representative of the measurement of a variation in child rearing or whether this might be related to reliability of the schedule. It is granted that the number of questions constituting the schedule and the number of questions with respect to each of the three areas of child rearing was small. This was recognized as one of the limitations of the study but could not be altered due to the time factor and the restrictions imposed by the requirements of the over-all study of family functioning - this study being only one

of the three aspects of family functioning investigated, thus necessitating a fairly long composite schedule. Furthermore, if reference is made to the schedule and to Tables II, III and IV in Appendix B, where the families are distributed in categories of permissiveness according to the responses to individual questions about the three areas of rearing practices, it will be noted that variations existed both as to the number of incomplete responses within an area and among the areas. These will be viewed in more detail when the sub-hypotheses are considered. However, it can be noted that the variations in the content of the questions would seem to have a bearing on the distribution of the families into categories of permissiveness and into the category of inconsistency.

It was in an attempt to deal with these questions that the thirty-eight families which were found to be inconsistent were further analyzed by classifying them separately (Table 2 in the preceeding chapter). These findings further support the evidence that the greater proportion of families was found to be something other than permissive in their child rearing practices, with only 21.5 per cent in infant feeding practices and 18.4 per cent in toilet training practices found to be permissive. Furthermore twenty-four out of thirty-eight families were either inconsistent, did not respond and/or gave unrateable responses

to questions dealing with sex training practices. Of twelve of the inconsistent families, eleven were inconsistent in two out of three areas of child rearing, with one family being inconsistent in all three areas. Considering the other twelve of the twenty-four families whose responses were not rateable or who did not respond, nine were also inconsistent in one other area of child rearing. This would strongly support the conclusion that the large proportion of families found to be inconsistent are actually representative of inconsistency in child rearing practices rather than reflecting on the reliability of the schedule.

These findings thus bear out the assumption that families would be found not to have reared their children consistently in either a permissive, non-permissive or extremely permissive manner. Furthermore, the findings show that not only was a large proportion of families inconsistent in the rearing practices during the child's first six years as a whole but a large proportion was also found to be inconsistent within the particular areas of child rearing. The number of families which were inconsistent increased from the infant feeding area (14.4%) to the toilet training area (19.3%) and was greatest in the sex training area (21.5%). In the latter area, eighteen families furthermore responded that their children did not show curiosity about sex or engaged in behaviour out of

sexual curiosity. This would indicate that these families experience difficulty in this aspect of the child's socialization experience, which in turn might have implication for the formation of a secure sexual identity.

The three sub-hypotheses arising out of the main hypothesis stated that a greater proportion of these families would be found to be non-permissive or extremely permissive rather than permissive in the child rearing areas of infant feeding, toilet training and sex training. The findings with respect to these hypotheses are most conclusive with regard to the toilet training area where the proportion of families which was found to be non-permissive exceeded, by a significant margin, the proportion of families which was permissive. However, when the non-permissive and extremely permissive families were considered in relation to the proportion of permissive families then the hypothesis respecting both infant feeding and toilet training practices could be said to have been substantiated. It is noteworthy that the greatest incidence of permissiveness was found to have occurred in the infant feeding area of child rearing practices. This is also the area having the largest proportion of extremely permissive families and the smallest proportion of inconsistent families of the three areas. It will be noted, if reference is made to Question 3 of the schedule and Table II in Appendix B, that sixty-three out of eighty-three

families were permissive and another thirteen families were extremely permissive regarding between-meal feeding.

The findings with respect to the area of sex training did not support the sub-hypothesis, even when the number of families found to be non-permissive and extremely permissive was combined and compared to the number found to be permissive. However, the significant findings here consist of the large proportion of the families which was found to be either inconsistent or which did not respond to the questions regarding behaviour in this area. Thirty-two out of the eighty-three families were found to be in this category compared to twenty-seven which were found to be permissive and twenty-four found to be either non-permissive or extremely permissive. The large proportion of mothers responding that "this never happened" during the sexual curiosity phase of development suggests that this may be a sensitive area of child rearing. Again, if reference is made to Table IV in Appendix B, it will be noted that the number of mothers giving incomplete responses ranges from 53 per cent to 67.5 per cent for the four questions respecting this area of child rearing. This shows that the questions in this area were similar as to content and that responses were fairly evenly distributed among the four questions. These findings should be of interest to social agencies from the point of view both of approaching

this area (due to its sensitivity) and in dealing with it as an aspect of casework treatment of the family (due to its importance in emotional maturation).

The sub-hypotheses regarding the factor of age of mother at time of birth of the child with respect to whom responses were elicited, stated that among the families studied which would be found to fall into the non-permissive or extremely permissive group, a greater proportion of the mothers would be found to be either younger or older than the proportion of mothers in the permissive group. The findings showed that the age of the mother was not a factor to any significant degree. It would seem plausible however that the assumption that the time span between the onset of child rearing and the time of the study (varying from six to ten years) would not influence the reliability of the mothers' responses should not have been made. Other factors such as the learning experiences of the mother in rearing children already older than the child in question, the sex of the child, father in the home, the emotional quality in the mother-child relationship are possibly equally as instrumental, or more so, in determining the nature of the particular child rearing practices. The findings as obtained did not show a significant variation according to the chi-square test of statistical significance.

The sub-hypothesis regarding the factor of education

of the mother stated that the proportion of families found to be permissive would increase as the education level of the mother increased. The findings tended to support this hypothesis. The proportion of mothers who were permissive increased from 16.7 per cent with elementary education to 22.7 per cent with junior high school education to 38.1 per cent with high school education. This would seem to be in accordance with the findings of Sears and Zuckerman to which reference was made on page 26.

The final sub-hypothesis stated that the child rearing practices of these families would be found to vary among different ethnic groups. The results appear inconclusive however as the sample obtained was not sufficiently large to determine trends with any degree of validity. Families with an East European and West European background show a slightly higher incidence of inconsistency in child rearing practices relative to the families of Anglo-Saxon background. This might lead to speculation that these families were experiencing difficulties in accommodating values in the acculturation process, however this trend did not meet the test of statistical significance. It might be noted that the section of the research group studying economic practices found that the average length of residence of these families in Winnipeg was ten years. This might indicate that these families had become relatively

acculturated and if so, this might have influenced the finding regarding ethnicity.

Further to some of the limitations mentioned already, it must be taken into account that this study was limited also by the fact that these families had been in receipt of casework services of varying intensity and duration from the social agencies. Consequently, the emotional atmosphere in the home and more significantly the parent-child relationship may have been influenced in varying degrees thus possibly having had an indirect and direct bearing on the nature of child rearing practices.

To summarize the findings, the main hypothesis was supported to the extent that in each of the areas of infant feeding, toilet training and sex training the majority of the mothers was other than permissive in that the largest proportion in each instance comprised those who were non-permissive, extremely permissive and inconsistent. With respect to the independent variables, the level of permissiveness varied with the educational level of the mother, to a lesser extent with the ethnic origin, but did not vary with the age of the mother.

It is hoped that this study has added to the knowledge pertaining to the child rearing practices of families known to the family agencies. Some of the areas of special sensitivity in rearing practices have been isolated

and demonstrated. The large proportion of families found to be inconsistent in their child rearing practices will perhaps be of special interest to those concerned with social welfare policy as well as to those who are engaged in direct social work practice. This might also provide an important area for further study.

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APPENDIX A

CHILD REARING SCHEDULE

Part C.

Instructions to the interviewer

This part of the schedule is to be completed only if there is a child in the home between the age of 6-10 years who has been raised from birth by the mother answering the questions. All questions are to be answered in regard to the same child. If there is more than one child in this age group, the questions are to be answered in regard to the child closest to age six years.

When asking questions, please try to refer to the child by using his name, wherever possible.

Is the child retarded or physically handicapped? ____
(If yes, do not complete the schedule.)

I. We all know that children have different likes and dislikes with regard to food, and the times at which they want to eat. Now,

1. During the first six months when you were feeding your baby, either by breast or by bottle, did you have a system or a routine for feeding him? ____

(a) If yes: Can you tell me what this system was and how you knew when to feed him? _____

(b) If no: How did you know when to feed him? _____

NOTE: If response to (a) or (b) was vague, like "on demand" or "when the baby cried", please ask mother what she meant by this, in order to determine how she knew when to feed him.

2. When your child was $1\frac{1}{2}$ years old and he would not eat his food when he was supposed to, can you tell me what you did? _____

3. (a) When your child was $1\frac{1}{2}$ years old and wanted to eat between meals, what did you do? _____

- (b) If answer is "I fed him" ask:
- i) Did you feed him whenever he asked? _____

- ii) Did you also feed him just before meal (s)? _____

4. (a) When your child was $1\frac{1}{2}$ years old and spilled his food, what did you do? _____

- (b) If response is "I cleaned it up", then ask what did you do about the child? _____

II. There are different ways in which people teach their children to use the bathroom and there are many different situations which arise during the training. We would like to know how you handled some of these situations.

1. (a) At what age did your child walk without the help of someone else or without holding on to anything? _____ (months)
- (b) How old was he when you started toilet training? _____ (months)
2. Did you place your child on the pot regularly to train him? Yes _____ No _____

If yes - if you placed your child on the pot and he did not have a bowel movement, what did you do?

3. Did your child ever wet the bed at night after you regarded him as trained? _____
If yes - what did you do? _____

4. When your child wet and/or soiled his pants during the day while he was being toilet trained, what did you do? _____

5. If your child wet and/or soiled his pants after you considered him as toilet trained, what did you do? _____

III. As children grow up, they may show interest in their own bodies and the bodies of others. They may often ask where babies come from, play with themselves and sometimes run around the house without any clothes on. Parents have many different ways of responding to this. Could you think back to when your child was between 3 and 6 years and tell us what you did in the following situations:

1. When your child asked where babies come from or what is the difference between boys and girls, what did you do? _____

2. When your child showed curiosity about his own body or the bodies of other children, when they were playing together, what did you do? _____

3. When your child took off his clothes and ran around without any clothes on, what did you do? _____

4. When your child played with his own body, what did you do? _____

Personal Characteristics

1. Age: Birth date of mother _____
Age of child being discussed _____ years
(Child in the home between the ages of 6 and 10
and nearest 6 years).
2. Education: Highest grade completed
Mother _____
3. Ethnic Origin:
What is your ethnic origin _____

APPENDIX B

TABLE I

OVER-ALL DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY NUMBER
AND PER CENT ACCORDING TO CATEGORIES
OF PERMISSIVENESS

	Number	Per Cent
Total	83	100
Permissive	21	25.3
Non-Permissive	16	19.3
Extremely Permissive	8	9.6
Inconsistent	38	45.8

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY NUMBER AND PER CENT IN
CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS ACCORDING TO THE
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS ABOUT INFANT
FEEDING PRACTICES

	Question 1		Question 2		Question 3		Question 4	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Total	83	100	83	100	83	100	83	100
Permissive	32	38.5	13	15.6	63	79.5	15	18.1
Non-Permissive	19	23.0	9	10.8	6	7.2	40	48.2
Extremely Permissive	32	38.5	40	48.2	13	15.6	24	28.9
Incomplete ^a	0	0.0	21	25.4	1	1.3	4	4.8

^aNo response or response not rateable.

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY NUMBER AND PER CENT IN CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS ACCORDING TO THE RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS ABOUT TOILET TRAINING PRACTICES

	Question 1		Question 2		Question 3		Question 4		Question 5	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Total	83	100	83	100	83	100	83	100	83	100
Permissive	28	33.7	51	61.4	16	19.3	16	19.3	14	16.8
Non-Permissive	41	49.4	22	26.5	16	19.3	42	50.6	38	45.2
Extremely Permissive	12	14.4	9	10.8	21	25.3	22	26.5	12	14.4
Incomplete ^a	2	2.5	1	1.3	30	36.1	3	3.6	19	23.0

^aNo response or response not rateable.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY NUMBER AND PER CENT IN
CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS ACCORDING TO THE
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS ABOUT SEX
TRAINING PRACTICES

	Question 1		Question 2		Question 3		Question 4	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Total	83	100	83	100	83	100	83	100
Permissive	23	27.6	23	27.6	14	16.8	15	18.1
Non-Permissive	15	18.1	9	10.8	12	14.4	14	16.8
Extremely Permissive	1	1.3	1	1.3	1	1.3	3	3.6
Incomplete ^a	44	53.0	50	60.3	56	67.5	51	61.4

^aNo response or response not rateable.

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY NUMBER AND PER CENT, ACCORDING TO CATEGORIES OF PERMISSIVENESS IN FIVE ETHNIC GROUPS

	Total 82 ^a	Anglo Saxon		West European		East European		N.American Indian		Other	
		No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
		36	100	25	100	15	100	2	100	4 ^b	100
Permissive	20	10	27.7	4	16.0	4	26.6	0	0.0	2	50.0
Non- Permissive	16	9	25.0	5	20.0	1	6.6	1	50.0	0	0.0
Extremely Permissive	8	2	5.6	3	12.0	3	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Inconsistent	38	15	41.6	13	52.0	7	46.6	1	50.0	2	50.0

^aEthnic origin was not obtained from one respondent.

^bConsist of one each of Jewish, Canadian, Italian and South African.