

A Comparison of Divorced and Married Families, their  
Relationships, Resources,  
and Children

by

Anne Champion

A thesis  
presented to the University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
Department of Sociology

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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RELATIONSHIPS, RESOURCES AND CHILDREN

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ANNE CHAMPION

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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MASTER OF ARTS

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the interrelationships between family structure, family relationships, family resources, and the behavior and perception of children in ten married and ten divorced families. Children in the study are between nine and eleven years of age. The study asks, what part, if any, does the family's socioeconomic circumstances and network of personal resources play in family interaction? Does divorce affect the patterns of daily interaction among family members, and if so, in what ways, and to what effect. Do children in divorced families behave and feel differently about themselves than those in married families?

The most significant conclusions concerning children are: 1) there is little difference between the academic, social, and emotional performance of children from married and divorced families of comparable incomes; 2) after divorce, the child's continuing relationship with the non-custodial father is as important to the child's adjustment as the continuing relationship with his or her mother; 3) emotional risk to children of divorce is minimized when parents cooperate with each other as parents.

Divorce is an extremely unsettling event for a child. Effects are mitigated when economic circumstances allow the

custodial parent to live comfortably with the children, and the child continues to enjoy a close relationship with the non-custodial parent, or when a child is removed from an abusive parent, However, this exploratory study suggests that children often lose more than they gain from their parents' divorce. The findings are limited by the relatively small and restricted sample.

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IN DEDICATION

TO DAVE

For his constant love and support



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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, an increasing number of divorces in Canada have touched the lives of children. According to Statistics Canada, (1981:84-205) 48.7 percent or 16,431, of all divorces in 1971 involved children. Ten years later, children were involved in 51.9 percent, or 35,112. The actual number of children involved in the same ten-year period suggest a similar trend. In 1971, 1.2 percent, or 114,815, of the total number of Canadian children and young people under 25 years of age were living in a divorced home. By 1981, the number of "Children of Divorce" had almost tripled: 3.9 percent, or 315,840. Such numbers, although revealing, tell us little about the impact of divorce, especially on children.

What happens to these families after divorce? Does divorce affect the daily patterns of interaction among family members, and if so, in what way? How does interaction in a divorced family differ from that in a married family? Do factors outside the family unit, such as the family's socioeconomic status and network of personal resources play a part in family interaction? Do children living in a divorced environment behave and feel differently about them-

selves from those living in a married environment? Questions such as these, which are of central interest to lay persons and professionals alike, will be addressed in this thesis.

Given the large number of Canadian families affected by divorce, there has been a surprising lack of systematic research in this area. Very little, for example, is known about the nature of family relationships before and after divorce, or the significance these relationships may have for the child. As Hess and Camara (1979:1) state, "Divorce changes the relationships among family members; it does not end them." They further suggest that the psychological, social, and academic development of children is significantly related to the quality of family relationships. Yet only a few researchers (e.g. Hess and Camara, 1979; Hetherington, 1979; Weiss, 1979; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980), have examined the ongoing psychological structure of families after divorce, and few have compared relationships within groups of divorced/separated<sup>1</sup> families and "married" families. Instead, much of the social science research in this area has

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<sup>1</sup> In the rest of this thesis, the term "divorced" will be used to denote separated or divorced households.

concentrated on differences between groups of parents and their children from "divorced" and "married" families. The underlying assumption in most of these studies has been that "married" families have relatively fewer difficulties with parent-parent and parent-child relationships than do "divorced" families.

Similarly, it has been suggested (e.g., Colletta, 1979) that all families are influenced by two sets of resources, specifically, socioeconomic status, and personal network of family and friends. However, much of the research conducted on this subject fails to take into consideration that divorced families, as well as married families, do not have equivalent resources.

In the same way, although it has been suggested by Loewenstein (1979), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), that there is little basis for the presumed similarity of interests and perceptions of parents and children, few researchers have asked the children themselves what they think about divorce. Much of the sociological analysis of divorce relies on the perspective of the spouses, neglecting the child's position. Therefore, our knowledge is incomplete and biased in this respect.

Only in recent years, when the sheer increase in numbers of children affected by divorce makes their presence pertinent, are sociologists, psychologists, judges, social workers, and society starting to place more emphasis on the child in the divorced situation. This is evident from films such as "Kramer vs. Kramer" and the fifty or so works of fiction and non-fiction for children on family break-up. Nevertheless, we are still a long way from being able to assess fully the impact of divorce for either the child or parent.

In short, the failure by researchers to conceptually and empirically distinguish between types of divorced and separated families, their failure to look at divorce from a child's perspective, and the tendency to view separated and divorced families in a negative light, limits, if not distorts, our knowledge in this area. Essentially, I suggest that existing research on families of divorce is inadequate, and, as will be elaborated in the literature review, leaves many questions unanswered. This thesis attempts to address some of these shortcomings.



## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In general, studies of family interaction, especially those focusing on families experiencing divorce/separation, have evolved in three stages:

#### 2.1 STAGE ONE:

In the 20 years between 1957 and 1976, researchers studying children of divorced parents were primarily interested in establishing a linear relationship between a one-parent home and some dysfunctional behavior in the child. These studies concentrated on the assumed causal relationship between the absence of one parent (usually the father) and the child's likelihood of becoming delinquent (e.g., Nye, 1957), developing sex-role identity (e.g., Biller, 1971, 1976; Lamb, 1975) learning, or social behavioral problems (e.g., Burchinal, 1964).

The usefulness of such research was limited for many reasons. First, many of these studies failed to examine the divorced family apart from other single-parent families. In a great many cases, all one-parent families were categorized into a single group, regardless of whether their family structure was due to singlehood, divorce, death, desertion,

or separation. Furthermore, even when researchers recognized the divorced family as a separate unit, the tendency was to conceptualize all divorced families as an homogeneous group. Factors that differentiated divorced families in terms of intra-family relationships, the family's personal, and socioeconomic resources, or the particular phase of divorce<sup>2</sup> the family was in, were not always considered.

Second, the divorced family, as all other forms of one-parent families, has been generally conceptualized as a deviant or aberrant form of the traditional or normal two-parent family (c.f. Benn 1969; Schlesinger, 1975:6). Researchers frequently used the single variable, "being a divorced family" to explain some form of dysfunctional behavior, such as depression (e.g., McDermott, 1968), or aggression (e.g., Sugar 1970)

Third, with respect to the children themselves, divorce has often been seen as the single event which was used to explain a particular child's development. Other variables, such as the child's age, gender, siblings, or psychological and physical health were not always taken into consideration. Sometimes, researchers did not differentiate between short and long term consequences. Often negative outcomes

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<sup>2</sup> Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) note that divorce is an extended process. For the child, as for the adult, it represents a chain of events which begins with the initial escalating distress of the marriage, often peaks at the legal separation, and may continue for several years after the divorce.

(e.g. delinquency, truancy, emotional problems), rather than positive (e.g. greater independence, earlier maturity) outcomes were emphasized.

In sum, the belief before 1970 that families of divorce were homogeneous, deviant, and exist as primary and inevitable sources of maladjustment in children led to biases and problems in the selection of samples, instruments, and analysis of data. As a result, such studies failed to address adequately the basic question: How are children affected by divorce?

## 2.2 STAGE TWO:

By the late 1970's the assumptions, indeed the fears, that the structure of the family inevitably produced personality and behavioral dysfunctions in the child had gradually given way to a more objective perspective. Increasingly, investigators focused on the strengths as well as the weaknesses of divorced families (see Weiss, 1979). The divorced family was now being viewed as a transitional form which changes over time (e.g., Hetherington, 1978; Hess and Camara, 1979; Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), and efforts were made to distinguish between short and long-term consequences of divorce (Hetherington, 1978; Kulka and Weingarten, 1979).

Four major studies by Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1978), Hess and Camara (1979), Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), and Weiss (1979) examined parent-child relationships after divorce. Despite their weaknesses, these studies, relative to those in Stage One, were better designed, broader in scope, and more sensitive to the complexity of family life in the situation of divorce and separation in North America.

### 2.2.1 Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1978).

This study used a comprehensive and multimeasure approach to investigate family interaction over the two year period following divorce. A sample of 48 children from divorced homes was matched by age and gender with a control group of 48 children from intact homes. Information about the children was obtained from parents and teachers at intervals of two months, one year, and two years after divorce. The measures included interviews with, and diary records of, parents, observations of the interaction between parents and children at home and in the laboratory, checklists of children's behavior, and a battery of personality tests administered to parents. In addition, children were observed in the nursery school. Peer acceptance, and ratings of the child's social and cognitive development were obtained from parents and teachers.

The selection of families from a relatively narrow range of demographic characteristics (white, middle class, col-

lege-educated parents) limits the generalizability of Hetherington's and Cox's findings. Nevertheless, the use of a normal, rather than a clinical sample of children, the inclusion of a carefully matched sample of children from intact homes, and the use of multiple measures and procedures to examine the continuity and change in the children and families, permit these researchers to offer an insightful analysis of the impact of divorce on parents, their children, and parent-child relationships.

These authors made three observations which are relevant for the present study. First, greater economic stress was reported among divorced couples than among married couples. Even though the mean income of the divorced couples (mother's plus father's) was equal to that of intact families the necessity of maintaining two households created greater economic hardships for the divorced families.

Second, interaction patterns between divorced parents and their children differed significantly from those in intact homes. Divorced parents tended to be less affectionate, communicated less, made fewer maturity demands, were less consistent in disciplining their children, and had less control over children than married parents.

Third, in divorced families, as well as in married families, effectiveness in dealing with children was related to the support and agreement between parents over child-rear-

ing. For example, in divorced families, the custodial mother's effectiveness in interacting with the child was positively related to a continuing and mutually-supportive relationship with the child's father.

### 2.2.2 Wallerstein and Kelly (1980).

This study was conducted in California under the auspices of the California Children of Divorce Project. An objective of this project was to document parents' and children's experience of divorce; another was to develop clinical intervention techniques to alleviate the high stress often associated with divorce. Parents were recruited to the Wallerstein and Kelly project through attorneys, counselors, social agencies, ministers, teachers, and advertisements describing the service.

The sixty families, involving 131 children between the ages of 3 and 18, who participated in the research were offered divorce counselling at three points in time: at separation, one, and four years after parental separation. Each family member was seen separately by a clinical team.

The data were collected on the quality of family life before and after the separation, the circumstances of the separation/divorce, the personal history of each spouse, the impact of divorce on each child and parent, the relationship

of each parent and child from the perspective of the child as well as the parent, and the parent's opinion on how well each child was coping with the marital disruption. The data were gathered through interviews of parents and children, teachers, and from school records.

As with Hetherington's study, Wallerstein and Kelly's study suffers from methodological problems. For example, the clinical interviews are difficult to replicate and may well have influenced the findings. The lack of a control group of children from intact families and the selection of a sample from a predominantly white, affluent, community north of San Francisco that has one of the highest divorce rates in the United States (c.f. Levitin 1979:8) limits the generalizability of the findings. Finally, when age and sex are controlled, the resultant sample size of individual groups is quite small.

However, there are some methodological strengths. Wallerstein and Kelly's use of a normal<sup>3</sup> sample of children, their careful documentation of the effects of divorce on each family member over several years, their astute clinical perceptions and insights, and their sensitivity to the complex ways parents and children react to divorce has provided an invaluable set of findings which invite further explora-

<sup>3</sup> Wallerstein and Kelly considered their sample of children to be "normal" in that only children who were considered to be age appropriate at school and who had never been referred for psychiatric or psychological treatment were included.

tion.

Three of Wallerstein and Kelly's findings have implications for the present research. First, they conceptualized divorce as an extended process. Such a process, which in most families in their sample lasted two to three years, was characterized by changes in family income, as well as changes in patterns of interaction among family members, especially those between the spouses, and between parents and children.

Second, children and parents differ in their perceptions of, and reactions to, divorce. For example, Wallerstein and Kelly (1980:305) observed: a) that very few of the children shared their parent's relief at the decision to divorce. b) Some of the marriages which had been unhappy for the parents had been comfortable and even gratifying for the child. c) Children made continual comparisons of their present family situation with their memories (i.e. family outings, degree of family conflict, relationships with parents) of the past. In many instances, those children who perceived their current relationships with each parent, jointly or separately, to be relatively similar or improved, generally found the post-divorce family gratifying.

Third, the affective relationship between the child and each parent continues after divorce. Although the custodial mother's caretaking and emotional significance became cen-



tral in these families, the emotional significance of the father for the child did not diminish over the five year period of this study.

### 2.2.3 Weiss (1979).

Weiss's work addressed some of the ways that changes in the family structure may affect parent-child relationships. On the basis of over 200 interviews with single and married parents from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds, and with 40 children and adolescents from single-parent households, Weiss suggests that the traditional structure of the two-parent household in which the child is subordinate to the parents, may no longer be maintained in a one-parent household. Without a second parent, parent-child roles are not clearly defined. Children may move from being subordinate members to junior partners and companions and be expected to share much more responsibility, decisions, and rights with the parent.

One of the strengths of Weiss' research was that it recognized both the positive and negative aspects of new family relationships. Another was that his observations, which were exploratory in nature, suggested directions for research into ways new family roles are negotiated and performed.

Further, Weiss notes that although most parents in his sample, (in contrast to Hetherington's observations of the parents in her sample), saw the greater independence and earlier maturity of their children as largely beneficial and functional for the family unit, the children's reactions were less positive. For example, some of the younger children, felt independent of, yet abandoned by, their parents and yearned for a parent's nurturance and protection. Similarly, although most of the adolescents were able to assume greater responsibility, and took pride in their self-reliance, they regretted the loss of their carefree youth.

#### **2.2.4 Hess and Camara (1979).**

This study examined the effects of divorce upon the child's behavior through two different research strategies: 1) by comparing the social and school behavior of children from both divorced and married homes and; 2) by analyzing the association between family relationships and child behavior.

The sample included 16 two-parent families and 16 divorced families. As the researchers acknowledged, the sample was selected from an extremely restricted range of family experiences and was characterized by the following conditions: the fathers were within visiting distance and maintained at least occasional contacts; all fathers paid

child support; the mothers had not remarried; all families were in the middle or upper socioeconomic strata; and none of the mothers reported severe financial problems.

While, as previously stated, the sample limits the generalizability of Hess and Camara's findings, two aspects of their investigations are of particular interest. One, family relations after divorce were found to be a better indicator of children's behavior than family composition. Essentially, the quality and extent of the child's continuing relationship with both parents was more important than whether the child came from a divorced or a married home. Two, the negative effects of divorce were greatly alleviated when positive relationships were maintained with both parents. The children who dealt with divorce most easily were those who were free to maintain close ties with each parent without becoming involved in the relationship the parents had with one another.

These findings support a central theme of Hess and Camara's, Hetherington and Cox's, Wallerstein and Kelly's, and Weiss's work, viz., "Divorce alters relationships, it does not end them." (Hess and Camara, 1978:1). Psychological ties between the family members continue to influence the children long after the divorce has occurred.

Studies which fall into the aforementioned Stages One and Two reveal two major shortcomings:

1. Only Hess and Camara's study compared relationships both within and between members of divorced and intact families. The remaining studies essentially examined groups of children and parents from divorced families, although Hetherington and her associates (1978) did include married families.
2. Almost all of the studies neglected to assess the role of socioeconomic status variables. Three strategies used illustrate this point: a) the sample was chosen from the same class (i.e., Hess and Camara's, Wallerstein and Kelly's); b) when persons were selected from different classes, class differences were ignored (i.e. Weiss), and; c) the measurement of class by income failed to consider the significant drop in income after divorce (i.e., Hetherington, et al).

It is clear that we are entering a stage in which future research in this area can no longer neglect the socioeconomic variables in the analysis of divorce and its impact on children. However, two studies by Colletta (1979a, 1979b) and one study by Ambert (1982) which examine the impact of class on family interaction in one-parent families seem to set the direction for future investigations in this regard.

## 2.3 STAGE THREE: 1979 TO PRESENT

### 2.3.1 Colletta (1979a, 1979b).

Colletta examined the child-rearing practices of divorced and married mothers of two income groups. She basically raised two questions:

1. Are differences between the child-rearing practices of married and divorced mothers related to the father's absence or are they largely related to low income which usually occurs with divorce? and,
2. What is the relationship between support, satisfaction with support and child-rearing practices?

Seventy-two divorced and married working class mothers were interviewed in order to determine how child-rearing practices vary with family structure, income, the gender and number of children in the family, and the amount of support<sup>4</sup>

Her findings confirmed two hypotheses: 1) "that maternal role performance would not be homogeneous among all divorced mothers but would vary with specific stress factors"; and 2) "that the likelihood of restrictive and demanding child-rearing practices would be related to the amount of stress the mothers faced with low income, the number of children in the family, and the sex of the child."

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<sup>4</sup> Colletta conceptualized support systems as forces at the individual and community levels which enable a person to master the stress and challenge of their lives. She included family and friends, socioeconomic circumstances and community assistance available to the families.

Colletta found income to be a critical factor in child-rearing practices. When income was held constant, marital status was unrelated to child-rearing practices. Married and divorced mothers with lower incomes tended to be more restrictive and make greater demands on their children than did mothers with higher incomes.

A third hypothesis, suggesting "that the level of support available to a mother is related to her child-rearing practices" was partially supported. While this relationship was found to be significant for moderate-income divorced and married mothers, child-rearing practices for low-income divorced mothers were more strongly related to their satisfaction with the support they received than to the actual support.

Colletta concluded that the relationship between many pathological characteristics and divorce may be spurious in that these characteristics are also found in poverty-stricken two-parent families. She suggested that future research on divorce should carefully examine the influence of critical factors as "income" and "support systems" on parent-child relationships.

### 2.3.2 Ambert (1982).

Ambert examined the relationship between children's behavior towards their custodial parents and a variety of so-

ciodemographic characteristics of the custodial parents, such as the parent's sex and socioeconomic status (SES). In her exploratory study, Ambert used information from a series of detailed interviews with parents, personal observations of parents interacting with their children, and parent reports of their children's behavior, to formulate and test hypotheses about marital disruption.

Ambert's sample included twenty Toronto custodial mothers and seven custodial fathers, all of whom had been separated for at least six months, and each of whom had at least one child older than six years of age. Socioeconomically, ten of the mothers and one of the fathers were of lower SES, the remaining ten mothers and six fathers were of middle and upper middle SES.

Admittedly, Ambert's sample would have been improved, had she included a control group of married parents, and if she had been able to enlist a group of custodial fathers at the same low level of income as that of her lower SES mothers. Nevertheless, despite such shortcomings, her research provides valuable insights into marital disruption and its aftermath. Ambert's study has direct relevance for the present thesis partly because it was conducted in Canada and partly because she considered the implications of the socioeconomic status of the parents in her sample.

First, in comparing the relationships between custodial parents and their children, Ambert found that custodial fathers reported better child behavior towards themselves than custodial mothers. While none of the fathers reported difficulties with their children, half of the mothers reported major problems. In addition, although the children of custodial fathers frequently verbalized their appreciation of their father, the children of custodial mothers rarely did so of their mothers.

Second, in comparing the behavior of children of upper SES mothers with those of lower SES mothers, Ambert found that upper SES mothers experienced a much more satisfactory relationship with their children than lower SES mothers. Apparently, lower SES custodial mothers were more likely than upper SES custodial mothers to report forms of deviant behavior in their children such as temper tantrums, truancy, sexual promiscuity, or delinquency.

Third, looking for explanatory factors, Ambert noted that custodial mothers, even those in the higher SES group, had fewer tangible and social resources than custodial fathers. Custodial fathers were invited for dinner by friends more frequently, had more dates, and received more help in babysitting and shopping from friends and relatives than custodial mothers. Apparently, apart from the fact that higher SES mothers had more long-term friends, more verbal contact with their relatives, and better relationships with their



ex-spouses, life was much easier for the custodial fathers in Ambert's sample than custodial mothers.

Just as Colletta did, Ambert, in drawing her conclusions observed that one of the most important variables affecting parent-child relationships in one-parent families is the social and economic situation of the custodial parent. Essentially, the economic circumstances and social support they lack, makes lower SES mothers more vulnerable to the deviant behavior of their children. As such, Ambert suggested that "research should assume a dialectical relationship between parental coping, social resource variables, and children's behavior" (1982:83).

In Summary:

Four main themes emerge from the literature:

1. Divorce changes relationships between family members, it does not end them (Hess and Camara, 1979; Hetherington, 1978; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Weiss, 1979). Therefore there is a need to examine the on-going psychological structure of the family after divorce.
2. Family relationships differ greatly from one family to another (Colletta, 1979; Hess and Camara, 1979; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). Thus, the possible effects of divorce are more clearly re-

vealed by a research strategy which compares family relationships within groups (intact and divorced) as well as between groups (intact and divorced) (Hess and Camara, 1979).

3. A parent's and a child's view of divorce may be quite different. (Weiss, 1978; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980:211), therefore, there is a need for children to be interviewed as well as parents.
4. Generally, family life is influenced by two sets of resources (Colletta, 1979; Ambert, 1982):
  - i) relatives and friends, ii) socioeconomic circumstances. Access to, and use of, these resources will influence the ways in which a family lives and how members adapt to changing circumstances, such as separation or divorce.

While this review of the literature does not permit firm conclusions about divorce, and its impact on children, it does have important implications for future research on divorce and family interaction. First, Hess and Camara's strategy of comparisons within groups (married and divorced) as well as between groups (married and divorced) has proven to be an important methodological strategy. Second, the significance of post-divorce relationships suggests that fu-

ture research should examine the post-divorce interactional dynamics of families. We need to know the factors affecting the family's capacity to establish and maintain cordial relations between parents, and between parents and children. Third, Wallerstein's, Kelly's, and Weiss's assessments that children may feel differently about divorce than their parents, implies that children be consulted as well as their parents. And, finally, Colletta's and Ambert's observations that parent's child-rearing practices are to some degree affected by their personal circumstances, particularly their socioeconomic status and support systems, suggests that more emphasis be placed on social class variables. The present study represents an attempt to incorporate many of these suggestions.

The main focus of the present study is on two forms of family: One where the parents are separated or divorced and are currently living apart; and two, where the parents are married and are currently living together. It specifically focuses on the following:

1. An analysis of family relationships in both married and divorced families, and the effects of such relationships upon the social, emotional, and academic behavior of children;

2. An examination and comparison of the socioeconomic and personal resources available to both divorced and married families and an assessment of the effect such resources may have on i) family relationships, and ii) children's social, emotional, and academic behavior.
3. An examination and comparison of the perception children in both divorced and married families have of families, divorce, and parental roles;
4. An analysis of the conception children in divorced families have of family life and divorce compared to the parent's concepts.

The following chapter outlines our research design and methodology.

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 THE STUDY - AN OVERVIEW:

This chapter outlines the methodological details of the study. It provides a description of the city where this study was conducted, an outline of the design, an explanation of the sampling and methodological procedures, and an account of the subjects. Before we discuss the methodological aspects, it is appropriate to note certain considerations salient to the study which may be of interest to other researchers. It is believed that, just as we drew insights from the work of Bott (1957), Colletta (1978), Rubin (1976), and Sennett and Cobb (1973), other researchers may benefit from our experience.

After planning the research strategy with her major advisor, the writer conducted the study with the assistance of two student interviewers. Later, after the tapes had been transcribed, two research assistants checked the transcripts against the tapes. We found that most of our respondents tended to lower their voices when they discussed personal matters. Quite often, background noises or interruptions by children or telephones ringing made some of the tapes diffi-

cult to transcribe. Our "checkers" fulfilled a very useful function. Not only did they verify the actual words spoken, but they verified important distinctions such as whether things had been spoken "in anger" or "in jest". Essentially, they helped to ensure that our transcripts were an accurate representation of our tapes.

The background preparation for the study took approximately one year. It was a long and tedious process of decisions and counter-decisions. At times, especially in the early stages when we were awaiting decisions from ethic committees, school boards, schools, and so forth, we were forced into periods of quiescent abeyance.

Like all research endeavours, we were confronted by the difficulty of choosing between qualitative and quantitative data, between closed and open-ended questions, between self-administered and personal interviewing. We were aware of the advantages of data generated by structured surveys and closed-ended questions that easily lend themselves to statistical analysis. Quantitative data, particularly from large random drawn samples, have been the preferences of most sociologists. We were equally aware of the limitations of qualitative data. Open-ended, semi-structured interviews that produce qualitative data are by their very nature, costly, time-consuming to collect, and difficult to analyze.

Despite these restrictions, the present study was based on a qualitative research strategy. We chose to collect our data by detailed interviews. We did this for two main reasons: First, the conspicuous lack of information on Canadian families suggested a need for a type of exploratory research which would provide a range of insights into everyday life. Second, we believed the interview method would enable us to tap the total life situation in which the respondents think and act (Babbie, 1975:277).

Most of the questions were open-ended, constructed so as to encourage respondents to answer in detail. (See questions in Appendix). While the sample size was of necessity small and virtually self-selected, we considered it to be appropriate because it was likely to provide us insights into the dynamics of everyday family life.

The study was designed to meet certain administrative standards. Because we wanted the school system to act as a liaison between us and the parents, we were required to comply with the research guidelines set down by the Winnipeg School Board which specified that our research be approved by an Inter-University Research Committee, and that we obtain written permission of the parents. We were also required to obtain permission from each of the principals of the schools we wished to use.

Furthermore, we were limited by our professional ethics. We believed that because we were asking families to reveal personal aspects of their lives, and those of children, the strictest form of ethical conduct was required of us. Consequently, although we were not financed by either organization, we followed the code of ethics stipulated by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association.

Consistent with such ethical guidelines, information provided by parents and children was treated in strictest confidence and effort was made to maintain their anonymity. At the end of the interview, children, as well as parents, were asked if they wished to have all or part of anything they had said deleted from the tape. Furthermore, acutely sensitive to the possibility that some of our respondents may have experienced stressful periods in their lives which might have been painful to recall, respondents were cautioned not to answer any questions they found upsetting, and interviewers were advised to stop questioning at the slightest sign of stress.

We encountered some difficulties on certain, if not critical, aspects of our research. First, we had hoped to have the child's teacher evaluate the child's academic and emotional behavior. Hess and Camara (1978) successfully used this technique. Second, as we assumed that the family's socioeconomic status was an important variable in family in-



teraction, we had hoped that one half of the families in our study would have a medium income and the other half would have a low income. We also hoped that the two levels of income, medium and low, would be applicable to half of the married and half of the divorced families. Third, we had given the families a choice of being interviewed in the home or at the university and we had expected that some of the families would prefer to be interviewed in the university setting. Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) as well as Hess and Camara (1978) had used locations outside of their respondent's homes. Some of these strategies had to be modified due to the contingencies of field work.

With regard to teacher evaluations, Dr. Paul Madak, Director of research in the Winnipeg School Division, stipulated that teachers would provide the evaluations of the children in our study on a voluntary basis only, and that we should seek permission from individual teachers as well as from each child's parents. More importantly, Madak advised that almost inevitably the School Board rejected requests which involved extra work for teachers. After weighing the advantages of having teacher's evaluations against possibly being denied access through the schools, we decided to forgo the teachers' assessments, thus forcing us to rely only on the reports of the parents and their children.

On the sampling strategy, we were unable to obtain a matched sample of divorced and married families at low as

well as moderate income levels which still met our sampling requirements.<sup>5</sup> As has been documented (e.g., Armstrong, 1978; Colletta, 1978; Statistics Canada, 1981) women consistently earn less income than men. We, therefore, could not find families headed by divorced mothers with incomes comparable to that of married families.

On the choice of the interview setting, all families elected to be interviewed in their own homes. This proved to be advantageous. We occasionally experienced difficulties in interviewing respondents in their homes. For instance, electrical outlets for the tape recorder were not always convenient and we were frequently interrupted by telephone calls, crying babies, visitors, doorbells, et cetera. By interviewing in homes, however, we gained glimpses of family life in circumstances which the interviews in a university setting would not have permitted. We had opportunities to meet and chat with various family members and were gratified by the welcome. We appreciated sharing their moments of cheerfulness, and their problems. More importantly, we gained valuable insights into the daily lives of families studied.

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<sup>5</sup> There are married families in Winnipeg with low incomes but many of these families are non-white. After a considerable discussion, we decided to interview only white families. There were basically two reasons for this decision: 1) problem of language, 2) the variable of race is so complex, we felt in a small sample it would be best to focus on one racial category.

### 3.2 THE SETTING

The families in this study lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba, a major urban center in Western Canada. As the capital and its main financial, manufacturing, and grain distribution center, Winnipeg holds a central position in the province of Manitoba. In 1983, when this study was conducted, about 585,000 people (over half of the provincial population) lived in Metropolitan Winnipeg.

Following the boom at the beginning of the century and again in the 1960's, Winnipeg has experienced a stable population growth. Yearly increases in Winnipeg's population stem mainly from small gains in net migration from both within and outside the province.

In common with other prairie cities, Winnipeg's population is composed of diverse ethnic groups. According to the 1981 Census, over thirty different ethnic groups reside in Winnipeg. The distribution of the major ethnic groups is as follows: 44 percent are British in origin, 10 percent Ukrainian, 9 percent German, 8 percent French, 3 percent Polish, and 2 percent Jewish (Statistics Canada, 1981, 93-931, 2:4).

Similar to its ethnic composition, Winnipeg also has diverse religions and religious sects: The 1981 Census lists over thirty different religious denominations. Of these, the major groups are Protestant (50%), Catholic (34%), Jew-

ish (3%), Eastern Orthodox (2%), and Eastern non-Christian (1%). Just over 9 percent of Winnipeg's population state they have no religious affiliation (Statistics Canada, 1982, 93-931, 5:2).

Traditionally, Winnipeg's main economic activity has centered on the city's preeminence as a railways' transportation repair yards and divisional points. The railways in turn fostered a rapid development of financial, manufacturing, and commercial activities. From World War I until the oil boom in Alberta, in the 1970's, the city was the nucleus of the Western economy.

At present, Winnipeg has a mixed economy including business, industrial, manufacturing, and service sectors. About 43 percent of Winnipeg's labour force is engaged in service and administration, 26 percent in trade and finance, 18 percent in manufacturing, and 8 percent in transportation (Statistics Canada, 1981, 95-981, 1:5).

Although Winnipeg's mean income per family of \$32,707 (1982) is slightly below the national mean of \$34,896, it enjoys relatively low cost of living in terms of housing, housing, recreation, transportation, et cetera. Winnipeg's unemployment rate in 1983 of 9.2 percent was also below national rate of 10.9 percent (c.f. Statistics Canada, 1985)

Nevertheless, at the time of this study, Winnipeg, similar to most parts of Canada, was experiencing a recession,

marked by relatively high unemployment and inflation. Several of our respondents who were employed were facing possible lay-offs or reduced hours. Others, unemployed but looking for work, were having difficulty finding suitable employment. The mortgage and interest rates were on the increase. The value of the Canadian dollar was on the decline. Understandably, many of our respondents, the children as well as their parents, were concerned about employment and the cost of living. Their concerns were expressed during interviews and these tended to influence their opinions on a variety of issues. Their responses to some of our questions illustrate this point.

**Will you get married some day, do you think?**

Well, I don't know if I'm going to get married or not. **(Would you like to maybe?)** Well if its going to be a lot of trouble, look at all the taxes and inflation. If you get a family it gets too much. (Boy, age 10)

**In general, how satisfied are you with your present money situation?**

I'm fed up with the ways things are going right now. They increase my rent, they increase my phone, they increase my gas, and they keep wage restraints where I work. Even if the company was in a position to give us a raise, (the government says) it can only be 6 percent this year and 5 percent next. It stinks! Everything else goes up and your wages don't! (Mother, age 29)

**Can you describe what your father does?**

He...well he used to, he was selling carpets and he wasn't making much so he decided to go for another job, so he quit that job, but then he wasn't suitable for it, so he was unemployed. (Girl, age 10)

**Looking ahead, do you think that a year from now your family will be better off, worse off, or just about the same?**

I'm growing very pessimistic. I hope it will be better, however, I'd say it is going to be about the same. (Mother, age 32)

Topographically, the physical development of the city has been concentrical with the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railway lines encouraging the directions along which growth has taken place. Centred in the downtown area are the major financial, insurance, business, shopping, and cultural areas. There are some small scale manufacturing companies located in the downtown area but in recent years they have tended to relocate in suburban industrial estates. Similar to most other Canadian cities, Winnipeg has recently witnessed a proliferation of shopping centres and industrial zones in its peripheries.

Traditionally, the rivers and the railways lines in Winnipeg have also affected the patterns of residential areas in terms of ethnic and social class characteristics. In-

migrants from other parts of Canada and Britain settled mostly in the upper and upper middle-class sections built along the river banks in the southern part of the city; foreign-born Europeans tended to reside north of the Canadian Pacific Railways tracks in the central and northern end of the city, areas close to employment and low cost housing; and, St. Boniface, East of the Red River became home for Winnipeg's French-Canadians (Nadar, 1976).

At present these residential patterns remain generally unchanged. For example, the North End continues to be inhabited by East Europeans and St. Boniface has a large French-speaking community. Most people of northern European origins have moved from the inner city to the suburbs and the vacated areas are now occupied by Third World immigrants and the Native Peoples. Thus, although diverse ethnic groups live in suburbs, people living outside the city's core are most likely to be of British or European origins, either born here or immigrated before 1945.

All but two of the families in this study lived in working and middle class sections of the inner and suburban areas of the city. One of the two families lived in an affluent area in the south west part of the city. The other lived on the fringe of the city in a semi-rural area, east of the city. None of the families lived either in an extremely wealthy part or in an extremely poor area of the city.

Only three of the respondents lived in apartments and the rest lived in single-family homes. Typically, the houses of the respondents in the inner city were built on small twenty-five to thirty-foot lots. Generally, they were narrow, two storey frame buildings interspersed with aging apartment blocks and corner grocery stores. Most had back lanes and straight paths leading from the front street to tiny fenced front yards. Like most houses in the inner city, most of the respondents' houses had been built prior to 1946. Some of the houses had been extensively remodelled, others were in a state of disrepair.

In contrast to the more decrepit older houses found in the inner city, the majority of the respondents' houses in the suburbs were modern. Most had been constructed during the last ten to twenty years and, typical of Winnipeg suburbia, were built on fifty to sixty foot lots. As a rule, most of the houses were neat, well-landscaped bungalows and side-by-sides with front driveways, wide front lawns, and back fenced yards. Modern shopping centres, schools, and community centres completed the picture.

In terms of satisfaction, Winnipeggers appear to have a fairly positive perception of their city. One national survey conducted in 1978 ranked Winnipeg sixteenth out of twenty-three metropolitan cities as being a satisfactory place to live. Another conducted in the Winnipeg area in 1981, found Winnipeg described as a pleasant and friendly city



with lots to do (Iser Newsletter, Vol. 2 Feb., 1983). As the following responses indicate, nearly all of our respondents concurred with those evaluations which see Winnipeg as a good place to live, and in which to raise children.

**How satisfied are you with this neighbourhood?**

The neighbourhood is great. The street is really nice and the kids know a lot of the people in the street... If they ever get locked out or something comes up and we are not here, I always know there is somebody they can go to that they know. (Mother in inner city)

**What is it like living here for the children?**

Very satisfactory. There are lots of children on the street. Most of them come from the sort of parents who are concerned about where their children are. It has been a good neighbourhood for children to grow up in. (Mother, living in suburbs)

**How do you like living here?**

I think this is one of the better ones (cities) we have been in. (Mother, recently moved into Winnipeg from another part of the province)

**How do you like it here?**

I, well, I really do appreciate being a free man... Its not going to be like in our country that maybe tomorrow we'll find something to eat or not. Or somebody will knock on your door and you'll get arrested for talking or saying a joke or something. Its a big decision and I am very happy about it, being here. Its the difference between this and my country as being a Hell and Heaven, that big difference. (Father, a recent immigrant).

The foregoing description of the city of Winnipeg sets the scene for the design of this study.

### 3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The philosophy governing the research design comes from Rubin (1976:14) who states,

We have hundreds of representative studies of one aspect or another of family life - important and useful studies. We have attitude studies and behavior studies; but few make the link between the two. We have probability statistics on marriage, divorce, sexual behavior, and much, much more; but they tell us nothing of the experiences of the flesh-and-blood women and men who make up the numbers. This is not a failure of those studies; they are not designed to do so. Still they leave us with a fragment of knowledge. Therefore, we need also social science that is so designed - qualitative studies that can capture the fullness of experience, the richness of living. We need work that takes us inside the family dynamics, into the socio-emotional world in which people are born, live, and die - a real people with flesh, blood, bones, and skeletons.

Guided by such an orientation, our research design was developed so as to enable an analysis of the relationship between family structure, family resources, family relationships, and children's behavior. A brief description of these units of analysis follows:

1. Family Structure.

- a) Divorced/Separated Families. One-parent households where the parents were separated or divorced and the child was living with one of her/his biological or adoptive parents.
- b) Married Families. Two-parent households where the parents were married and the child was living with both of her/his biological or adoptive parents.

2. Family Relationships.

- a) The affective relationship between the two parents;
- b) The affective relationship between each parent and the child separately.

3. Family Resources.

In the initial step of the analysis, families were classified on the basis of income only. In the second step, in keeping with our assumption that families are not homogeneous and may differ in the type and accessibility of resources, the income criterion was expanded to take into consideration other socioeconomic and personal network resources such as education, child care, housing, family and friends.

4. Child Outcomes.

- a) The child's emotional, social, and academic behavior;
- b) The child's perception of families, divorce, and parental roles;
- c) The child's perception of divorce and life in a divorced household;

The design was similar to the model used by Colletta (1978) in her study of one and two-parent families at two income levels. It called for two comparisons between the cells in Figure 1

Figure 1:	
Moderate Income Married Families	Moderate Income Divorced Families
Low Income Divorced Families	

In the first comparison, which was between divorced and married families, moderate-income married families were compared with moderate-income divorced families. In the second comparison, within divorced families, moderate-income divorced families were compared with low-income divorced families. The main objective of the first comparison (See Figure 2) was to determine the effects of divorce with income held constant. The main objective of the second comparison (See Figure 3) was to determine the effect of income on divorced families.

Figure 2:	
Moderate Income Married Families	Moderate Income Divorced Families
Effects*	

\* - "Effects" as used here refers to family relationships, child outcomes, and family resources other than family incomes.

Figure 3:	
Moderate-Income Divorced Families	Low-Income Divorced Families
Effects *	

### 3.4 SAMPLE

Due primarily to the relatively small number of families participating in the study, our sample had to be selected from a somewhat restricted range of family experience. The families were selected on the basis of family structure, family income, and age of child. To meet the first criterion, married families were matched with an equal number of divorced families. By the second criterion, divorced families whose income was below Statistics Canada's low income guidelines.<sup>6</sup> were matched, for comparative purposes, with an equal number of families possessing an income in excess of

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada's low income cut-off limits are calculated on the basis that families below these limits spend, on average, 58.5% or more of their income on food, shelter and clothing. Low income cut-offs are differentiated by size of area of residence and by family size. For example, in Winnipeg in 1983, the limit for a family of 2 persons was \$12,440; the limit for a family of 3 persons was \$16,641. (Statistics Canada, 1983, 13-206:10).

those guidelines (primarily medium range.) Our third criterion was the selection of families with at least one child between the age of 9 and 11, and in the 4th or 5th grade at school. It was important that the children in the study be old enough to respond to our questions.

#### 3.4.1 Selection of Cases:

In selecting families for this study, we were guided by Sennett and Cobb's (1973:44) approach:

to talk to people about their experiences... involves a measure of person to person trust that does not come from getting people's names in a directory and calling them up. It is very difficult to ring doorbells randomly in a neighbourhood and ask people if they would like to sit down for three hours and tell you the story of their lives...therefore, we moved from person to person through contacts we developed... In the beginning we met people through nursery schools and parents' groups...increasingly, the people we interviewed helped us find others they thought might be interested.

We used three strategies to obtain our sample. While each strategy alone would have ultimately provided us with a sufficient sample, we believe that all three strategies assured a sample most suitable for this study.

1. We requested permission from Winnipeg School Division #1 (inner city) to send letters to homes through grades 4 and 5 students of several schools in their division. Following this, we approached principals of the schools which

the division had assigned for the study, for their permission. The letter (See Appendix) outlined the purpose of our research and invited families to participate. Parents who were interested in taking part in our study or who desired more information, either contacted us directly by phone or filled out a card we had included with the letter. These cards, which were returned to the schools by the children, were in turn passed on to us by the schools. Seven of the married and four of the divorced families in the sample were obtained in this way.

This method of choosing cases had two main advantages. First, divorced families were not singled out or "labelled", and because family participation was voluntary, families were willing to talk to us. Second, by requesting the School Division to assign us schools in working and middle class areas, we were able to select families from the specific social classes that the research design called for.

There were disadvantages as well. First, the sample was biased insofar as only families who volunteered were interviewed. Second, the return rate was low. Of the 500 or so letters and cards sent home through the children, only twenty-six families returned the cards indicating they were interested in participating. Furthermore, of these twenty-six families, five families were turned down because of their difficulties with the English language, three because we could not arrange a suitable time to hold our interview, two



had family events which forced them to cancel at the last minute, two moved out of the school district, one changed their phone number to an unlisted one before we were able to contact them, and two of the fathers in the married families did not want to take part in the study.

While this low rate of return was disappointing, it may be attributed mainly to the large number of foreign-born families and the high turn-over rates in the student population in some of the schools we were assigned. For example, 180 letters were sent to one school where the transfer-in rate was 26.1 percent and 75 percent of the students came from non-white or recent immigrant families (c.f. Mr. Fleck, principal; Winnipeg School Division Report 1034: 198 ).

2. Adults attending a Family Course at the University of Winnipeg were told about the study. Three married and three divorced students, each of whom met our criteria of having a child in grade 4 or 5 volunteered their families. A major advantage of this method was that it insured our sample contained families where at least one parent was educated beyond high school. This factor was important for our study. Essentially, while we were primarily interested in exploring the effects of income on family interaction, we were also interested in exploring the effects of other resources such as education and occupation. Thus, the families recruited through the elementary school system provided us with working-class families, while those from the university were from middle-class backgrounds.

3. Families who had heard about our study from others contacted us at the university and offered to take part. Three families were selected in this manner. This latter technique - that of snowballing - could have gone on indefinitely had it not been for our limited time and resources.

#### 3.4.2 Characteristics of our Sample:

Our final sample consisted of ten married and ten divorced families, and, as called for, each family had a child in grade four or five. Five of the families had what might be termed low income, while the remaining fifteen families were in the medium income group.

All divorced mothers had custody of the children. Three of the non-custodial fathers saw their children on a regular basis, five did so occasionally, and two of the fathers had little or no contact with their children.

All the families in the study were from working and middle class backgrounds. Although most of the parents had some form of post secondary education beyond grade twelve, only two married fathers, two married mothers, and three of the divorced mothers had university degrees. The fathers' occupations ranged from blue-collar (e.g., mechanic, heavy duty equipment operator) to professional/technical employment in licenced professional or technical fields (e.g., optician, electrician). The mothers' occupations ranged from

service (e.g., waitress, cashier) to professional categories (e.g., teacher, nurse).

In the two-parent households, all fathers were employed full time; and of the ten mothers, three chose not to work outside of the home, four were employed full time, and three part time. In the one-parent households, four of the ten mothers were employed full time, three part time, two chose not to work, and one was unemployed but actively seeking employment. Two-parent households had a mean family income of \$36,496.00; one-parent households had a mean income of \$17,149.00.

On other personal characteristics of our respondents, the mean number of children per family was two, and only one of the married families and one of the divorced families had pre-schoolers. The mean age of the married fathers was 39; in the case of married mothers, the mean was 35, while for divorced mothers the mean was 34. In part, the age of the parents is consistent with our sampling strategy: families had to have at least one child in the 4th or 5th grade grade at school. (Hence, younger parents were eliminated from consideration.)

The length of marriage of parents in married households ranged from 11 - 25 years with a mean length of 14 years. Length of marriage in divorced families before separation occurred ranged from 3 to 18 years; the mean was ten and a

half years. Five of the divorced mothers had obtained final divorce papers, two were awaiting the final decree nisi, and three were separated. While none of the mothers in this latter category expressed any desire of reconciliation, none of the three were actively seeking a legal divorce. Legally divorced mothers had been divorced from less than a year up to seven years, for a mean of about three and a half years. Separated mothers had been separated from one year to six years: a mean of about three years.

In the one-parent households, although three of the mothers had formed "live-in" arrangements with male companions, all of the mothers remained single. Of the non-custodial fathers, two had remarried and four lived with female companions. This confirms previous findings that men tend to remarry more frequently than women.

The families in this study represented a diverse population. While they had many similarities, they also had some differences. Since variables such as education, occupation, the gender of the child, and the religious affiliations of the parents, have been found to influence family functioning, we compared the major groups of families on these characteristics. Furthermore, in an effort to assess the extent to which the findings of this study can be generalized, we compared general socio-demographic characteristics of our sample with the population of Winnipeg as a whole.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the characteristics of divorced and married mothers. As can be seen, the married mothers were more religious, had more income, and had a greater number of boys than the divorced mothers. Although income and religious affiliation might well be attributed to a basic difference between divorced and married families, undoubtedly our sample would have been improved if we had been able to obtain a sample of married families with equal number of girls and boys. As our time and financial resources prevented further sampling, the best we could do was to be sensitive to this factor in our analysis.

Table 3 compares characteristics of our sample with the general population of Winnipeg. Although our sample was not randomly selected, the cases appeared to be moderately representative of Winnipeg's middle and working class families.

TABLE 1

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Divorced and Married Mothers

	Divorced Mothers (N=10)	Married Mothers (N=10)
<u>Education</u>		
High School only	4	3
Post High School	6	7
<u>Family Income</u>		
Less than \$10,000	3	0
\$10-19,999	4	0
\$20-29,999	1	8
\$30-39,999	2	2
<u>Religion</u>		
Catholic	3	2
Protestant	0	5
Other	0	1
None	7	2
<u>Occupation</u>		
White Collar	5	5
Blue Collar	2	2
Not working	3	3
<u>Where born</u>		
In Canada	9	8
Europe	1	2
<u>Number of Children</u>		
1-2	8	8
3-4	2	2
<u>Gender of Child</u>		
Female	7	1
Male	3	9

TABLE 2

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Divorced Respondents'

	Low SES (N=5)	Medium SES (N=5)
<u>Education</u>		
High School only	3	1
Post high school	2	4
<u>Family Income</u>		
Less than \$10,000	3	0
\$10-19,999	2	2
\$20-29,999	0	1
\$30-39,999	0	2
<u>Religion</u>		
Catholic	2	1
None	3	4
<u>Occupation</u>		
White Collar	2	3
Blue Collar	1	1
Not working	2	1
<u>Where Born</u>		
In Canada	4	5
Europe	1	0
<u>Number of Children</u>		
1-2	4	4
3-4	1	1
<u>Gender of Child</u>		
Female	3	4
Male	2	1
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Separated	1	4
Divorced	4	1

TABLE 3

A Comparison of Selected Socio-demographic Characteristics  
of Winnipeg's Population and Sample Cases

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Winnipeg</u> (N=584,842) %	<u>Sample</u> (50) %
<u>Education (age 25-44)</u>		
High School	44	35
Post high-school	56	65
<u>Religion</u>		
Catholic	34	23
Protestant	50	30
No religious Preference	9	40
<u>Where Born</u>		
Born in Manitoba	67	70
Born outside Canada	19	20
<u>Median Age at First Marriage</u>		
Males	24	23
Females	22	20
<u>Average Number of Children</u>		
1-2	77	80
3 or more	23	20
<u>Family Income - Hu-Wi Fam:*</u>		
Less than \$10,000	5	0
\$10,000-\$39,900	64	70
Over \$40,000	30	30
Average Income	\$34,222	36,496
Median Income	\$30,960	37,500
<u>Female Headed (age 24-44)*</u>		
Less than \$10,000	38	30
\$10,000-\$39,900	59	70
Over \$40,000	2	0
Average Income	\$14,656	\$17,149
Median Income	\$12,703	\$12,200
Incidence of Low Income Families	14	13

\* - Winnipeg income 1981; income of respondents 1983.



### 3.5 THE HOME INTERVIEW:

The interviews were done between March and July of 1983. It had been an early Spring and characteristic of Winnipeg's weather at this time of year, a mixture of hot dry and cool wet days. Many of the parents, particularly the mothers, were annoyed at their children over "wet and dirty clothes". Almost instantly, we found the weather assisted us in establishing a rapport with our respondents. As the following responses indicate, weather often mediated interaction between mother and child:

**Can you describe a typical school-day evening in your family?**

Well after school, when it's nice out, which hasn't been too much lately, I've let R...go out and play because he loves to play...but he's coming in so wet that I've kept him in. He's so dirty that I've had to make him take his clothes right off there, (at the front door) and then downstairs right into the washer. (Mother of ten year old boy)

**Do you ever just talk about things with your mother?**

Well depends, say like a couple of weeks ago, I got my new shoes all wet playing soccer and baseball, and I got in and she really got mad. And so, like I would really like to; I know I tried. Most of it was because when I was on the first base and here someone is coming and running after me. I was going out of the way and he slipped in all the water in the middle of the field and I fell into a puddle of water, so I got my shoes and my coat all wet. (Boy age ten)

**Do you sometimes not get along with your mother?**

Sometimes. Yes. Like, if I get my shoes muddy, new shoes and they are all suede. I got killed for that today... Got grounded for a week, that's the worst part. (Boy, age ten)

As indicated earlier, four interviewers assisted in data collection. In the case of married families, and in as many of the divorced families as our time schedules would permit, families were interviewed by two interviewers. This practice proved advantageous for both the interviewers and the families. By interviewing two family members at the same time, we were able to reduce the time we were disrupting the family. For us, it was convenient to interview in pairs. Not only were transportation problems solved, but any apprehensions about going into stranger's homes were minimized. Furthermore, because two of our interviewers were male and two were female, sometimes interviewers and respondents were of the same gender, sometimes the opposite.

Although the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, there were some drawbacks to working in respondents' homes. Loaded down with our interview and recording paraphernalia we sometimes aroused the curiosity of the neighbours. Once, on going to the wrong door, we were mistaken for social workers. Another critical problem was lack of space. Typically, our respondents' houses were small, and if, as was usually the case, the whole family was home, it was often

difficult to find two locations permitting privacy to conduct the interviews. Usually, we simultaneously interviewed in the kitchen and in the living-room. Other household members temporarily withdrew to their bedroom or were asked to spend the evening elsewhere. The latter was the case in the three divorced families with a "live-in-partner". All three partners, one of whom we passed as he was leaving, were conspicuous by their absence during interviews.

Occasionally we interviewed both parents at opposite ends of the same room due to scarcity of space. While this situation was far from ideal, we had little choice. Respondents often were at ease in the cramped quarters, although sometimes they tended to lower their voice to a whisper or waited until their spouse had left the room before answering questions that involved the spouse at the other end. For example, when asked, "Do you ever wish you had not married?" a 35 year old husband responded,

Not while she is sitting there! (Do you want to wait until she's disappeared? We can come back to it.) No, that's okay. Sometimes, yes.

Interviews of parents lasted between one and three hours, and those with the children between half and one hour. As a rule, husbands tended to take longer than wives to complete the interview. One reason is that some sections of the questionnaire, such as those on employment, were more appli-

cable to men than women. Also mothers were more often interrupted by the children than the fathers. Mothers also tended to be responsible for domestic tasks such as putting the children to bed, making coffee, and answering the phone. Thus mothers, more than fathers, sometimes tended to hurry through the interview. Finally, it may well have been that men, not always given the opportunity to express their views on family experiences, found the interviews stimulating.

Following Bott's (1957) technique, we began the interviews with about ten or fifteen minutes of casual conversation, followed by an explanation of the study, including its goals, who was in the research team, how we were financed, and how the information would be used.

We explained that there was little information available on the Canadian family and on divorce, and that we wanted to talk to a small number of families. Some of the explanation was always directed towards the children in the study. In general, we attempted to let the children know how interested we were in hearing about their daily activities and their ideas about marriage and family life. We also tried to reassure them that the interview "was not a test" and that there were "no wrong or right answers". Obviously, as some families were more interested in the background of the study than others, the explanations were tailored to each family's circumstances. However, throughout the discussion we were careful to avoid giving the impression that households with

two parents were "more normal" than ones with one parent. We also informed the respondents that we were not counselors and, therefore, not qualified to counsel them.

While our initial letter of invitation to the families informed them of our plan to interview spouses separately, a few respondents had reservations. Among the married families, two husbands were quite uncomfortable about their wives being asked to be interviewed separately. One husband felt that we were "checking up on his answers" or "trying to trick him". The other felt that because it was a "family study" his family should be interviewed as a "family unit". After they were assured that none of our questions were designed to check one spouse's responses with the others, and that they could refuse to answer any questions, or terminate the interview any time they chose, both men cooperated.

Among the divorced families, two mothers had concerns about interviewing their children separately. In one case, the mother was concerned that her child, who at the time, was seeing a counsellor, might be upset by our questions. In the other, the mother, as much curious as she was concerned, was intensely interested in listening to her child's views. In the first case, the mother was reassured once a copy of the child's interview schedule was shown and was satisfied that under no circumstances would we pressure the child to respond if he appeared even slightly upset. In the second, the mother was satisfied when the child herself vol-

unteered to later reveal the questions to her. To allay any fear the mother might have, we gave her a copy of the child's interview.

In general, interviews with the parents were fairly relaxed. Most parents were quite willing to share their opinions, views, and feelings, often informing us more than we had expected from such open-ended questions as, "How do you get along with your spouse?"

Our questions on income, however, did cause some hesitation. Generally, low income respondents were more willing to reveal their incomes than those with high incomes. This problem was circumvented by using cards indicating levels of income. The following is an example of the ways respondents answered the question on income:

**Would you tell me the number (on card) which best represents how much you earned last year before taxes?**

Well, its all confidential? You are not going to tell Revenue Canada? **(No, I wouldn't do that.)**  
Well, I pay myself a salary. I get a percentage of the gross profit, the gross intake of my store, and I pay myself a salary out of that...I need a calculator (Father, moderate income.)

Okay, I earned under seven thousand, but my income tax form is here, but with child support and my earnings and board and room and everything altogether my income would be eleven thousand dollars.  
(Mother, low income)

Interviews with the children were less predictable than those with the parents. Children, we found, have a limited attention span. During interviews, we had to be extremely attentive, willing to listen to stories about their best friend or their favourite pet. Occasionally, they asked us to talk to a friend, or siblings. In such circumstances, we found it strategically prudent to stop the interview long enough for a younger brother or sister to say a few words into the recorder. Sometimes, they were candidly blunt, demanding "how much longer is this going to take?"

Children also differed surprisingly in their communicative skills, regardless, of their age. For example, while some nine year olds in the study were extremely articulate, clearly expressed their views and related their experiences, some ten and eleven year olds had difficulty expressing themselves. Often they resorted to body language, (e.g., moving hands, nodding heads, etc.), and frequently we ended in translating such gestures with our recorded commentaries. For example:

**Are some of the children at school hard to get along with?**

**(You are nodding your head again, does that mean a lot of them?) A lot. (Girl, aged eleven)**

In retrospect, we considered the interviews with both parents and children a success. Whether by words or by gestures, both were equally expressive. In essence, both pa-

rents and children were an integral part of the research. Together, they contributed greatly to the overall picture of family life we were trying to discover.



## Chapter IV

### QUANTIFYING THE DATA

This chapter describes the analysis - the breakdown and reconstruction - of the data. It explains how we categorized the interview data so that other interested researchers can replicate, critique, and extend our research. (Further details are appended, see Appendix A,B,C).

The interview data were transferred to 5 1/2 inch floppy discs of a microcomputer. This strategy proved advantageous for an analysis of qualitative data. Once the taped data were on the discs, it was relatively efficient and easy to search for, print out, compare, and code answers to specific questions.

As stated earlier in this thesis, we were interested in exploring the interrelationships between family structure, family relationships, family resources, and child outcomes. However, we recognized that families were not homogeneous regardless of their type or marital situation. In effect, we were interested in both categorizing and comparing groups and treating families as individual cases. Prompted by these considerations, over three hundred items were coded and fed into the computer at the University of Manitoba. Using the Statistical Analysis System (SASS), these items

were sorted and categorized in terms of individual family's marital status, type of relationships, resources, and children's performance. While the marital status, being either married or divorced, needs no further explanation, the classification and coding procedures used for family relationships, family resources, and child outcomes merit further elaboration.

#### 4.1 FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The families were classified by the type of family relationships in two different ways. Initially, both married and divorced families were classified into "types" on the basis of our overall impression gained from the replay of taped interviews, reading the transcripts, and from the notes taken at the time of the interview. The respondent's assessment of their relationships as well as their voice modulations suggestive of sadness, happiness, anger, defeat, or resignation on tape were noted. Basically, the studied families fell into two types which we tentatively labelled "strong" and "weak".

The second method was more complex. It involved a detailed breakdown of the transcribed interviews by selected attributes. We looked for similarities within and differences between each type of family identified by the initial classification. Subsequently, the coding of sixty-six items

concerning family relationships provided a comprehensive representation of familial interaction as it prevailed in both married and divorced families at the time of the interview, and of a retrospective assessment of the relationships which existed in the divorced families before their marital disruption. Using such a procedure, we divided the families in terms of two distinctly different types of family relationships, the dimensions of which have been summarized in the following figure. As can be seen, one was a type of family based on companionship, flexibility, sharing, and emotional expressiveness, and another was based on inflexibility, authoritarianism, and little expressiveness. We conceptualized the first as "congenial", and the second, "conflictual".

Figure 4

Congenial Type

Conflictual Type

1. Quality:

Get along well. Perceive themselves as "close", "friendly". Demonstrate affection and are satisfied with affection received. Their relationship is a total physical and emotional union. Are happy with their marriage and are ready to "work on it" to preserve it.

Describe their relationship as "not close" "not good" "hostile" or "Indifferent". Sometimes say they are close but add a contingency clause such as ideal when their partner "doesn't fool around" or "is sober". One or the both of them are dissatisfied and want their relationship to change.

## 2. Companionship

Enjoy each other's company. Do a lot, or most things together, but are interested in, and supportive of, activities each does alone. It is a "WE" relationship, couple-centered.

Rarely do things as a couple without children or others. Show little interest or support of each other's activities. It is an "I" relationship, self-centered.

## 3. Communication:

Find it easy to talk with one another. Consensus on most things, especially issues concerning values, marriage, and children.

Communication is an issue between them. Report they "have problems communicating with one another" or "do not talk a lot".

## 4. Emotional:

Emotionally supportive of one another. Ready to listen and help. Often so "cued" into their spouse, they do not have to wait to be told.

Are not emotionally supportive of one another. Often spouses keep their own problems to themselves, neither heeding nor listening to one another.

## 5. Conflict.

Conflicts between them are rare. If they disagree they try not to argue in front of the children, and neither one loses control.

Consider they argue more than most other couples. Often they disagree in front of the children, and one or both of them lose control.

## 6. Decision-making:

Decision-making is joint, based on mutual consensus. Rather than one giving in, they will work out a compromise which is acceptable to both.

Both spouses go their own ways if they cannot reach a consensus, or the final decision is habitually only made by one spouse with only a minimal discussion.

## 7. Division of Labour.

"Sharing" and "flexibility" are central. Many tasks are shared. Others are determined by the time, skill, and preference of each partner. Tasks tend to change over the years, depending on the family's needs and situation.

Division of labour is traditional with roles clearly defined. Few tasks are shared. Females are responsible for "feminine" tasks such as cooking and cleaning, males for "masculine" tasks such as car and house maintenance.

## 8. Parents and Children

Both parents enjoy their children, take an active interest in their activities. Parents work as a team, and while one parent may be more involved with a child than the other, there is no competition or jealousy between parents.

Parents do not support one another in dealing with the children. Often, one accuses the other "does not handle them right" or "does not take enough interest or time". Friction between the parents over the children may be quite hostile.

## 9. Child-rearing Ideology:

Rules are relaxed and adjusted to the circumstances. Discipline is flexible, based on reason and "friendly" persuasion. Children are dealt with as distinct individuals. They have few set duties and are encouraged to set their own limits, doing things because they "want to" rather than because they are "made to".

Rules are firm and unbending with few exceptions made. Discipline is rigid and authoritarian. Parents tend to treat their children "as a group" rather than encourage each child's separate individuality. Children are expected to help on a regular basis around the house and yard.

## 10. Family Ideology

Expectations:  
Both partners have similar expectations of marriage.  
Congruence:  
Parents assess family roles and situations in the same way.

Expectations:  
Partners have different expectations of marriage.  
Congruence:  
Parents tend to differ in their perception of family roles and situations.

Although the families in our study were situated on a continuum between the two extremes, we found it quite easy to classify them as either congenial or conflictual.<sup>7</sup> Recognizing the significance of family relationships, we decided to incorporate them into our analytical framework. Therefore, in addition to the type of "family resources", which will be dealt with in the following paragraphs, a "congenial" or a "conflictual" family became a basis of comparison, based on 14 congenial and 6 conflictual families.

#### 4.2 FAMILY RESOURCES:

Each stage of the analysis entailed problems. With respect to "Family Resources", we were aware that not all families are similar, and have varying resources and thus are likely to have different outlooks. Nevertheless, we were intrigued by the diversity of families in terms of their complex life styles and views. How does one compare the "resource value" of a run down home badly in need of repair for a mother who considers herself "so lucky to have the house", with that of a fully modern bungalow which the mother says is "completely inadequate to meet their needs"? How does one equate the family with three cars for whom transportation is a problem with the family who report they have

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that families were analyzed according to members within the household. Thus, married families were classified according to the relationships between parents and between parents and child. Divorced families were classified mainly on the relationship between mother and child.

neither a car, nor a problem with transportation? Similarly, how can one equate the mother who says, "My mother is my greatest resource, I don't know how I would manage the kids without her", with the mother who reports, "I'd do anything if my mother would stay away."?

As the foregoing suggests, resources are perceived differently by individuals. Thus, when assessing family resources and the value of such resources for individual families, one has to take into account the subjective as well as the objective aspects of family resources. With this in mind, the following steps were taken to classify the families by their resources.

First, we developed a list of all objective resources of each family as well as their levels of satisfaction with such resources. This list, which included such varied resources as personal health and emotions, income, employment, child care, housing, et cetera, was compiled from responses to questions such as,

**What is your main source of income?**

**How do you feel about working?**

**How satisfied are you with your living arrangements?**

Second, the list provided the means for allocating appropriate "scores" used to compare one respondent's resources with another's. As the following example concerning "friends" demonstrates, it provides a fairly comprehensive

basis of comparison. (For full list and method of scoring, see Appendix B).

<u>Friends</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Scores</u>
Emotional help from friends	Yes/No	1/0
Tangible help from friends	Yes/No	1/0
Frequency of contact with?	Regular/Not regular	1/0
Get together with friends?	Social/Special/Never	1/1/0
Satisfied with social life?	Yes/No	1/0

Understandably, considering the divergent types of families in our study, there was a wide range of resources. Whereas, the possible "resource scores" could vary between 0 - 207, in actual fact, the "resource scores" of our families ranged between 75 - 148.

#### 4.3 CHILD OUTCOMES:

Compared to the system of measuring family resources, measurements of children's performance were relatively simple. In the absence of formal reports on the children's scholastic performance, and psychological testing of their social and emotional skills, we relied on the respondents' responses to selected questions (examples below) for constructing an "overall competence scale" that delineated the qualities that parents and children value.



What sort of things do you think a child in grade 4 or 5 can do for themselves?

Do you think a child should obey immediately when you ask them to do something?

The final scale, which consisted of seventeen items, included only those attributes on which there was uniform consensus of parents and/or children. For example, attributes, such as "immediate obedience" and "helping with household tasks" which were considered to be important by some parents, but not by others, were excluded.

Specifically, our respondents concluded that in school, children should be average or above, well behaved, and friendly with their teachers; socially they should have friends, and get along well with other children; and emotionally, children of this age group should be fairly independent, able to do things for themselves, and not overly demanding. In terms of personality, parents desired happy, out-going, confident children.

Children were scored by how well their academic, social and emotional behavior fit this typology. In procedures similar to those used with "Family Resources", we used the entire sample of children to create a measurement of competence against which each child could be compared. Using the seventeen items of the "overall competence scale" (See Appendix B for list of items and scores assigned) as a basis

of scoring, those children whose scores were less than the mean scores of the whole sample were considered to be "below mean"; those with scores equal to or above the sample means were considered to be "mean" or "above mean".

In our sample, out of a possible "23", the overall scores (academic, social, and emotional scores combined) ranged between 4 - 16, with a sample mean of 12.4. Pam, with an overall score of "4" and Tracey with an overall score of "16" illustrate examples of children we considered to be "below mean" and "above mean"

Pam is eleven years old and in grade five. She says she "hates" school, thinks her teachers are "grouchy" and dislikes all her subjects except "Unsustained Silent Reading". Pam says she is doing "okay in school" but her mother reports Pam has problems with reading and has a resource teacher working with her. Socially, Pam doesn't have any real friends, finds "lots" of the children at school and in the neighbourhood difficult to get along with. Emotionally, her mother finds Pam overly demanding and says at times it is a problem to get her to do things. During the interview Pam's attitude ranged from sulky petulance to outright hostility towards her mother, her peers, and her teachers. In terms of her personality, her mother describes her as a moody, difficult child, with a low self esteem.

Tracey is eleven. She is in grade six and loves school, ranks herself as "about average". She likes just about everything at school, especially maths. She says she sometimes has a few problems with French, but her mother reports she has always done fairly well in school. Socially, her mother describes her "as very sociable". She herself says she has lots of friends at school, including "some special ones", and she does not find any of the children at school or in the neighbourhood difficult to get along with. Emotionally, her

mother finds her "endlessly" demanding, and reports that it is sometimes difficult to get her to do things. During the interview, Tracey was pleasant and attentive. Personality-wise, Tracey is described as a happy, stable child with stubborn streaks.

In sum, relative to family structure, and marital status variables, the operationalization of family relationships, family resources, and child outcomes involved several phases of conceptual and computer analysis. The remaining chapters of this thesis will focus on the findings. Chapter Five describes the "family resources of the families, and Chapter Six describes the "child outcomes" of the children in the study. To facilitate discussion, where appropriate, each section will include statistical comparisons of groups of our respondents (e.g., married/divorced, congenial/conflictual, low/medium, below/above mean child outcomes), as well as qualitative illustrations of individual cases. However, it must be emphasized that these types of statistical figures are reported only to indicate the variation among respondents. In that the sample was relatively small, consisting of only twenty children, and twenty married, and ten divorced parents, and that some questions were not fully discussed by all respondents, the data should be seen not for their statistical significance, but for their summary and corroborative value.

## Chapter V

### FAMILY RESOURCES

In this discussion of Family Resources, comparisons include three groups: a) married with divorced families; b) congenial with conflictual married and divorced families; and c) low, medium, and upper medium income divorced families.

Wide disparities have been noted by previous researchers between the resources available to one and two parent families. Ambert (1982), for example, observes the limited social activity of custodial mothers; Colletta (1979) refers to the economic hardships of single parents, particularly those in the lower socioeconomic group. Because women generally earn substantially less than men, and many resources are related either directly or indirectly to family income (see Resource Scale in Appendix C), it is to be expected that the women respondents, particularly the divorced mothers, who are for the most part the prime source of family income, will have lower resource scores. It is also assumed that a certain degree of disparity will exist between the resources available to congenial and conflictual families. Presumably, family members who are "close" and "amicable" are a greater resource for one another than those who are

"hostile" and "distant". Our data partly support these assumptions.

#### 5.0.1 Married and Divorced Families:

A comparison of the resource scores of married and divorced respondents indicates that the majority of divorced mothers have fewer resources than either married fathers or mothers. In fact, as can be seen in Table 4, seventy percent (N=10) of the divorced mothers have fewer resources than either of their married counterparts.

TABLE 4

#### Distribution of Resource Scores of Married and Divorced Parents

Married Fathers (N=10)	Married Mothers (N=10)	Divorced Mothers (N=10)
103	94	75
116	109	76
126	113	77
127	113	86
129	119	89
131	121	90
134	130	92
136	132	98
143	136	103
145	145	107
<u>Mean Scores:</u> <u>129</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>89</u>

To compare those resources not specifically related to family income, the second step of the analysis breaks down the respondents' resources by "socioeconomic", "socioeconomically related", and "personal network of family and friends" dimensions. These are listed in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Distribution of Respondents' Scores  
by the Type of Resources

	Married Fathers (N=10)	Married Mothers (N=10)	Divorced Mothers (N=10)
Socioeconomic	34	31	25
S.E.S. Related	22	22	14
Personal Network	75	69	52
<u>Mean Scores:</u>	<u>131</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>91</u>

Considering the "socioeconomic" category which is composed of the employment, education, and income resources of our respondents, it is of interest to note that although both married and divorced parents in our sample have similar educational qualifications, they differ in their socioeconomic scores. As the following interview data illustrate, the employment and income resources of the married families

in our sample are considerably higher than those of the divorced families:

**What type of non-salary benefits to you receive through your job?**

I have a pension plan, a dental plan...life insurance, and there is a good sick leave benefit. And after you work so long, you get so much time. And they have, like the Mondays off every second Monday, I think that is nice. **(Do you have a company car?)** No, but a person can work on their own vehicle in the company garage after hours or on the weekend.

(married father, mechanic, family income \$45,500);

Once you get on full time, I get some type of sick benefit, and there's a dental plan. **(Only with full time?)** Well you see, they cover me for the amount of hours I put in. They cover me, but not my children right now. If my hours go down then I am not covered; I'm only covered for three months unless my hours go back up. If I work a lot of hours - almost full time, then the children are. **(You mean they keep putting you in, taking you off?)** Yes. **(Must be difficult?)** Oh definitely. **(How about life insurance?)** Well the group insurance they have is \$5000.00 death benefit (that is) if you are full time.

(divorced mother, supermarket cashier, family income \$12,500);

**In general, how satisfied are you with your present money situation?**

I guess its about as good as it can be but I can't say its too satisfactory... I don't have financial security. I don't know from one month to the next if I can make the mortgage payments.

(Divorced mother, with an income of \$12,000);

I'm satisfied. I'm happy with it. I think again its because we learned to budget and live within our means. I guess if living within your means is having two cars. They are not new cars by any

means, they are older cars, and we live in an older house, and I think we really watch. We don't buy things foolishly; we have cash before we buy an appliance or whatever, things like that. (Married father, family income of \$37,500).

Next, in comparing respondents' transportation, leisure, child care, and housing resources which, in that they require financial expenditures, we have categorized as "socioeconomic related", married parents in our sample again appear to have a distinct advantage over divorced parents. Only regarding their transportation resources are married and divorced respondents similar. As a group, married families have greater leisure, child care, and housing resources than divorced families. The following statement by some of our respondents illustrate the disparity between the leisure and child care resources of divorced and married families:

**How about holidays, what do you usually do?**

Last year I worked right through my holidays. They gave me fourteen days off and I didn't get one. We got paid, but...  
(Divorced mother)

Well lately we've been going to England.... **(By yourself or with the children?)** Well that far we usually go by ourselves. If its North America we usually take the kids. **(You usually drive then, do you?)** Yes, the big plan in the future is one of the Disney things, you know Orlando.  
(Married father)



Well we haven't really had a holiday I guess for about two years. What we did once was we stayed a weekend at one of the hotels here. The kids loved the swimming pool, so we spent a weekend like that. I'd like to get them away if I can get enough money for about a week. Some place down in the States. No place in particular, just to get away. (Divorced mother)

We get a month in the Summer and we vary...We have that (cottage) now and so we go to the lake, sometimes for two, three, or four weeks. We also like to camp... We've done a fair bit of motoring. It's been something the kids, as I said, they sort of grew up with it - motoring and camping. So we've seen a fair bit of the country. But we always spend some time at the lake. (Married mother)

**How satisfied are you with the care your children get when you're not around?**

When I'm not around the only care they get is themselves... It would not be my preference, but I cannot afford to hire someone to be here when I'm not. (Divorced mother of three children)

**Is getting someone to look after your pre-schooler a problem?**

Well Kelly goes to play school one afternoon a week... (How does she usually react if you leave her?) Great... We have two regular girls (baby-sitters) that she knows... If we go to my mother's place as soon as we walk in the door, its "bye mommy". "bye daddy". (married father)

Comparing the third category, that of our respondent's "personal network of family and friends", it appears that once again married mothers and fathers have more resources than divorced mothers. Interestingly, when this category is further broken down by related dimensions, it appears that while married and divorced respondents are basically similar in their personal, community, and friendship resources, married families derive considerably more assistance from their immediate family than divorced families.

To a large extent, this difference between the two types of family can be explained. Married spouses, even those who are not "close", are more likely than divorced spouses to give emotional, material, and physical support to each other. Married spouses, as such, constitute a greater resource potential for one another than do divorced spouses. The following responses to our questions on household tasks support this view.

**What tasks do you do regularly around the home?**

I do the child rearing, the cooking, the cleaning, and the shopping. I do the home and car maintenance as well as I can, and do-it-yourself jobs. **(Have you always done most of the things in the house, even when you were married?)** Yes. (Divorced mother with three children)

Well the child rearing we share. Cooking, I do during the week and on weekends it is sort of when everybody is hungry, whoever wants to cook, cooks. My husband will usually whip up some weird concoction... The cleaning I do, and the kids sometimes will do the dusting and the vacuuming. Home and car maintenance my husband usually looks after. If we were putting in a carpet, or something like that, we'd all do it together, I guess.  
(Married congenial mother)

**What does your spouse do around the house?**

He doesn't do much cleaning. He buys the groceries most of the time. Of course he fixes the cars. Then he usually fixes things around here. That's his job.  
(Married conflictual mother)

**5.0.2 Congenial and Conflictual Families**

When the resources of married and divorced respondents are compared, we note that as we had expected, the married mothers and fathers in congenial families have more resources than their married counterparts in conflictual families. As evident from the data in Table 6, the married congenial fathers' mean score of 138, and the married congenial mothers' mean score of 129, are both slightly higher than either the married conflictual fathers' mean score of 123 or the married conflictual mothers' mean score of 110

A similar comparison of the total resources available to conflictual and congenial divorced respondents, however, yields less conclusive results. Of the two divorced mothers

TABLE 6

Distribution of Resource Scores of  
Congenial and Conflictual Married Families

<u>Resources</u>	Congenial Fathers (N=6)	Congenial Mothers (N=6)	Conflictual Fathers (N=4)	Conflictual Mothers (N=4)
Socioeconomic	35	31	33	30
S.E.S. Related	23	21	20	21
Personal Network	80	77	70	59
<u>Mean Scores:</u>	<u>138</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>110</u>

in the "conflictual" category, one has a resource score of 107 which is higher than any of the other divorced mothers. She has a full-time job with standard fringe benefits, a large network of friends and relatives, and receives substantial financial support from her parents. The other has a score of 77 which is the second lowest. She is employed part-time while attending university, has no close relatives in Winnipeg, and is in constant financial difficulty. Separated just a year ago, she finds the pressures of going to school, holding a job, and maintaining a family overwhelming. Thus, although as indicated in Table 7, the congenial mother's overall mean score of 89 is quite similar to that of the conflictual mother's score of 91, this may be a result of the small sample size.

TABLE 7

Distribution of Congenial and Conflictual Divorced Mothers  
by the Type of Resources

<u>Resources</u>	Congenial Mothers ( <u>N=8</u> )	Conflictual Mothers ( <u>N=2</u> )
Socioeconomic	24	24
S.E.S. Related	14	14
Personal Network	51	53
<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>91</u>

A significant finding from the second step of our analysis which breaks down respondent's resources into separate dimensions, partly supports our assumption that a family's socioeconomic situation influences the ways in which a family lives and its members interact with one another. More specifically, although spouses in congenial married families have slightly more "socioeconomic" and "socioeconomically related" resources than spouses in conflictual married families, (Tables 6 and 7), such a pattern is not found among divorced families: divorced mothers in congenial families have the same number of socioeconomic and socioeconomically related resources as divorced mothers in conflictual families.

A comparison of the respondents' "personal network" resources indicates (Tables 6 and 7) that although married parents in congenial homes receive considerably more resources from their personal network of family and friends than their counterparts in conflictual families, divorced mothers in congenial homes fare about the same as divorced mothers in conflictual homes. Again, it is cautioned, that as there are only two mothers in our conflictual divorced category, the results of this second comparison may be a reflection of the cell sample size, rather than of congenial and conflictual divorced families.

### **5.0.3 Low and Medium Incomed Divorced Mothers**

The most striking finding in our comparisons of the resources available to low, medium, and upper medium income divorced mothers is the similarity between the resources of the three income categories. As the data in Table 8 suggest, there is very little difference between the resources of mothers with low, medium, and upper medium incomes. As one would expect, small variations between resource scores of the three income groups, stem mainly from the "occupational" and "income" dimension of the socioeconomic category.

TABLE 8

Distribution of the Types of Resources  
by Income Group of Divorced Mothers

	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Upper Medium</u>
<u>Resources</u>	(N=5)	(N=5)	(N=3)
Socioeconomic *	21	28	24
S.E.S. Related	14	14	14
Personal Network	52	51	51
<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>89</u>

\* The apparent inconsistency between the socioeconomic resources of medium and upper medium mothers stems from our system of measurement. (See Appendix C)

By using each family group's overall mean resource score as a basis, it is possible to compare each group of families against one another. As can be seen in Table 9, which lists the types of family in order of their overall resource scores, married congenial fathers and mothers, followed by married conflictual fathers and mothers, have more resources than any of the categories of divorced families. Of the divorced families, medium income divorced mothers have slightly more resources than the other divorced families and, as to be expected, low income divorced mothers have the least.

TABLE 9

The Type of Families Ranked  
by their Overall Resource Scores

<u>Type of Family</u>	<u>Mean Score</u>
Married Congenial Fathers	138
Married Congenial Mothers	129
Married Conflictual Fathers	123
Married Conflictual Mothers	110
Divorced Medium Income Mothers	93
Divorced Conflictual Mothers	91
Divorced Upper Medium Income Mothers	89
Divorced Congenial Mothers	89
Divorced Low Income Mothers	87

All families lives are influenced by two sets of resources, i) relatives and friends, ii) socioeconomic. Access to, and use of, these resources will influence the ways in which a family lives and how members adapt to changing circumstances such as divorce.



The resource scores assigned provide a basis of comparison. However, they do not indicate the significance of the socioeconomic and personal resources in day to day family life. The following case profiles provide an indication of the disparities affecting each family: An analysis of each case profile also tends to emphasize the significance of resources, over and above finances, in day to day family life.

Bob (married congenial father) - scored 145 on the scale:

Bob, 31, has been married ten years and has two children. Self-employed, he has an income of \$40,000 and receives considerable financial and other assistance, when needed, from his father. Bob and his wife have owned their own home for several years and will shortly be moving into a newer and larger house; his father will help with the mortgage.

Bob is very close to his parents and brothers; telephones every other day or so and goes to lunch with a brother at least once a week. Active in church work, Bob and his wife share the same basic values and interests. He considers his children "a great source of strength" for him personally and for his marriage. Although he often works long hours, he helps with the housework when necessary. Since the family has two cars, transportation is not a problem. Bob and his wife take annual vacations with, and on occasion, without the children (his parents look after the children).

Bob's marriage has a sound base, his business is thriving and he is confident about the future. In addition to the high level of socioeconomic resources Bob enjoys, there can be little doubt that the quality and amount of personal resources his family give to one another, contribute greatly to Bob's success.

\*\*\*\*\*

Jane (married, conflictual family) scored 115 on the resource scale:

Jane and her husband have been married for 13 years and have three children. They are buying a house in a good neighbourhood. Jane went back to work after the third child because she claimed her husband never gave her any money, excepting for housekeeping. When she needed money for herself, she added 15 dollars or so to the grocery bill.

Jane's father died several years ago and she now only sees her widowed mother twice a year. Her brother and half-brother live in British Columbia; the only contact is a periodic phone call. She has two close girl friends.

With a family income of about \$45,000.00, Jane is fairly satisfied with the family's financial situation. However, conflict with her husband continues over money matters, and in more recent years, her husband's resentment over her demands that he help with housework has worsened their relationship.

Jane claims that her husband does not take any real interest in the children and seldom attends Parents' Nights at school. She finds the children a personal resource and the main reason the marriage still exists. Over the years, she has told her husband of the periodic "bad" days at work, or with the children, but only if she thought he would understand. He has never confided in her in respect to his work. In spite of this, however, she still believes she can count on her husband for some help around the house, even if it results in "yelling and threats".

In a conflictual environment, Jane does not suffer unduly through lack of money, but lacks many of the personal resources wives of congenial marriages ordinarily expect from their husbands.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mary (divorced, low income mother) scored 76 on the resource scale:

Raised by her grandparents from a very early age, Mary has never met her father and seldom sees her mother. An unhappy childhood led to a very early marriage at the age of 15. She was widowed at 19, remarried at 20 and divorced at 25. Her second marriage resulted in physical and mental abuse. Now 32 years of age, Mary receives no support from her ex-husband. Although she has had no contact with him for several years she still fears for her own and her only child's safety. She has a sister in British Columbia who she has not seen in nine years. A brother is in prison.

Mary returned to school for five years and now has a full-time job which pays about \$12,000 a year. She lives in a subsidized, newer but "run-down" townhouse off the Main Street - in one of the poorer areas of the city. Mary does all the housework, including repairs but has little time or money to improve living conditions. Her only close relative is her aging grandmother who requires assistance. Mary has seldom been out of the city for a vacation and she has little time or money for recreational activities. has not owned a car since her separation.

Mary does not find her young son a "resource" or great comfort even though she is fond of him. For his part, the boy cannot understand why his mother is always tired when she gets home or when he comes in from school. Mary finds the role of the single mother draining -- "I don't have the energy for it".

She does admit that her life has improved somewhat since the divorce and although money remains a problem she feels she is better off living independently. In contrast to Bob and, to a lesser degree Jane, Mary has very limited socioeconomic and personal resources.

\*\*\*\*\*

A brief summary of the results of our comparisons of the respondents in this study, including those covered in the preceding case profiles, follows:

1. Comparisons of married and divorced families suggest that most married mothers and fathers have more resources than divorced mothers. In part, the difference between married and divorced parents can be attributed to the superior socioeconomic resources of the married parents, in particular the father's occupation and income. The assistance married parents seem to derive from their immediate family is another resource. While married parents, even those who are not particularly "close", can usually count on some form of physical, material, and emotional support from each other, divorced mothers mostly have to rely on themselves.
2. Comparisons between conflictual and congenial families are less conclusive. Our findings indicate that whereas congenial married families have slightly more resources than conflictual married families, there is little difference between the two categories of divorced families.
3. Similarly, comparisons of different income categories of divorced families indicate very little difference exists between the resources of mothers in low, medium, and upper medium income groups. Minor differences which occur between the three groups of mothers stem from the "income and/or occupational" dimensions of the socioeconomic status variable.

## Chapter VI

### THE CHILDREN

Having examined families and the nature of their relationships and resource patterns, we now turn to the data on children. In this chapter, the data on children from the following families are compared: 1) married and divorced, 2) congenial and conflictual, and 3) low, medium, and upper medium income divorced. In Part A respondents' information on the children's academic, social, and emotional adjustment is compared. In Part B the views children of married and divorced families have of family, marriage, and divorce are compared. Finally, the data on the children's and parent's perceptions of divorce, and life in a divorced household are compared in Part C.

#### PART A

##### 6.1 CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT:

Educators, as well as parents, are concerned if changes in family structure affect a child's behavior at school and at home. It has been reported (c.f. Riley, 1981) that after their parents separate, children show marked behavior changes at school, more restlessness, daydreaming, and dif-

ficulty in concentration. Some children act aggressively and display attention-seeking behavior, while others feel helpless and confused by the sudden change in family structure. Changes in socioeconomic circumstances experienced by families after parents separate, also cause concern. Children's achievement is greatly affected by the socioeconomic conditions in which he or she live. For example, data collected by the Winnipeg School Division indicate that 75 percent of the variance in test results in language arts and mathematics can be explained by socioeconomic differences between students (Madak and Davies, 1979). Ambert (1982) and Colletta (1978) suggest a positive correlation exists between a family's socioeconomic situation and a child's behavior. Our data support some of these conclusions.

#### **6.1.1 Children from Married and Divorced Families**

A comparison of the total or overall adjustment scores of children in our sample from married and divorced families supports the suggestion that children are adversely affected by their parents divorce. As can be seen in Table 10, only 10 percent (N=10) of the children in married families are below the sample's overall adjustment mean, compared to 40 percent (N=10) in divorced families.

TABLE 10

Overall Mean Performance of Children  
from Married and Divorced Families

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>% of Children</u> <u>Below Mean</u>	<u>% of Children</u> <u>Mean or Better</u>
Married (N=10)	10	90
Divorced (N=10)	40	60

Comparisons of the academic, social, and emotional dimensions of the overall score, yield similar results. Children from divorced families seem more likely than children from married families to be below the mean academically, socially, and emotionally (Table 11). This is particularly evident in the children's emotional scores. Whereas only one of the ten children in the married families is below mean in emotional performance, in divorced families it is six out of ten. The self-esteem of children from divorced families is generally lower than that of children from married families. Relatively few children from divorced families can think of good things that have happened to them.

TABLE 11

Academic, Social, and Emotional Performance of  
Children from Married and Divorced Families

% of Children Below Mean

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Social</u>	<u>Emotional</u>
Married (N=10)	30	30	10
Divorced (N=10)	50	50	40

**6.1.2 Children from Congenial and Conflictual Families:**

A comparison of the "overall" scores of children from congenial and conflictual families suggests that domestic tension and stress tend to influence a child's overall achievement. As indicated in Table 12, children from congenial homes are more likely to perform at "mean or better" than those from conflictual homes. While three of the six (50%) children in conflictual homes score below the mean, only two of the fourteen (14%) do so in congenial homes.



TABLE 12

Overall Performance Scores of Children from  
Conflictual and Congenial Families

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>% of Children Below Mean</u>	<u>% of Children Mean or Better</u>
Congenial (Married and Divorced) (N=14)	14	86
Conflictual (Married and Divorced) (N=6)	50	50

When performance scores of children in married and divorced families are examined separately, we note that the only child with a "below mean" score in the married families lives in a conflictual home. Thus, in married families, 100 percent (N=6) of the children in congenial families, compared to 75 percent (N=4) in conflictual families are "mean or better" (Table 13). Similarly, looking at divorced families, while 75 percent (N=8) of the children in congenial families score "mean or better", 0% (N=2) do so in conflictual families.

TABLE 13

Overall Performance Scores of Children from  
Conflictual and Congenial Families

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>% of Children Below Mean</u>	<u>% of Children Mean or Better</u>
Congenial Married (N=6)	00	100
Conflictual Married (N=4)	25	75
Congenial Divorced (N=8)	25	75
Conflictual Divorced (N=2)	100	00

Results of the breakdown of the overall scores into academic, social, and emotional dimensions are reported in Table 14. Whereas children from congenial divorced families do considerably better academically, socially, and emotionally than children from conflictual divorced families, children from congenial married families only do better emotionally than their counterparts from conflictual families. Somewhat surprisingly, children in our sample from conflictual married homes appear to do slightly better academically and socially than children in congenial married families.

Two explanations are in order. First, the difference between the percentages of children who are "above" and "be-

TABLE 14

Academic, Social, and Emotional Performance of  
Children from Conflictual and Congenial Families

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>% of Children Below Mean</u>		
	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Social</u>	<u>Emotional</u>
Congenial Married (N=6)	33	33	00
Conflictual Married (N=4)	25	25	25
Congenial Divorced (N=8)	37	37	50
Conflictual Divorced (N=2)	100	100	100

low" mean in married conflictual and congenial families is slight, and the sample size is small, thus the findings may be a function of the sample size. Second, married fathers, as compared to divorced fathers, are more readily accessible to their children. In this respect, as the following responses illustrate, married fathers in conflictual as well as congenial families tend to take a more active role in their children's daily activities.

**If something happens to you, you are hurt or need help, which parent do you usually go to?**

Well I would usually go to both of them. If I was hurt I'd go to my mom because she's a nurse and she'd know what it would be...and then I'd go to my dad because he'd probably know what caused it, or if I'm gonna need stitches, or if I'm gonna be fine. (Boy, from congenial married family)

My mom, because she's there all week and my dad is just there on the weekends. (Girl, from congenial divorced family)

I'd go to my mom first, but if my mom weren't there, I'd go to my dad. (Boy, from congenial married family)

My dad. (do you ever go to your mother instead of your dad?) Yes, when my dad isn't home. (Boy, from conflictual married family)

My mom. (Would you phone your dad?) Not really. (Girl, from amicable divorced family)

(laughing) My mom! (that's a stupid questions isn't it, if your dad lives in Vancouver?) Yes. He sends money in our cards though, and we play cards, so the money is useful. (girl, amicable divorced)

**Does your dad know most of your friends?**

He used to when he used to live here, but now he doesn't. (Girl, from congenial divorced family).

Hardly any of them, because they live here and he doesn't. (Girl, conflictual divorced family)

Yes, he knows most of them. He doesn't mind if they come into the house. Sometimes he lets them sleep over. (Boy, from congenial married family)

**Does your dad go to things at your school?**

Yes all of them. **(Does he help you with your school work?)** Yes, well usually he comes to all my soccer games and helps me along with stuff for sports. He taught me how to skate and how to handle a puck with a hockey stick. He showed me how to run with my legs nice and high. He showed me how to kick a soccer ball...and when I have troubles with my friends, he usually helps me along with them. Tells me what to do. He usually helps me with running my bath or maybe helps me clean up my room, and when I first got my marbles, I didn't know how to snap them and he showed me how. **(So your dad really helps you?)** Yes. (Boy, from congenial married family)

No. Like he's not here when I'm going to school. **(What about when he comes to Winnipeg?)** No. He just asks me how I'm doing. (Girl, from congenial divorced family)

Yes, concerts and stuff like that. **(How about Parent-Teachers?)** No, my mother does Parent-Teachers. **(Homework?)** Well my German school work, and sometimes with projects or something. (Boy, from conflictual married family)

No. **(Does he help with your homework?)** No, he can't help, he isn't here. (Girl, from conflictual divorced home)

Well sometimes if my mom's not home or something. She's mainly the one that helps me, but my dad helps me with some things. Like if we have to build a project or something like that he'll help. (Boy, from conflictual married family)

### 6.1.3 Different Income Levels of Divorced and Married Families:

Comparisons of the overall performance scores of children in our sample from three income groups of divorced families are reported in Table 15. Children from families with low incomes score the same as those with medium incomes. In both types of family, 40 percent of the children have "below mean" scores. While this finding refutes Colletta's and Am- bert's hypotheses of a positive relationship between a fami- ly's socioeconomic situation and child outcomes, the scores of children in the "upper medium income" level appear to support them. Specifically, all of the children (N=3) from families in the upper group are with "mean or better" scores.

A comparison of the dimensions of the overall performance scores reveals the same general trend. Academically, so- cially, and emotionally, the performance of children in up- per medium income families is considerably superior to that of children in medium and low income families. In fact, as shown in Table 16, apart from their lower emotional scores, the performance of children in our sample from upper medium divorced families is favourably comparable to that of chil- dren in married families. Socially, and in terms of their overall scores, the children from upper medium income di- vorced families score higher than those from medium income married families (Table 16).

TABLE 15

Overall Performance Scores of Children from Various  
Income Levels of Married and Divorced Families

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>% of Children Below Mean</u>	<u>% of Children Mean or Better</u>
Low Income Divorced (N=5)	40	60
Medium Income Divorced (N=5)	40	60
Upper Medium Income Divorced (N=3)	00	100
Medium Income Married (N=10)	10	90

TABLE 16

Academic, Social, and Emotional Performance Scores of  
Children from Different Income Levels  
of Divorced and Married Families

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>% of Children Above Mean or Better</u>		
	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Social</u>	<u>Emotional</u>
Low Income Divorced (N=5)	60	50	40
Medium Income Divorced (N=5)	40	80	40
Upper Medium Income Divorced (N=3)	66	100	66
Medium Income Married (N=10)	70	80	90

Using the overall score as a basis, the performance scores of children from each type of family are compared. (Table 17) The results support the argument that it may not be divorce itself which adversely affects the children, but rather the lower socioeconomic status in which the divorced mother finds herself. While children from divorced families with incomes of \$24,000 and over have one of the highest overall scores, (greater percentage are the mean or better), divorced families with incomes less than \$24,000 have almost the lowest (greater percentage below mean).

In sum, the results of findings on child outcomes are significant in two aspects. First, while initially it appears that children from married families do much better than children from divorced families, we find very little difference between the overall performance of children from married and divorced families when the income of the latter is comparable to that of married families. Essentially, in support of our proposition that the more similar the family's socioeconomic conditions, the more similar the child outcomes, the performance of children in upper medium income divorced families is comparable to that of children in married families.

Second, a comparison of conflictual and congenial families indicates that children in congenial families, particularly congenial divorced, are more likely to do better than their counterparts in conflictual families. While we attri-



TABLE 17

Overall Performance Scores of Children from  
Different Types of Family

<u>Type of Family</u>	<u>Percentage of Children</u>	
	<u>Mean or Better</u>	
	%	
Upper Income Divorced (\$24,000 and over) (N=3)	100	
Married Congenial (N=6)	100	
Divorced Congenial (N=8)	75	
Married Conflictual (N=4)	75	
Medium Income Divorced (Above Statistic Canada's Low Income Guidelines) (N=5)	60	
Low Income Divorced (Below Statistic Canada's Low Income Guidelines) (N=5)	60	
Lower Income Divorced (Less than \$24,000) (N=7)	43	
Divorced Conflictual (N=2)	00	

(Note: Because some families fit more than one category there is some overlapping. Thus the N's exceed the total sample (N=20) of children).

bute part of this difference between the children to the stress and tension in the home, we suggest part of the difference, particularly in the divorced families, is attributed in some cases to the parent's (mainly the father's), lack of interest in and/or contact with the child.

Our interviews revealed that all parents expected their children to do well in school with mean or above average grades. They wanted them to be well behaved, and friendly with their teachers; socially, they should have friends and get along well with other children; and emotionally, parents felt children of this age should be fairly independent, able to do things for themselves.

In terms of academic performance, there is a direct relationship between the child's school work and the assistance he or she receives at home and school. The following excerpts from our interviews illustrate this fact.

**You mentioned that you give the boys homework that they do each night during the week?**

Yes. Well, I write with them everyday...It doesn't matter if its holidays, or whatever. Every day one page of work. If I don't like the way - sometimes they like to write too fast and its not good - then they have to write another page... **(Do the watch TV?)** No, usually they are not allowed to watch TV very much. Last year I installed a lock. **(lock on the television?)** Yes, its a special kind of mechanism... So when I am going outside, I don't have to say "John and Stevie, you don't watch TV",...I just lock it up and go...  
(Married father; child with education score of 4/6).

Other parents were less extreme but nonetheless interested in their children's progress at school. One married mother responded to our question "What are some of the things you do with your child?" in the following way:

School work. I've helped him with projects and essays, and I've taken him to the library and helped him find research a lot.  
(Married mother; child with education score of 4/6).

Occasionally, parents blamed the children for their poor school performance. The following two responses to our question, "How is your child doing in school?", illustrate this point:

I don't think she is working up to her potential. She doesn't put the stress on it that I'd like her to give. It's just she's a social bird and she likes to talk. She is more interested in people than school.  
(Divorced mother; child with education score of 3/6).

She's having a hard time. She has trouble with her hand-writing and her reading. **(Has it always been this way?)** The last two years. She doesn't want to try.  
(Divorced mother; child with education score of 2/6).

The children themselves frequently took the blame for their low performance. Some said they had problems concentrating; others said they had problems with their reading or their writing. One young boy from a divorced family blamed his temper tantrums. He explained:

I have my off days. (Why do you think that happens?) My temper is bad and I can't control it, so if I get into a bad mood and the teacher tells me that I do something wrong, I usually get mad at him.

(Child from Divorced family; education score of 1/6).

In some cases, parents blamed the teacher or school. Two parents of children who were having problems with their school work went to see their childrens' teachers. They gave the following accounts:

**Are you satisfied with the school your child attends?**

No. They just don't have any backup for single parents... I was running into problems with Pam at school, and I went to the teacher and said, "listen, we have to do something. I need a resource teacher or something because this kid is falling behind." And her comment to me was, "You can't expect your child to do any better because you are a single parent."

(Divorced mother; child with education score of 1/6).

Not really. Peter was having trouble at school. Since that trouble we have found out that ninety-nine percent of the children in that particular teacher's classroom is labelled as retarded, or slow, or whatever. She's not a teacher!

(Married mother; child with education score of 4/6).

In general, parents in congenial married families tend to support one another in matters concerning the children more so than do parents in conflictual married families and di-

vorced families. Responses from two married and one divorced respondent illustrate the different types of support mothers receive from their spouses.

**Are you satisfied with the support you get from your spouse with the children?**

No. You know Ray takes them to hockey and the odd time may give them money but other than that, the kids are mine. If they want something signed for school, if its Parents Night, they are mine. I don't really resent that, but I think it could be a better division.  
(Mother in conflictual family).

I've helped Jeffrey a lot with his homework but we usually get into an argument, so its better when my husband helps him... He has a soothing effect on him.  
(Mother in congenial married family).

No. I've been very frustrated in these past months because I've seen what I think are very serious problems with her and in discussing this with her father he has not been willing to see their existence at all. He has just said, there are no problems.  
(Mother in divorced family).

As indicated, regardless of the course of action they take, almost all of the parents in the study were concerned about their children's school performance. This concern, however, does not always extend to meaningful help for the child. Hence we see quite clearly that wide differences that exist from child to child in their academic progress are due, in large measure, to domestic conditions.

PART B6.2 CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND DIVORCE

It is less damaging for a child to live in a stable one-parent family than in an unhappy, conflictual married family (Hetherington et al, 1978). However, some fears have been voiced that children raised in a one-parent family may lack suitable role models, and may in turn have problems forming appropriate marital relationships themselves. (see Pope and Mueller's review, 1976). In other words, divorce begets divorce and marital instability is transmitted from one generation to the next.

Our study addressed these issues. Specifically, we asked the children whether or not they wished to get married, whether or not they wanted to have children, and if so, how many. We also asked them for their definitions of parental roles. and the nature of relationships they expected with their future spouse. Finally, we asked them what they thought about divorce.

Our comparisons of children from married and divorced families indicate that children from divorced families tend to be a little more cautious about getting married than children from married families. In response to our question, "Do you want to get married someday?", the majority of the children (seven from divorced families and six from mar-

ried families) said they would like to, three of the children from divorced families added a condition such as "if I meet the right person?", or "If I get a good job". For example, two boys from married families and one girl from divorced families, responded as follows:

Yes, I hope to. **(Why do you say that?)** Well, I don't know but I guess I just want to get married. I guess I'd just like to have a nice family.  
(Boy, from married family)

If I find the right guy. **(Why would you want to get married?)** I don't know, just so I would have someone to turn to I guess. (Girl, from divorced family)

Probably not. **(Why?)** Well, I've got my reasons. Like I just don't want to be married. I want to be like my uncle. He's never married...like he can go out whenever he wants to. (Boy, from married family)

Children in our sample from divorced homes also appear more likely to be reluctant about having children of their own than children from married families. Nine of the ten children from married families expressed a desire to have children, compared to only six of the ten from divorced families. Interestingly, while three of the nine children from married families specified they wanted to have children "only if they got married", none of the divorced children mentioned marriage as a prerequisite.

When the children's desired family size was compared, we note that those from divorced families as well as from married families follow the prevailing societal norms. As the following statements illustrate, the children wanted fairly small families (one to three):

**Will you want to have children?      How many?**

Yes. One. **(Why would you say that?)** Because they wouldn't fight. (Girl from a two-child divorced home)

Yes, two. **(Why?)** Because if you have any more than two, its hard to keep track of them. (Girl from a three-child divorced home)

Not too many, maybe one or two. **(One or two? Why?)** Because it costs a lot of money later on. (Boy from a three-child married home)

Yes, I'd like to have children, but I'd have to get married to get children. **(How many children would you want to have?)** Two. **(Why do you say that?)** Because over that, its too expensive. (Boy, from two-child married family)

The second set of comparisons of the children's perceptions of parents and parental roles are also revealing. Children were asked to define "mothers" and "fathers" and to describe what their own parents did in and out of the home. The children were also asked to tell how they were affected by the work their mothers and fathers did outside of the home.



In respect to the first question, we found that some of the children had difficulty defining "mother". Eventually, however, eight of the ten children from married families and seven of the ten children from divorced families used terms such as "love" and "care" to portray a "mother" as a person who mainly loves and takes care of children. Surprisingly, even though half of the children's mothers worked outside of the home, none of the children included the aspect of "financial support" in their description. The responses of children of three mothers employed outside home illustrate this point:

**Could you tell me what the word "mother" means to you?**

She looks after me, feeds me, makes me new clothes, loves me. (Girl, from married family)

I'd say a mother is someone who loves you, someone who takes care of you. (Boy, from divorced family)

A love forming person. You can always go with your problems to her. (Boy, from divorced family)

Some children also had difficulty defining a father. About half the children described a father using the same type of expressive terms of "love" and "caring" as they had used to describe a mother. However, in contrast to their definitions of "mother", several of the children, even those whose fathers were unemployed at the time, also included the instrumental idea of "support" in their definitions. The

remaining half either could not think of an answer or emphasized non-affectionate attributes. Three of the children responded thus:

**Can you tell me what the word "father" means to you?**

Well pretty the same as I defined a mother. Someone who cares and helps you when things get you down. (Boy, from married family)

A large man. He's gentle, and he cares. He's like a mother, only a man. (girl from divorced family)

A father is one that supports you, and works for you and stuff like that. And he loves you. (Boy, from divorced family)

More stricter than a mother. Harder to talk to. Nothing else really. (girl from divorced family)

In comparison to the difficulty some children encountered defining parents, most of the children knew the name of their mother's employer and could give a fairly adequate description of the work she did in the home. It would appear that, as far as the children in our sample are concerned, work for the mother revolves mainly around cooking and cleaning. As the following responses indicate, mothers seldom have time to "play".

**Can you describe what your mother does?**

She's a substitute. (teacher) She cleans, makes the meals and cleans up, and she sews, and watches T.V. (Boy from married family)

Barely anything. Yells "Come in for supper!" (But she does all the cooking?) Yes, but that's different, you can't count that. We have to eat it anyway. (What does a mother do, just cook and call you in for supper?) Yes. Tells me to clean up my room when I don't want to. (Girl age 9, from conflictual divorced family).

She works at Safeway. She vacuums, does the dishes, washes the windows, cleans up my brother's room. (Does she play with you?) Sometimes she plays, but not too often. She's too busy. (Girl, from divorced family)

The children's description of their father's work was a little more limited than that of their mother's. While we readily understood that the children from divorced families, several of whom had little or no contact with their fathers, might not have a clear idea of what their father did, we were a little surprised to find that even some of the children from married families had only a vague idea what their fathers did outside of the home. For the most part, children's descriptions of their father's work outside the home were confined to his profession or trade - "a steam fitter", "an optician", "a manager". In contrast to their descriptions of their mother's work, where most of the children named their mother's employer, only one of the children named their father's employer. Regarding their father's

work inside the home, in contrast to their mothers' "cooking and cleaning", fathers primarily "fix things" and "play". Three of the children described their father in the following way:

**Can you describe what your father does?**

He works. (What kind of work does he do?) I think he's a photographer. (And does he do any housework?) He fixes things. (Does he do the vacuuming, things like that?) No, he might cook once in a while. He plays with us. (Girl, married family)

I don't know. (He has a job?) Yes. (Do you know where?) No. (Girl, divorced family, sees father every six weeks)

My dad's a minister. (Can you describe what he does?) He plays games. He takes us to all our stuff and he fixes stuff. (Boy, from married family)

Although, as mentioned earlier, some of the children were unsure what their parents actually did outside the home, most of the children (80%) could tell us how they felt about their parents working outside the home. It appears that, children from married families tend to have a more negative perception of their mother's work outside of the home than children from divorced families. Five of the ten children from married families, compared to only one of the ten children from divorced families either preferred that she be home to keep them company, or they complained that she came

home tired and irritable. The children of three working mothers responded to our questions about their mother's work as follows:

**Does your mother's work outside of the home affect your life?**

Sometimes. (In what way?) Not being with me  
 sometimes. (Sometimes you wish she were there?)  
 Yes. (Girl from married family)

Sometimes, she comes home grouchy and yells "I want this house clean". (Girl from divorced family)

Sometimes now and then when my brother is out, I'm just bored sitting at home. I'd like to have a parent to talk to. (Boy from married home)

A similar, although lesser, degree of difference occurred between the perceptions the two sets of children had of their father's work outside the home. Whereas two of the ten children from married families viewed their father's work negatively, none of the ten children from divorced families did so. With the exception of the two children from married families who felt their father's employment prevented them from spending time together, children from both divorced and married families either considered their father's work did not affect them at all, or else they associated positive benefits from his work such as "paying the mortgage or feeding them". Responses from three children indicate the type of answers we received:

**Does your father's work outside of the home affect your life?**

He usually doesn't get home until quarter to one if he is working late. **(Does that bother you?)**  
No, not really (Boy, from married family)

It keeps him busy for a long time. **(So it affects your life?)** No, not really. I don't mind. (Girl from divorced family)

Its good. I think its nice. Well he goes to work to earn the money for the mortgage and all our food. (Boy from married family).

The children's responses to our questions regarding the type of marital relationship they expected to have with their future spouses were quite traditional. Nine of the ten children from married families and eight of the ten children from divorced families described a relationship where the women are primarily responsible for the children, cooking, and cleaning, and the men for the house maintenance and support. Surprisingly, although eight of the ten children from divorced families and five of the ten from married families expected that the wife would probably work outside home, only one child from married families and two children from divorced families expected to have egalitarian relationships with their future spouses. The following statements from a boy from a married family and a girl from a divorced family indicate the type of responses the children made regarding their future relationships:

If you were married what sort of things would you expect your spouse to do?

Do the housecleaning. Do most of the cooking. Get kids. (Do you want her to have a job outside?) No, no, just a housewife. (Boy, from married family)

More of the harder stuff, things I'm not able to do. Fixing up things, cars and stuff. (Would you expect him to do any housework?) Not really. (How about cooking?) No! (laughing) (Or look after the kids?) It would be nice if he helped. (Girl, divorced family)

What sort of things do you think your spouse will expect you to do?

I don't know, support the family or stuff like that. She stays in the home and I go out to work and support the family. (Boy, from married family)

Clean, look after the kids, change the diapers. (How about yard work?) I don't know, maybe he can do some of it. (How about working outside of the home, would you get a job do you think?) Yes, I guess so. (Full or part time) Maybe part time. (girl, divorced family)

Our third set of comparisons concerns divorce. We asked the children to define the word "divorce" and to tell us how they felt about it. We also asked them whether or not they had friends whose parents had divorced, and if so, how their friends were coping.

The children from both divorced and married families generally defined divorce as "to separate" or "to split up", and children from both groups knew about the same number of friends who were having difficulty coping with their parents' divorce. Contrary to our expectations, the children in our sample from divorced families tended to accept divorce more readily than those from married families. Specifically, when asked how they felt about divorce, while most of the children stated or inferred that it made them feel very "sad" or "upset", several of the children from divorced families also considered divorce to be an appropriate solution for unhappy marriages. The following conversations indicate the views children expressed about divorce.

**How do you feel about divorce?**

Its okay. Well if you don't love a person you should divorce. (Girl from divorced family)

I really feel sad, like say, it would be really hard, like who cares about the kids? Usually the court would want you to stay with your mother say, or it could depend, but it would be so hard. (Boy, from married family).

It's alright if they are fighting (Boy, from divorced family).

Yuk! I feel its blaa. And I hate it. Craig, my brother's friend, they were separated and his mother got remarried and he's not getting over it. (Boy, from married family).

When two parents...aren't happy with each other, and they don't think they are right for each other, and so, they argue, and...they separate. (How



**do you feel about it?)** Its just a thing in life.  
(Girl, from divorced family).

Well one thing, I wouldn't want it to happen to me. (Boy, from married family).

Well if the father treats the mothers meanly or something she should take him for a divorce...or if the wife's taking all the money or something and stuff like that then the man should have a divorce. (Boy, from divorced family)

In comparing the responses of children, it was expected that children living in conflictual families would be more reluctant to get married and have children of their own than children living in congenial families. It was probable that the arguments and conflict witnessed by the child in the conflictual family would make marriage and children less appealing for the child. This assumption was only partially supported by the findings of the present study. First, the findings from married families indicate that while only three (33%) of the children in congenial families stated they wanted to get married and have children of their own, all four (100%) of the children in married conflictual families were enthusiastic about getting married, and having children. Second, findings from divorced families indicate that whereas four (50%) of the children in the congenial divorced families wanted to get married and five of them wanted to have children, one of the two children in conflictual divorced families did not want to get married but wanted to have children, and the other did not want children but wanted to get married if she "finds the right person".

Our interviews and discussions with the parents brought to the fore factors related to marriage decisions, especially those factors precipitating early marriage which may explain the children's views of marriage. Rubin (1976:49-68) also offers explanations as to why working class couples get married.

Rubin suggests that many young couples see marriage as an escape from oppressive living conditions and repressive parental authority. She elaborates, young people need "a place to feel safe". As the following conversations with parents indicate, this was certainly the situation with some of our respondents.

**When you were first married what did you expect?**

To escape from home. I wanted to escape from my mother and have my own home where I wouldn't be domineered and stepped on. (Divorced mother)

Well, that I would't have to worry about anything anymore because I was going to be taken care of...I was moving out of a bad situation. My mom and dad weren't divorced or separated then - that didn't come until a couple of years after I was married - but the home situation was bad, so I was leaving a home that wasn't the greatest for one that was more secure. (Divorced mother)

I had this sort of fantasy. Live in a log cabin and I thought at the time I really didn't care if there was anybody else around...I wanted to marry someone strong like my dad. (Mother, Conflictual Married Family)

Relatively extreme parental discipline may well be the motivating factor which will ultimately push a few of the children in our sample into early marriage. The following statements made by three of the parents we interviewed suggest that some parents were quite strict with their children.

**What kind of rule do you have for your children?**

Well, they've got their room, and the dishes, and they have to sweep the floor once they've finished the dishes...Bedtime is nine o'clock sharp...There is a certain time she has to be in the house every night. If she's not in by seven o'clock, she better have a good reason...When I speak they know they have to do what I tell them, or I show them the belt. (Divorced mother)

One year he was slow at school and I warned him that if he got a bad report card I wouldn't buy him any Christmas presents, and I never did. I didn't allow him to watch TV for almost four or five months. Nothing. Just homework. (Mother, conflictual family)

I do believe in rules. As long as they live at home, they have to obey. (Father, conflictual family)

Rubin also describes the importance of the sociol-psychological milieu in which we all live where "everyone marries and where those who don't are viewed as deviant and deficient". This thought ties in closely with our own findings. It would appear that many parents, even those in conflictual married families, place considerable value on marriage and children. In fact, insofar as a number of these parents are

concerned, marriage and children are synonymous. One marries to have children and then stays together because of them. The following two cases illustrate this point:

Paula, age 45, has four children, two of whom are still living at home. When questioned about why she got married, she readily explains that her husband, "desperate to marry, deliberately made her pregnant". Yet, Paula, has no regrets. While from Paula and her husband's descriptions, their marriage has been far from ideal - money, sex, affection, work, are all sources of conflict for them - Paula says she has never once wished she had not married. For Paula, her children "are her first concern". She feels children are a constant source of joy and fulfillment and she pities people who are so narcissistic that they do not see the value of family life. Divorce, for Paula, is out of the question.

Peter, age 35, has two children, and if his wife would only agree, he would like to have five more. Children, for Peter, provide the reason for living. Peter, in fact, feels so strongly about family life, or as he puts it, "in the family atmosphere" that he "could never consider life without the children". While he laughingly says he sometimes wishes he had not married and both he and his wife say they have had serious problems in their marriage, he fervently explains that he believes men and women are meant to be married and raise families. In Peter's opinion, "it is only natural to be married", and if he weren't married to his wife, he would be married to someone else. Divorce, for Peter, should only be a last resort. He thinks when children are involved, every effort should be made not to "break the family."

Although our findings relative to children's perceptions of marriage, family, and divorce, are not conclusive, it is quite apparent, with few exceptions, that children, even

those "of divorce", still believe that marriage and raising children is an important part of the living process. Children's concepts of what a family is, and what it means to its members, are not altered substantially by their experience with divorce. Understandably, children of divorce are more cautious in their views of marriage and children of their own. Yet, children's concepts of the family they would like to have in the future are the traditional mother and father and children situation. Based on the responses to our questions, one would have to conclude that the expectations of children today do not differ greatly from those of their parents.

PART C6.3 CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF A DIVORCED HOME

Several researchers suggest that although family relationships change after divorce, they do not end. Even in those situations where the non-custodial parent has little or no contact with the family, the psychological relationship between parents and between parents and children continues long after the final separation (e.g. Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Hess and Camara, 1979; Loewenstein, 1979). Indeed, our findings support such assertions.

The relationship between the parents is an integral part of the child's experience and therefore relationships between spouses, and between parents and children were compared. On relationships between spouses before and after divorce we found that while one mother felt her post-divorce relationship had deteriorated, and six reported a general indifference, (this to some was a change for the better), three mothers reported the relationship with their ex-spouse had actually improved.

The interview data corroborates the assertion that "Divorce changes relationships between family members --it does not end them":

**If you compare your present relationship with what you had when you were still married, has there been any changes?**

It's worse. He is very unhappy now about the divorce. It took him a long time to accept it...and even up until last year, when he moved from B.C. back to Winnipeg, he assumed he was coming back, not only for Chris, but for me. And when that didn't work out, he was hurt. (Separated four years, divorced three years.)

I would say it has got better...although I don't think that we could ever have a really joyful kind of relationship... we remind each other of all we have lost in giving the marriage up... But now we are able to talk rationally because we don't have to live together. (Separated eighteen months.)

It's changed to the point where his feelings, his attitudes don't affect my life any more, other than financially. Occasionally, I will look to him for support with the kids if I've had three weeks alone with them and...he has just got to come and take them off my hands...while I go out and be by myself. (Separated two years, divorced nine months.)

Nevertheless, whether the change was for better or for worse, as the following statements by two divorced mothers, (both of whom had been separated for at least four years) illustrate, the original connection often remains long after the final separation:

This is going to sound dumb, but I find we've almost come full circle... He phoned the other night, and he said to me "I phoned you Monday and Tuesday and where were you?" Heh!, what do you mean "where was I?" For some reason he is trying to become involved in our life again... (Separated for nine years, divorced for five.)

One year he came home at Christmas. The kids and I were opening gifts...We didn't know he was coming and he appeared at our door Christmas morning. It didn't really upset me. You know it took me a good three years to get over it (the separation) for me. (Separated for almost four years, divorce pending.)

During the interviews the respondents themselves described the changes in their relationships. Consistent with Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980:4) description of divorce as a "chain of events, which begins with the initial escalating distress of the marriage, often peaks at the legal separation, and may continue for several years after the divorce", several respondents related the process thus:

When we were first separated, every time he came I told him he was living with a whore...I would just call her everything in the book...I would say it took me a good three years before I really separated myself completely from the relationship. And then I realised that being angry wasn't going to help. I didn't really want to argue with him...because I wanted to maintain a friendly relationship because otherwise it wasn't fair to the kids. (mother, age 37)

He left me for a hooker...She's Indian and she works on Main Street. So I had basically a very bad identity crisis at the time... I thought I was totally useless...and nobody would want me...After we had separated I realized I had better change my attitude because I'm going to end up in an institution and then what's going to become of the kids? **(Do you remember how you felt about**



**the divorce?)** Relieved, free in a sense; worried, scared - mostly because it was a big responsibility financially... there was a great burden taken off my shoulders when I filed. When I was in court and the divorce granted, I still didn't feel great. I feel happier today about it. (mother, age 31)

Three mothers mentioned the financial link. The collection of maintenance and child support payments often necessitated contact with their former spouse. The following statement describes the procedure one 29 year old divorcee followed each week to get money from her ex-spouse:

He lives in an apartment block in down town Winnipeg. I see him almost weekly. Whether its me going down to see him or him just dropping in. It varies. When I think its payday for him, I'll phone, and if its payday, I'll drop down and get some money.

Eight mothers also related how the children, on occasion, kept them involved with one another. Two explained as follows:

He comes to visit the children, that's the main thing. (mother, age 35)

We've gone back to court about three times. Once over support and once over visitation rights, and we are going back again in September over more support...I was just ordered to Family Court because he phoned and found the kids were away to camp for a week. So I got called to Family Court because he reported I had broken the agreement. (mother, age 37)

Mothers reported changes which had occurred in the relationships between parents and children. Most mothers believed their own relationships with the children had improved since the lessening of marital stress. However, conversations with mothers and children in the two conflictual divorced families suggested that the relationship between mother and child in these families was far from ideal.

I don't think we have ever really had a good relationship. The separation has heightened it, but it didn't initiate it. It has always been difficult. (Mother 1)

Sometimes bad, sometimes good, depending on what mood I'm in. **(What happens when you don't get along?)** I scream at her. **(What does she say?)** Go to your room. I don't want to be around you. (Child 1)

Not close at all. **(Do you enjoy each other's company?)** No. I know what I'm doing wrong. Basically her dad would not pay any attention to my son so I bent over backwards trying to make up the loss there and I've kind of shut her out. So she's become more distant, more difficult. (Mother 2)

Not that good. **(Does she go to things at your school?)** Not very often. **(Does she help you with your homework?)** No. I need it but she won't. (Child 2)

Mothers also commented on the changes which had occurred in the relationship between father and child. As stated earlier, four of the fathers were living with a new partner and two had remarried. This inevitably brought changes in

the relationships between fathers and children. As the following responses indicate, most mothers believed that the relationship between father and child had deteriorated.

It's deteriorated...He's living with another woman who has two children so when our children go over there they feel kind of second fiddle and they don't really like that... My children, or his children actually, are visitors. (Mother, age 32)

They used to be very close but...when we first separated he called them at least once a week. Now they are lucky if they get a phone call once a month, or we'll have to call him so they can talk to him. He's living with another woman now. Her boys are "It"...He does a lot more with her boys than he's ever done with his own girls. (Mother, age 29)

It has got worse. He got married recently so he is not as high up on a pedestal as he used to be. He also drinks, so Karen's not too impressed with that. (Mother, age 33)

Three mothers considered the relationship between father and child had improved. They attributed the improvement to the extra attention the father paid to the child. Nevertheless, as the following statements indicate two of these mothers resented that the fathers did only "fun" things with the child, without assuming any of the "work" or responsibility.

**What kind of things do they do with their father?**

All the fun kind of things that we used to do all together as a family. He gets all the goodies, like movies, playing games and things like that. (mother, age 30) During the summer they go to the lake, or else he takes them to his house and also to his mom and dad's. He comes over weekends and he plays the poppa,...He doesn't have to worry if they are sick, or what they are up to, or what they are doing. I should have it so good! (mother age 33)

Some changes were brought about by the father's absence from the city. One father, had moved to California; another to Vancouver. In both situations, the children kept in touch by phone and visited their fathers once or twice a year. One mother described the visiting arrangement thus:

Since he now lives in Vancouver, she only sees him about once a year. Sometimes he can come in at Christmas, but basically its the Summer. **(What do they do together?)** Oh he takes them camping, anything they want, anything the girls want he tries to fulfill it for them because he does only see them for a couple of weeks so he spoils the hell out of them. Like Santa Claus! (mother, age 30)

Two mothers narrated the difficulties fathers sometimes experience keeping their children occupied.

Before the past three months they were spending three weekends out of the month. Now, a phone call. They don't want to visit him now. **(What do they do together?)** Nothing. That is the problem. He would pick them up, he would go golfing, leaving them at his mother's apartment. There really

wasn't much point, so now they (the children) are balking. (mother, age 31)

He's taken them swimming. He took them to Red River Ex. last Summer, the odd movies, you know. I think fathers have a very difficult time of what to do with the kids when they've got them on their hands. (mother, age 28)

Eight of the ten mothers wanted their children to continue their relationship with the father. Two described how they tried to maintain the father-child bond:

You know he used to accuse me of playing chess with the kids - you know, manipulating him with the kids - but I never did that. I wanted to maintain a friendly relationship so the kids would have the freedom to go back and forth. (mother, age 42)

Mary doesn't like me to say something nasty about her father, and I try not to. (mother, age 37)

The remaining two mothers wanted to sever the relationship between the child and their father. One, an abused wife, was afraid of her former husband. The other felt the children themselves wanted to sever the ties with the father. She explained:

He wanted to see them, but then my daughter started getting migraine headaches because she couldn't face him...And so I said, if you don't want to go to see him, you don't have to"... **(Did he argue about it?)** No, he didn't. He came down to pick up the kids and she didn't go. It was just once. That was the last time. **(Does he send gifts at Christmas?)** I don't accept gifts at Christmas...If he can't care what they eat, or how they

sleep, or keep warm during the year, then there's no point for him to become a great big Santa Claus at Christmas. (mother, age 38)

Yet, as the following conversation with one mother indicates, the bond between a child and his father continues on in spite of mother's wish to keep them apart.

His father deserted us when Donald was two years old...There were no problems until about a year and a half ago when all of a sudden he became curious as to what his father looked like and different things like that. (mother, age 32)

Understandably, the complexities of child custody and visiting arrangements and the formation of new partnerships resulted in family relationships differing considerably in and between families. As a result, notwithstanding the fact there may have been some similarities in the initial divorce arrangements, major differences in family relationships eventually evolved. Essentially, each one of the ten divorced families we interviewed had a different type of arrangement affecting the family relationship. At the time of divorce, five gave sole custody to the mother with the other five involving a joint or shared custody arrangement.

It has been said, rightly or wrongly, that people don't change -- circumstances do. In our study, there is little doubt that changing circumstances had a major impact on family relationships, especially for the children. In six instances, the natural father has either remarried or is liv-

ing together with a new partner; in these cases, the children now have less regular contact with the natural father and in two cases, none at all. It was clear that, for the most part, a remarriage or new partnership formed by the father does create more stress initially for the children of the first marriage. This is particularly true when a child finds himself or herself not only visiting the natural parent but also the new partner and her children who at times are resentful.

Where joint or shared custody arrangements are in place, the children appear to see the father on a more regular basis, although this varies according to where the father is domiciled. Here again, however, as one or both natural parents assume new partnerships, the family relationships change.

Some indication of the variations in family relationships can be readily seen from the following examples in our study.

Mother has sole custody; now living with new partner who child has adopted as new "Dad".

Joint custody; child spends weekends with father; mother lives with new partner who child dislikes.

Mother has sole custody; she remains single; child visits father in California for six weeks in summer; is free to phone father any time.

Joint custody; father lives in B.C.; before remarriage child visited occasionally; now father no interest in child of first marriage.

Mother sole custody; child used to visit father once a week now rarely; nothing to do.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) suggest that a child's and a parent's perceptions of events surrounding divorce may be quite different. What appears quite reasonable, even gratifying, for the parent, might be upsetting, quite disturbing for the child. Even in those situations where the parents openly conflict, children are not always aware of the problem. As the following situations illustrate, this was the case with some of our respondents.

The mother's perception:

I took them out of school and I said, "You are not coming back. We are never going to see B.C. again...We're going back to see grandma and grandpa and all the rest of the family in Winnipeg." The oldest one said, "What about daddy?" And I said, "No, he's not coming." and I took them with me on the plane... Actually, it was really funny 'cos I told him I was just coming on holidays, but I never went back (laughing). **(Do you remember how you felt?)** I'm free! I guess that's what you have to call it. It was great! (Mother, age 30)

The child's perception of the same situation:

All I remember is that we were driving back through the mountains, me and my sister with my mom, and that there were piles of snow and we had to bounce in the back seat to get the car to go further so that we could find a place where we could turn around and go back. **(That's when you left B.C. was it?)** Yes, and then we got sent by plane. Not daddy, only me and my sister and my mom. **(How did you feel about it?)** I was really surprised, and really sad. I just wanted them to stay together. I was so afraid. **(Do you think they will ever get back together?)** I've been hoping that for so long. (girl, age 10)



The mother's attitude:

I'm generally happier even though I am much busier and I have more stress and tension and responsibility to deal with. I feel capable and, although sometimes I feel overwhelmed, generally I feel in control... **(Would you like to get married again?)**  
No. I have no desire to be married again **(Mother, age 32)**

The child's attitude:

I hate it the way it is. I want my mom and dad to quit fighting and get back together again. (girl, age 9)

Similarly, while none of the mothers were reluctant to state their marital status, as the following responses illustrate, several of the children were embarrassed by their parents marital situation.

Yes, that was embarrassing what Lana (child's best friend) did. She just started talking about it in front of a couple of the kids. But I've said if they pass it on, they are going to get it. It's embarrassing when your friends pass it on to their other friends. (girl, age 10)

Sometimes we have a discussion at school about divorce, and he (teacher) says, "How many people don't have a father?". I don't put my hand up, so no one knows there's no one. (boy, age 11)

Our interviews suggested two main reasons for the disparity between the attitudes of mothers and children. (i) an almost complete lack of consultation and communication between parent and child. and (ii) the elimination of certain resources previously available to the child.

In broken marriages, children are primarily bystanders in a situation over which they have no control. The main source of antagonism invariably is between the parents, not between the parent and child. None of the children in our study were consulted prior to the separation. In nine cases out of ten, the mother knew the separation was coming long before the child was told; hence, it was often very difficult for the child to accept the situation.

In answer to our question, "How long before you separated, did you know your marriage was on the rocks?", two mothers responded as follows:

To be honest, I knew it wasn't going to last. I'm actually very surprised that it lasted as it did because, I'll be the first to admit, the only reason I married him was I had his daughter...Actually when I said "I do", I knew that if it lasted a year I knew I was going to be lucky. It ended up it lasted seven. (Mother, age 28)

About six years. **(Whose idea was it to separate?)**  
Mine...I was just so frustrated I would have done anything. I would have paid him support to leave.  
(Mother, age 31)

We asked the children, "Do you know why your parents separated?"

No. My mom's tried a little but I haven't understood. She tries to tell us that things are going to work out okay, and she tries to tell us about why they divorced, but I still don't understand why. (Girl, age ten)

I didn't know what was going on. All I can remember is I didn't know where my dad was. (**How do you feel about it now?**) Now I know why she did it, because he wasn't very fair at all. He promised us stuff and he would never do it. (Boy, age 11)

As mentioned earlier, the second reason for the difference in attitudes or perceptions, and one which is very pertinent to this study is that our interviews revealed children have far fewer resources than their parents. This was particularly noticeable in the divorced families. In contrast to the divorced mother who almost inevitably has a friend, a relative, and sometimes an ex-spouse they can turn to, we found most of the children in our sample were solely dependent on parents and grandparents. Our interviews revealed that eight out of ten maternal grandparents maintained a close relationship with the grandchildren but only two of the ten children were able to maintain a close relationship with the paternal grandparents. In those situations where the child does not have a good relationship with its mother, or where the child has little or no contact with its father, or grandparents, the child's resource network is further restricted. The following interview data illustrate the relatively limited resource network of children, compared to that of parents: In response to our question, "Who do you take your troubles to?",

## Mothers' responses:

My mother helps me out with money, and my aunt babysits for me...I talk to my mom or my older sister about important decisions...If I have trouble with the kids I talk to Dave (live-in partner) about it, like he's got a way of handling them, or like my girlfriend, the girl that lives in the next block over has got to be the one that I talk to the most. Like when I've got problems...her and I, we've talked to five or six in the morning, just about our kids. (Mother, age 29)

A variety of people. The guy I'm dating right now; my girl friends; my parents; my in-laws; brother, sisters. Various people, depending on what the troubles are. If its something about the kids, occasionally I'll go to my ex-husband. Nobody says, "I don't want to hear your problems, lady, go away, come talk to me when you're happy, you know." That's the type of people I hang around with. (Mother, age 29)

## Childrens' responses:

I'd tell my parents (mother and live-in partner).  
(Boy, age 11)

Well, just my mom and dad.  
(Girl, age 10)

My mom. (How about your dad?) Well, not that often. (Boy, age 11)

If we are at my mom's place, I tell my mom. (How about at your dad's place?) No. (Anybody else?) No, not really.  
(Girl, age 10)

Two children, both in conflictual divorced families, did not often confide in anyone in the household, not even with their mothers.

**How do you feel about things now, do you still cry about it?**

It was two weeks ago, when my dad dropped us off. I usually take off my coat and start hanging it up, and then, well we have to have a bath and I'd cry in my bath. (What does your mom say then?) Well, I don't let her know.  
(Girl, age 9)

**If something happens to you, you are hurt, which parent do you go to?**

My dad, because he mostly talks to me. He's easier to talk to. (How about your mom?) No. (girl, age 11)

What is a resource for the parent is not necessarily one for the child. Three of the mothers had formed live-in arrangements with boyfriends. Two of the children were pleased with the arrangement, basically adopting their mother's new partner as a substitute "father". The third child was upset, bitterly describing him as "the guy who sleeps in my mother's bed."

I wish I had never met him. I don't like him. He's too mean and bossy. He thinks he's the boss. He can get out of my house! (girl, age 9)

**What do the children think of your boyfriend?**

They don't want to let him out of their clutches. They've got him where they want him and he's a pushover. They love him. Like I say, he's fantastic. (Mother, age 29)

Well Brian has sort of adopted him as a father. He calls him dad. He spends a lot of time with him. (Mother, age 31)

In respect to living standards, six of the ten mothers reported their family's income had gone down, one reported it had remained the same, and three reported an improvement. Understandably, family income affects the children as well as their mothers. Some had to move to cheaper accommodation in poorer areas of the city. Others had to live in houses badly in need of repairs. While some children appeared quite content, a few were not happy with their current living accommodation.

#### **What's it like living here?**

Well, lots of drunks around here, and its noisy from the cars. The ceilings leak and that. (**Anything else wrong with the place?**) Well the fire just happened next door, so lots of people are worried about that. We are going to move sometime. (Boy, age 10)

I don't like the furniture. Its pretty old. The rooms need painting and the floors are all worn out. (Girl, age 10)

My mom and dad got separated and we couldn't afford the house without my dad, and then we moved. We've had to move so often. First we moved to an apartment and then we moved here. Then we moved to another house in the Maples, and then we moved back here. (**How do you feel about all this moving?**) Its hard. Packing up and unpacking. Getting to know new people. Its hard. (Girl, age 9)

I've been living here my whole life and I'm used to it so I don't think I could get along in any other house. The house is nice and the streets aren't very busy so you can ride your bike. (Girl, age 11)

Sometimes the necessity of having to maintain two households when formerly there had been one, means economic changes for the families. Some economic changes, as in the following case, seem to affect the child more than the parent.

When my mom and dad got separated, my dad got the TV and my mom got the record player. (Do you like listening to music?) No, I never use it much.  
(Girl, age 9)

Sometimes the necessity of coping on a reduced income, creates resentment against the mother. In one instance, it sparked sibling rivalry.

**Are you happy with the money and things you have?**

Well I'm supposed to earn a dollar every Friday, but my mom doesn't give it to me. I don't know what she does with it. (Boy, age 10)

Well I figure that my mom gets more clothes than I do. Even if she can't give me an allowance, I feel that if she gave me at least a dollar then that would be okay, but she doesn't. (Girl, age 10)

I never get as many things as my sister on my birthday. She always gets more. Plus she's got shelves in her room, two dressers and two closets. I haven't even got a closet. I've only got one dresser. (Girl, age 9)

No. My grandma always goes to these friends and they always give her these used clothes. I hate them...I say "mom I need new jeans", and she says, "Do you think money grows on trees"...She always

thinks of herself first...I want "Macs" jeans.  
They are tight jeans. They are really nice.  
(Girl, age 11)

We asked parents and children to describe a typical day in their home. Their responses revealed a wide difference in leisure activity, some of which could be directly attributed to the family's resources.

**What does your family do after supper in the evenings?**

We do household chores. Like clean my room, clean the bathroom, dishes, and vacuum. Maybe go to the community club, watch TV and stuff. (Boy, age 11)

Me and my sister do the dishes while my mom relaxes and watches TV before she goes to work, and then when we're finished we go watch TV or just go outside and play. (Everyday?) No, my mom is not always home. Sometimes she is at work. We always do the dishes though, and make sure the house is clean before we go to bed. (Girl, age 10)

Watch TV. Some days are different, like when my two sisters are working and when my mom's at school and then I'm alone with the dog. **(Do you have to do any housework?)** No, we have a cleaning lady. (Girl, age 10)



What about on the weekend, what do you usually do?

I go to my grandma's every weekend. (Do you belong to any groups?) Girl Guides. I take swimming and I used to take piano but I quit. (Girl, age 10)

We usually get up real early around seven and I come down and watch cartoons. (Are you in any organized things?) All week, we just play out front. (Do you take any lessons, like swimming?) Not this year. (Boy, age eleven)

We stay at the babysitters while my mother works. (Do you belong to any organized things?) No, just baseball at school a little bit. (Do you take any lessons?) No. (What do you mostly do at the babysitters?) Watch TV or play with my friends.

The following brief analysis of interviews with two of the child-respondents participating in this study provides some indication of the wide disparity in support resources affecting the outlook and perceptions of each. One came from a struggling, low income divorced family, the other from a stable, upper-middle income divorced family.

Katie (child of low-income divorced family):

Katie, nine years of age, lives with her mother and sister in a working class district. Her mother has an approximate income of \$12,000 from part-time work, child support payments and board paid by the mother's live-in boy friend.

Katie has fairly severe emotional problems adversely affecting her school work. She has few, if any, close friends and finds most other children, including her sister, difficult to get along with. Her mother does attend some of the school functions with Katie "but not too often" according

to Katie. Prior to the marriage breakdown she had her own bedroom; now because room was needed for the boy friend, she must share a room with her sister who Katie feels is favoured. She is also very resentful of other children who "have more things than me.

Katie would prefer to live with her father who she sees nearly every weekend. She used to visit the mother's parents regularly and other relatives periodically. now she only sees them if her father takes her at weekends. As time passes she sees less and less of any of her grandparents. She seldom sees her uncles and aunts.

Katie does not like her mother's boy-friend, referring to him as "bossy and mean", and as "the guy who now sleeps in my mom's bedroom".

Although Katie knows the chances of her parents getting together are remote, she wishes they would try. Even though her parents used to fight constantly before the separation, the news of the divorce came as a shock. Her parents did not tell her anything until after the event. Her mother tried to explain according to Katie but she is still very confused and still cries, especially after her father takes her home after a visit. Katie can't think of anything good in her life since the divorce but won't talk to anyone about it.

Karen (child of upper-middle income divorced family):

Karen is ten years of age and lives with her mother and three sisters in a middle-class district of Winnipeg. Her mother receives an income of \$24,000 from her husband and has other resources, has not worked full-time since the divorce, and is currently attending the University of Manitoba. Karen's mother owns the house and the family income is sufficient to allow for the services of a cleaning lady.

Karen has a very active life in and out of school including Girl Guides, swimming lessons and Sunday School. She often goes swimming and to the movies with her mother and sisters. She has two special friends at school where she is considered

an excellent student. She thinks she would like to be a veterinarian after she finishes school. An out-going child, Karen is very friendly with her neighbours and gets along well with her school mates. She sees her grandparents on her mother's side of the family at least once a week and often stays over a weekend with them; she also visits her aunts and uncles periodically. Since her parents were divorced Karen visits her father in California for six weeks every summer. She does not have an allowance but her mother gives her money whenever she really needs it. She thinks she probably gets more money than most of her friends.

In respect to the separation and subsequent divorce, Karen does not remember being told but she was not really surprised because she knew her mom and dad "didn't get along". At the time of the divorce she was relieved and has grown to live with it. She does not think the divorce affected her too much, especially since she still sees her father at least once a year for at least six weeks, and her other relatives constantly.

Although these examples might be considered extreme with wide disparities between the outlook and perceptions of each child, the irrefutable fact emerges that financial and adequate supporting human resources largely determine the lifestyle of each "child of divorce".

In sum, our study suggests that the extent to which children are adversely affected by divorce can be seen academically, socially, and emotionally. In varying degrees, the children of divorce in this survey perform below the mean in all three areas when compared to the attitude, progress, and life type of children in happily married families. As suggested earlier, in broken marriages children are primarily bystanders in a situation over which they have no control.

In this study, none of the children interviewed were consulted by either of their parents prior to the divorce; hence, with the complete absence of communication it was hardly surprising that the children rarely accepted the situation. Similarly, it was hardly surprising that these same children indicated a far more cautious and less than enthusiastic response to our questions on marriage and child-bearing than their counterparts from married families.

**Chapter VII**  
**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The past decade has seen dramatic increases in the number of marriages ending in divorce. One aspect of divorce which concerns, and will continue to concern parents, social workers, judges, and other observers, is the effect of divorce on the children.

Given the large number of Canadian children affected by divorce and its consequences, there has been a surprising lack of systematic research on this issue. Even in the United States, where recent studies on divorce and children have begun to build a useful base of knowledge, there are several gaps. Statistical data on the increase in both the divorce rate and in the numbers of children affected in Canada do little to assess the actual impact of divorce for either the child, or the parent. The present study endeavours to relate some of the statistics to everyday life in a number of married and divorced Winnipeg families. This thesis attempts to address the following question: How does divorce affect family members, especially the children?

This study examined family relationships, family resources, and the behavior and perception of children in ten divorced and ten married families. It asked, what part, if

any, does the family's socioeconomic circumstances and network of personal resources play in family interaction? Does divorce affect the patterns of daily interaction among family members, and if so, in what ways, and to what effect? Do children in divorced families behave and feel differently about themselves than those in married families?

A review of the divorce literature revealed four central themes which became an integral part of the research design of this study.

1. Divorce changes relationships between family members, it does not end them. Hence, there is a need to examine the on-going psychological structure of the family after divorce.
2. Family relationships differ greatly from one family to another. Thus, the possible effects of divorce are more clearly revealed by a research strategy which compares family relationships within groups (married or divorced) as well as between groups (married and divorced).
3. A parent's and a child's views of divorce may be quite different. Therefore, we need to interview children as well as parents.

4. Family life is influenced by two sets of resources; i) relatives and friends, ii) socioeconomic. Access to, and use of, these resources will influence the ways in which a family lives and how members adapt to changing circumstances such as divorce.

Ten married and ten divorced families each of which had at least one child between the ages of 9 and 11 in the 4th or 5th grade in school were studied. All families in the study were from middle-class backgrounds. Incomes of five divorced families were below Statistics Canada's Low Income Guidelines; incomes of the remaining fifteen were above the guidelines.

Data for the study were collected by detailed interviews of both parents and their children. Each respondent was asked questions designed to elicit specific information about their family resources and relationships, and their concepts of family life and family-related events. Our analysis of the data focused on four main areas:

1. An examination and comparison of the socioeconomic and personal resources of both divorced and married families and an assessment of the effect such resources on: i) family relationships, and ii) children's social, emotional, and academic behavior.

2. An analysis of family relationships in both married and divorced families, and the effects of such relationships upon the social, emotional, and academic behavior of children;
3. An examination and comparison of the perception children in divorced and married families have of families, divorce, and parental roles;
4. An analysis of the conceptions children in divorced families have of family life and divorce compared to those of their parents.

This thesis, in its entirety, provides background information about the procedures, methods, and approach leading to an analysis of each set of circumstances. The strength of the findings are limited by the relatively small and restricted composition of the sample, (i.e. all white and primarily middle class). Therefore, generalizations from this study must be made with these and other limitations in mind. Our sample was self-selected and at two basic income levels. None of the mothers had remarried. It was not feasible to interview fathers in divorced families. An additional concern might be raised as to the validity of only using parents as the informants of their children's well-being. Teacher ratings and school records would have been prefera-



ble sources of evaluations. The most salient conclusions are summarized below.

### MAJOR FINDINGS

#### Family Resources:

A comparison of the socioeconomic and personal resources of married and divorced families indicates:

1. Most of the parents in married homes have more resources than the divorced mother. The difference between the two types of family can be partly attributed to the advantageous socioeconomic position of the married parents, in particular to the father's contribution and, partly to the assistance married parents derive from one another. While married parents, even those who are not particularly "close" can depend on some form of physical, material, and emotional support from their spouse, divorced mothers, in the main, have to rely on themselves.
2. Although congenial married families have slightly more resources than conflictual married families, (primarily the support spouses give to each other), there is little difference between the two categories of divorced families.

## The Children

### a) The Child's Experience of Divorce

1. A child's and a parent's perception of events surrounding divorce may be quite different. What appears quite reasonable, even gratifying for the parent, may be quite upsetting for the child. Even in those situations where the parents are in open conflict, the child is often shocked when parents separate.
2. Children are primarily bystanders in a situation over which they have no control. They are seldom consulted before a divorce and are seldom prepared. Moreover, they fail to understand even when it is eventually explained to them.
3. Parents are seldom equipped to handle reactions from children and are often unable to provide children relevant support during the divorce crisis.

### b) Academic, Social, and Emotional Adjustment

1. There is very little difference between the overall performance of children from married and divorced families when the income of the latter is comparable to that of the married family. Therefore, favourable

socioeconomic circumstances are as important, if not more, as whether the child comes from a divorced or married home.

2. Overall performance, (academic + social + emotional) of children is related to the degree of conflict/congeniality among the families. Children in congenial families, particularly congenial divorced, are more likely to do better overall than their counterparts in conflictual families. Part of the difference between the two groups of children can be attributed to the stress and tension in the home. Part of the difference, however, may also be attributed to the amount and quality of assistance the child receives at home and school.

c) Children's Views of Marriage, Divorce, and Family

1. Children from divorced families tend to be more cautious in their views about getting married and having children of their own than children from married families. The children from divorced families were inclined to add a condition such as, "Only if I meet the right person" and "If I get a good job".
2. The children from divorced families tend to accept divorce more readily than those from married families. While most children stated or inferred that

divorce made them sad, several of the children from divorced families considered that in some cases, divorce was an appropriate solution for unhappy marriages. Most of the children of divorce, however, expressed the wish to see their family together again, even though they believed it to be unlikely.

3. Children's concepts of what a family is, are not changed very much by their experience with divorce. Nearly all children described a gender-specific relationship wherein, for example, women are primarily viewed as responsible for caring for the children, cooking, and cleaning, and men for the maintenance and support of the household.
4. Even though half of the mothers studied worked outside of the home, none of the children included the "financial role" of mothers in their description. To the child, work for the mother centers on cooking and cleaning.
5. The majority of children either thought their father's work did not affect them at all or they associated positive benefits from his work such as "paying the mortgage, or feeding them".

d) Effect of Post-Divorce Family Relationships upon Children

1. Family relationships change after divorce, they do not end. Even in those situations where the non-custodial parent has little or no contact with the family, the psychological relationship between parents and between parents and children continues long after the final separation.
2. Children, in particular, experience change in their relationships with their parents following divorce. Most mothers believed that while their own relationship with their children had improved since the lessening of the marital stress, the relationship between the child and the father had deteriorated. The father's new partnership and less regular contact between father and child were contributing factors to such deterioration.
3. Family relationships differ considerably in and between families. The complexities of child custody and access arrangements and the formation of new partnerships associated with marital disruption compound the diversity. Children in our study appeared happiest when parents cooperated with one another as parents. Although they were no longer husband and

wife, they were still mother and father, supporting, rather than undermining one another.

4. Changes in a family's socioeconomic and personal resources after divorce affects the child as well as the parent. Children who view life in a divorced home most positively are those whose life after divorce is similar or improved to that before divorce.
5. Parents are a child's major resource. Children who adapt most readily to divorce are those who continue to enjoy a close relationship with both parents as they had before the divorce.

## 7.1 CONCLUSIONS

Notwithstanding the limitations of the study, one can draw several conclusions from the findings. The most significant insofar as the child's adjustment to divorce is concerned are: 1) the family's socioeconomic circumstances are as important, if not more, as whether the child comes from a divorced or married home; 2) Emotional stress to children is minimized when parents cooperate with each other as parents; 3) the quality of the child's relationship with the non-custodial father is as important to the child's adjustment as the quality of the child's relationship with the custodial mother.

Divorce is an extremely unsettling event for a child although in some cases the effects are mitigated where economic circumstances allow the custodial parent to live comfortably with the children, and when the child continues to enjoy a close relationship with the non-custodial parent), or when a child is removed from an abusive parent. However, findings from the present study support previous findings which suggest that generally, children lose more than they gain from their parents' divorce.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980:10) astutely, and somewhat cynically, suggest that many of our unwarranted assumptions about children have arisen simply because they have suited the adults' needs at the time. Thus, the conventional wisdom of yesteryear that "parents should stay together for the sake of their children" has been replaced with a "marriage that is unhappy for the parent will be unhappy for the children", or conversely, "if the parents are happy, the children will benefit". Yet, as the findings of this study indicate, children perceive, react, and cope with divorce in a different manner than their parents. For example, even in those situations where the parents are in open conflict, children are not necessarily aware of the problem. Consequently, the separation is likely to distress the child as much, if not more, than the parents.

Hultsch and Plemons (1979:21) point out that life events are particularly stressful if they continue for an extended

period and if they involve multiple changes and losses. Divorce is not a single event. For the child, as it is for the parent, it represents a chain of events - a formidable series of legal, social, psychological, and economical obstacles.

The period before divorce which generally lasts about two years is often considered to be the most threatening and disturbing phase of the entire divorce procedure (Goode, 1956:73) Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). During this time parents and children alike undergo considerable strain and upset. When one parent finally moves out, the child is likely to feel the greatest degree of failure, rejection, and abandonment. Yet, the parents are often unable to console their child because they are too concerned with their own problems.

The family life after the divorce is one of adjustment and change. The adjustment involved with reduced socioeconomic circumstances, changes in housing conditions, schools, and child care often disrupts the child's daily pattern. Continued friction between parents arising from bitterness, disputes over custody, visiting, and maintenance, further upsets the child. The tendency for family friends to withdraw and for less frequent interaction with kin, especially the paternal grandparents, tends to reduce the child's sense of stability and security. Often the child longs for a two-parent family again.



Children do not petition for divorce. The divorce is the decision of their parents. Adding significantly to their feelings of helplessness, children often face their problems of divorce alone. Parents, trying to cope with the radical alterations of their own lives, often have a diminishing capacity to parent at this time.

In sum, our findings suggest that "children of divorce" are a vulnerable population. The dependent position of the child, and the many changes which occur during the divorce process, especially those resulting in a reduction in the family's socioeconomic circumstances and/or in the quality of the relationship between parent and child, tend to emphasize the child's vulnerability.

## 7.2 IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present study suggest implications for researchers, policy makers, and counsellors interested in divorce and its aftermath. The first is methodological. Divorced families must not be viewed as an homogeneous group. Many factors influence the degree of stress incurred and the family's capacity to adjust. Obviously, the impact of divorce is more clearly revealed by a research strategy which compares families both within and between groups of married and divorced families. Without such a strategy, the significance of family resources and family relationships for divorced families would not have been revealed.

Future research concerning divorce cannot ignore the significance of family resources. It is clear that socioeconomic resources play an integral role in the divorced family's capacity to function after divorce. Due to a combination of causes, such as lower earning power, insufficient child support and inadequate, and sometimes costly child care facilities, divorced families, particularly those headed by women tend to face serious economic hardships. It would seem pertinent to explore in much greater depth the effect that the socioeconomic status of the family has on the parent's and the child's adjustment to divorce. For instance, what effect, if any, does the source and stability of income have on the family's sense of well-being? Do custodial mothers who are assured of adequate income experience less stress than those who have to rely on social assistance? Do children whose non-custodial parent contribute adequately towards child support, feel more loved than those whose parents contribute only minimally or not at all?

It is also clear that the personal network of family and friends undergoes considerable change after the parents divorce. The tendency for friends to withdraw reduces the divorced family's support network. Changes in the relationships between children and their fathers, and between children and grandparents have also been noted. However, more research is required in this area. Subsequent researchers might also explore the contributions, both posi-

tive and negative, that revisions in the divorced mother's and the child's support networks make to the adjustment process.

The importance of post-divorce relationships indicates that more investigation should be conducted on family relationships after marital dissolution. More information is required about the factors that inhibit the establishment of reasonable attitudes by parents in respect to maintaining relationships for the child's sake.

The impact of divorce is not uniform. Many factors influence the degree of stress experienced by families. Our findings identify changes in the child's life which frequently accompany parental divorce. One set of changes may be the quality and quantity of parent-child interaction, while another may be the socioeconomic changes the family experiences. Unfortunately, in respect to the children, our sample was not large enough to allow controls for important variables such as the children's ages at divorce, the gender of the child, the presence and age of siblings, the length of time since divorce, and the influence of the father's remarriage. The research needs to be repeated with a sufficient number of cases which would permit this type of analysis. There is also a need for longitudinal research which would allow us to understand children's reactions to parental divorce over a period of time.

The results of this study also have implications for professionals counselling families experiencing divorce. Counsellors must stress the importance of a continuing relationship between the child and both parents independently, notwithstanding the antagonism that may exist between each parent. This gives parents an opportunity to effectively help the child deal with divorce.

The courts could ease the trauma of divorce and minimize its impact on children. Legal emphasis is on the dissolution of the marriage and the procedures that determine custody, visitation rights, and property settlements. There is less concern with the effect on family relationships. The efforts of judges and lawyers working as mediators can reduce conflict between parents and thus spare the child the stress of divorce arguments. Such actions would help to establish and maintain healthy relationships after the divorce.

Finally, it must be conceded that the single parent household is here to stay. Therefore, policies which focus on strengthening of such households through income and support systems are required to ensure the future for children of divorce.

**Appendix A**  
**DATA ANALYSIS**

Family Relationships

Relationships between Parents:

1. Quality

The quality of the relationship between husbands and wives was measured by assessing the closeness, degree of affection, and level of satisfaction with the relationship.

To measure "closeness", married and divorced respondents were asked to describe their present relationship with their spouse. Divorced respondents were also asked to describe their marital relationship just before their marital break-up.

Relationships were considered to be "close" if the respondent characterized them as such. Respondents who used such terms as "our best friends", "good buddies", "get along well", and described their relationship as a "total sharing, emotional, physical union" were considered to be closer than those who described themselves as "basically close", but added a qualifying clause such as ideal "when their partner was sober", or "in a good mood". Relationships were consid-

ered "not close" if the respondent stated or inferred that "they did not get along well", that "they had many problems", "were openly hostile", or "coldly indifferent".

In order to measure the "degree of affection" between parents, respondents were asked if they considered themselves to be openly affectionate or consistently reserved. Respondents considering themselves as openly affectionate were categorized as more affectionate with one another than those who described themselves as reserved.

Two items were used to assess the degree of satisfaction of respondents. In the case of divorced persons the relationship with their former spouse was assessed. Respondents were asked about their ideal conceptions of marriage when they were first married, and the degree to which their relationship met this ideal. They were also asked to comment on the sexual and affectionate components of their relationships.

Those respondents who generally considered their marriage had met or excelled their original expectations, and who were generally happy with the sexual and affectionate aspects of their marital relationships were categorized to be more satisfied with their relationship than those who were discontent with either aspect.

## 2. Companionship

"Companionship" between husbands and wives was assessed according to the number of their shared activities, the degree of enjoyment they experienced, the degree of interest and support they showed in each other's activities, and whether or not they usually had joint vacations.

Respondents who reported shared activities, enjoyed each others company, were interested in and supportive of each other's outside activities, and usually spent vacations together were considered to be "good companions". Conversely, respondents who stated they did most things apart, stated or inferred they did not particularly enjoy being with one another, often had separate vacations, and had little interest or knowledge of each other's activities were considered to be "poor companions".

## 3. Communication

The form of communication between husbands and wives was measured by two questions. First, both parents in the married families, and the mother in the divorced families were asked to state how well they communicated with their spouses. Second, they were asked if communication was an issue or source of disagreement for them.

Respondents who stated they "communicated well", that "communication was not a problem" or that "communication was not an issue between them" were labelled better communicators than those who reported that "communication could be better", that they "disagreed about communication", or in some way inferred that one or the other of them was not satisfied with the way they communicated with one another.

#### 4. Emotional Support

The degree of emotional support which existed between married spouses and between divorced spouses in their former marriages was evaluated by using two items. First, respondents were asked whether or not they told one another about a bad day, and whether or not they listened. Second, respondents were asked to name a maximum of three individuals whom they felt provided them with emotional support.

On the first item, relationships where both spouses talked and both listened to each others problems were considered to be more emotionally supportive than those where both listened, but only one partner talked. Situations where neither spouse told the other their problems and neither spouse listened were considered to be least supportive. On the second item, those respondents who named their spouse as one of the three individuals who provided them with support were considered to be more supportive of one another than those who failed to do so.



## 5. Conflict

The "type of conflict" which existed between married spouses and between divorced spouses when they were still married was assessed by several indicators. Respondents were asked questions regarding the number of issues they agreed or disagreed about, whether or not they felt they argued or disagreed more than other couples they knew, whether or not they usually argued in front of the children, and whether or not one or the other lost their temper.

Relationships where the couples stated they seldom disagreed, who felt they argued less or the same as other couples, who did not argue in front of the children, and where neither one of them lost their temper were considered to be "non-conflictual". Relationships where the couples stated they disagreed about most things, who felt they argued more than most couples, who usually argued in front of the children, and often lost control were considered to be "conflictual".

## 6. Decision-making

Decision-making in the home was categorized from answers parents and children gave to the questions "How are decisions made in your family?", and "What happens if s/he says "no" to something you want?"

Married families and divorced families before they divorced were scored according to the degree of equality in their decision-making. Respondents who reported decisions in their family were usually made by mutual consent of both the husband and the wife were considered to be the most egalitarian. Respondents who reported that while decisions were discussed at great length by both spouses, in the case of dissent, the final decision was habitually made by only one spouse, were considered partially egalitarian. Finally, families where both spouses went separate ways if they could not reach a consensus, and families where there was at the most a minimal discussion, and the final decision was always made by husband or wife alone, were considered to be the least egalitarian.

#### 7. Division of Labour

The patterns of "Division of Labour" in the home was examined by asking respondents to describe what part each member of the household played in child-rearing, cooking, cleaning, food preparation, shopping for food and for clothing, do-it-yourself jobs, home and car maintenance, and community work.

Families were classified according to the extent family members shared tasks, or did them alone. Divorced mothers were asked to describe their present situation, then asked to note any changes that had taken place since their separation.

#### 8. Relationship Between Parent and Child:

Relationships between parents and children were assessed from information obtained from the mother, father, and child in the married families and from the mother and child in the divorced families. Generally, each parent and child was asked to comment on their own relationship, and whenever appropriate, parents were also asked to describe the child's relationship with the other parent.

Similar to the manner in which the relationships between parents were assessed, the quality of the relationship between each parent and child was measured by the "closeness" and "degree of affection" between the pair. Parents and children who reported that their relationship was "close" or that they "got along fine" or "great" were considered "closer" than those who reported their relationship as basically close but added a contingency clause such as "some of the time", or "if s/he's in a good mood" or "it's not quite as close as I'd like". Alternatively, those respondents who described their relationship as "poor" or "not good" were not considered to have a close relationship. The "degree of affection" was measured primarily from the child's response to the question, "Do you ever just give your father/mother a hug?". Children who reported they hugged the parent quite regularly were considered to be more affectionate than those who did so "only sometimes" or "never".

The parent's interest in the child's activities was assessed from the parent's reported involvement with the child's friends and school activity. Parents who helped their children with their homework and were involved in most activities at the school, including field trips were differentiated from those who reported they were less involved, and from those who never, or seldom took part in activities at their child's school.

The parents' involvement in the child's friends was examined by asking how many of the child's friends the parent knew and whether or not the parent allowed the friends to play in the house. Children who reported their parent knew most of their friends and let them sometimes play in the house were scored higher than those children with parents who knew only a few of their friends and did not allow them to play in the house.

The type of "communication" between each parent and child was evaluated by whether or not the child liked to talk to the parent about things in general, and more specifically, whether or not the child would tell the parent if he or she had had a good or a bad day.

Children who reported they liked to talk to their parent "a lot" were scored higher than those who reported they liked to talk only some of the time. Communication between parent and child was considered to be poorest if the child

reported they never, or seldom liked to talk to their parent. Similarly, children who reported they always told their parent about a bad or a good day were scored higher than those who reported so doing only some of the time, and those who never did, respectively.

The degree of "emotional support" between parents and children was based on the child's willingness to ask its parents for help and the child's assessment of the parent's discipline. Children were asked if they would seek their parent's help when they were upset or needed something, and if so, was one parent easier to approach than the other. They were also asked when they disagreed with their parents whether they thought their parent was fair.

Children who reported they usually went to their parent when they were upset, when they needed something, and who thought the parent was usually fair in matters of discipline were considered to have a higher degree of emotional support than those who gave negative responses to any of these items.

Finally, completing the assessment of the relationship between parent and child, the child's position in the domestic hierarchy of the household was judged by the number of tasks the child performed around the house and yard, and the child's role in decision-making.

In respect to the child's part in the household tasks, children who were expected to contribute a great deal to regular household maintenance were considered to participate more than those who were expected to contribute little, or who did so only occasionally or on a voluntary basis. On decision-making, children who reported they were consulted on all decisions in the home were distinguished from those who reported they were consulted only on matters that directly concerned them, or those who reported they did not have any say.

## Appendix B

### FAMILY RESOURCES

Resources of each of our respondents was measured by the following list. Items are scored to represent the value of our respondents' resources. The higher the respondent's score the higher the resources of the individual.

#### Family Resources Check List (parents)

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Variations</u>	<u>Scores</u> <sup>8</sup>
<u>Socioeconomic Resources</u>		
1. <u>Employment:</u>		
<u>Paid Work Outside of Home</u>		
Employed?	Full/Part/Unemployed	2/1/0
Type of work	Profession/White/Blue	3/2/1
Decision not to work?	Easy/Mixed/Hard	2/1/0
Hours fluctuate?	No/Yes	1/0
Work shifts? Weekends?	No/Yes	1/0
Supervise others?	Yes/No	1/0
Supervising important?	Yes/No	1/0
Work skill?	Medium/Low/Unskilled	2/1/0
Control over work?	Most/Lot/Some/None	3/2/1/0
Likes work?	Yes/Unsure/No	2/1/0
Choose same work again?	Yes/Unsure/No	2/1/0
Rather change work?	No/Unsure/Yes	2/1/0
Children's view of work?	Good/Mixed/Bad	2/1/0
Children and work?	Easy/Mixed/Hard	2/1/0
Lose income if stayed home	No/Yes	1/0

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<sup>8</sup> Slashes separate various responses and their corresponding scores. For example, for the first variable, persons who are employed full time are given a resource value of 2, those employed part time 1, and those who are unemployed 0.

Benefits from Employment?

Pensions	Yes/No	1/0
Insurance	Yes/No	1/0
Dental	Yes/No	1/0
Sick leave	Yes/No	1/0
Other Benefit	Yes/No	1/0

Unpaid Work outside of Home:

Do volunteer work?	Yes/No	1/0
Hours worked week?	+10/5-10/1-4/0	3/2/1/0

Education

Educational level	Degree/University/ Trade/Elementary	4/3/2/1
Father's Education	University/Trade Elementary	3/2/1
Mother's Education	University/Trade Elementary	3/2/1
Received encouragement	Yes/No	1/0

Income

Respondent's Income:		
Earn income of any kind?	Yes/No	1/0
Over Winnipeg's average income?	Yes/No	1/0
Total Family Income:		
Over Statistic Canada's Low Income Guidelines	Yes/No	1/0
Other sources of income?	Yes/No	1/0
Income fluctuates?	Up/Same/Down	2/1/0
Satisfied with income?	Yes/Mixed/No	2/1/0
Future financial?	Up/Same/Down	2/1/0
Get money from?	Family/Friends/ Bank/None	1/1/1/0

2. Resources related to Socioeconomic situationChild Care

Use day care?	Yes/No	1/0
Problem with sitters?	No/Yes	1/0
School lunch program?	Yes/No	1/0
Use Lunch program regularly?	Yes/Sometimes/No	2/1/0
Satisfied with lunch care?	Yes/Mixed/No	2/1/0
Satisfied with school?	Yes/No	1/0
Sitters for sick child?	No problem/problem	1/0
Caretaker for sick child?	Two/Only mother	1/0



Housing and Neighbourhood

House paid for?	Yes/No	1/0
Rent/mortgage costs?	Under/Over 25% income	1/0
Rooms in house?	Over/Under 4	1/0
Bedrooms in house?	Separate/Share	1/0
Satisfied with house?	Yes/No	1/0
Satisfied with neighbourhood?	Yes/No	1/0

Transportation

Household has car?	Yes/No	1/0
Transportation a problem?	Yes/No	1/0

Leisure

Take vacations?	Yearly/Sometimes/Rare	2/1/0
Type of vacation?	Luxury/Medium/Budget/	3/2/1
Get away without children?	Yes/No	1/0
Satisfied with vacation?	Yes/No	1/0
Have time for oneself?	Yes/No	1/0

Personal Network of Family, Friends and CommunityPersonal

Place of birth?	Winnipeg/Manitoba	3/2/2/0
Years in Canada?	+20/10-20/-10	2/1/0
Language problems?	None/Some	1/0
Satisfied with marital status?	Yes/Sometimes/No	2/1/0
Satisfied with gender?	Yes/No	1/0
Serious illness in family?	No/Yes	1/0

Household

Number of adults?	Two/One	1/0
Children over 12	Yes/No	1/0
Children under 5	No/Yes	1/0

Help in Household:

Help with children?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0
Help with cooking?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0
Help with food preparation?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0
Help with cleaning?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0
Help with shopping?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0
Help with home/car?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0
Do-it-yourself jobs?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0
Get outside help?	Yes/No	1/0
Pay for outside help?	Sometimes/No	1/0
Likes work in home?	Yes/Mixed/No	2/1/0
Children and housework?	Easy/Mixed/Hard	2/1/0

Family - other than immediateParents:

Alive?	Two/One/None	2/1/0
Where live?	Winnipeg/Manitoba	3/2/1/0
	Other Province/Outside	
Frequency of contact?	Daily/Weekly	4/3/2/1/0
	Rarely/None	

In-laws- Alive?	Two/One/None	2/1/0
Where live?	Winnipeg/Manitoba	3/2/1/0
	Other Province/Outside	
Frequency of contact?	Daily/Weekly	4/3/2/1/0
	Rarely/None	

Siblings- Number of	+3/2-3/1/0	3/2/1/0
Where live? (closest one)	Winnipeg/Manitoba	3/2/1/0
	Other Province	
Frequency of contact?	Daily/Weekly/	4/3/2/1/0
	Rarely/None	

Emotional help:		
from family other than parents	Yes/No	1/0
from parents	Yes/No	1/0

Tangible help- from parents	Yes/No	1/0
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Family-Immediate (spouse/partner)

Spouse/partner employed?	Yes/No/Not known	1/0/0
Effects spouse employment?	Good/Mixed/Bad/nil	2/1/0/0
Emotional help from partner?	Yes/No	1/0
Relationship with partner?	Close/Fairly/Not	2/1/0
Affection from partner?	Yes/No	1/0
Satisfied with affection?	Yes/No	1/0
Enjoy being with partner?	Yes/No	1/0
Do a lot together?	Yes/No	1/0
Interested in one another?	Yes/No	1/0
Communicate well?	Yes/No	1/0
Listen about bad day?	Yes/No	1/0
Emotional help from children?	Yes/No	1/0
Satisfied with family size?	Yes/No	1/0
Children personal resource?	Yes/Some/No	2/1/0
Children marriage resource?	Yes/Some/No	2/1/0
Spouse's help with children?	Good/Some/Poor	2/1/0
Spouse's time with children?	Lots/Little/None	2/1/0
Child helps in home?	Lots/Some/Minimal	2/1/0
Good things about children?	Yes/Mixed/None	2/1/0
Children help in decisions?	Lots/Some/None	2/1/0

Friends

Emotional help from friends?	Yes/No	1/0
Tangible help from friends?	Yes/No	1/0
Frequency of contact with?	Lots/Minimal	1/0
Get together with friends?	Yes/No	1/0
Satisfied with social life?	Yes/No	1/0

Outside Agencies/Community/Organizations

Emotional help from others?	Yes/No	1/0
Tangible help from others?	Yes/No	1/0
Turned to agency for help?	Yes/No	1/0
Currently using agency?	Yes/No	1/0
Satisfied with agency?	Good/Mixed/No	2/1/0
Unable to obtain help?	No/Yes	1/0
Satisfied with community help?	Yes/Mixed/No	2/1/0
Religious?	Yes/No	1/0
Religious involvement?	Lot/Some/Rare/Nil	3/2/1/0
Non religious organizations?	Yes/No	1/0
Involvement?	Lots/Some/Rare/None	3/2/1/0

Possible Range = 1 - 206  
 Sample Range = 75 - 148  
 Sample Mean = 114.6

**Appendix C**  
**CHILD OUTCOMES**

Child Outcomes

Children were assessed according to their academic, social, and emotional behavior. Responses were scored whereby the higher the score attained, the better adjusted the child.

1. Academic: (Coded 0 - 6)

Factors

- a) Child's current academic performance.
  - b) Child's performance over last five years.
  - c) Child's emotional/behavior in school.
  - d) Child's relationship with his/her teacher.
- 
- (1) - Parent reports child doing well in school.
  - (1) - Parent reports child has not had problems in last five years.
  - (1) - Parent reports child does not "misbehave", "act up" or have any type of emotional problems in school.
  - (1) - Child reports that school work has always been easy.
  - (1) - Child likes teachers.

Scored '1' for each positive and '0' for each negative response.

Possible Range scores	=	0 - 6
Range of Sample	=	1 - 6
Sample Mean	=	3.7

2. Social: (Coded 0 - 7)Factors:

- a) Child's friends in and outside of school
  - b) Child plays with other children
  - c) Getting along with other children
- (1) - Parent reports child gets along well with other children.
  - (1) - Child has friends at school, including some close ones.
  - (1) - Child plays with children during recess and after four.
  - (1) - Child does not find children at school difficult to get along with.
  - (1) - Child reacts in a reasonable or mature way if other children try to upset him/her.
  - (1) - Child has friends outside of school.

Scored '1' for each positive and '0' for each negative response.

Possible range of scores = 0 - 7  
 Sample range of scores = 2 - 7  
 Sample average score = 5.25

3. Emotional (Coded 0 - 6)Factors:

- a) Personality
- b) Maturity - Independence and attention
- c) Emotive expression and optimism

a) Personality (Coded 0,1,2)

Child considered to be "well balanced" if parent,

- (2) - describes the child as "happy", "confident" or "well adjusted".

Child considered to have "mixed" personality if parent,

- (1) - describes the child as "basically happy or confident", but sometimes "moody", "angry", or "non-confident".

Child considered to have a "problem" personality if parent,

- (0) - describes the child as "moody", "angry", "non-confident", or "extremely difficult to get along with".

Maturity (Coded 0 - 3)

i) Independence (Coded 0,1,2)

Child considered to be,

- (2) - "mature" if parent feels the child is independent and reports it is not difficult to get her/him to do things for her/himself.
- (1) - "fairly mature" if the parent describes the child as fairly independent but reports it is sometimes difficult to get the child to do things for him/herself.
- (0) - "immature" if the parent reports it is extremely difficult to get the child to do things for her/himself.

Attention: (Coded 0,1)

Child considered to be,

- (1) - "mature" if the parent reports the child demands "about average" or "very little" attention.
- (0) - "immature" if the parent reports the child demands "a lot of attention" or is "very demanding".

c) Emotive Expression and Optimism: (Coded 0, 1)

- (1) - Child can think of something good that has happened in last five years.
- (0) - Child cannot think of anything good that has happened in the last five years.

Possible range of scores	= 0 - 6
Sample score	= 1 - 5
Sample average	= 3.45

## Overall Scores (Academic + Social + Emotional):

Possible range of scores	=	0 - 19
Sample score	=	4 - 16
Sample average	=	12.4

## Appendix D

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Interview: Schedule for Parents \*<sup>9</sup>

#### A. BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

Before we get into the main topics of the interview, could you tell me a few things about yourself and the people in this household?

1. First, where were you born?  
If outside Canada,  
When did you come to Canada?  
How long have you lived in Winnipeg?  
If from another province?  
How long have you been in Winnipeg?
2. What is your present marital status?  
  
If Separated
3. How long have you been separated? Is this the first  
time you have been separated? (If not) Number?  
Length of each separation?  
  
If Divorced
4. How long have you been divorced? How long were you  
separated before you divorced?
5. Was this your first marriage? How long have you been  
married? (first? second? third?)

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<sup>9</sup> Separate interview schedules were used for divorced and married families. For the sake of brevity, schedules used for the parents and children in divorced families are reproduced here. Schedules for respondents in married families were identical, except for the items specifically relating to separation and divorce.



6. How old were you when you were married?      Separated?  
Divorced?
7. Are both of your parents still living? (If not) Year  
of death(s)?
8. (If yes) Where do they live?
9. How often do you see, speak, or visit them? (Fre-  
quency and nature of contact)
10. Were your parents ever separated or divorced? (If  
yes), How old were you? (If no), Are you the first  
in your family to experience a divorce?
11. How about your in-laws?      Are both of them still  
living? (If no) Year of death(s)?
12. (If yes) Where do they live?
13. How often do you see, speak, or visit them? (Fre-  
quency and nature of contact)
14. Were either of your former/spouse's parents ever sep-  
arated or divorced? (If no, and respondent divorced)  
Are you the first to divorce in your family?
15. Brothers and Sisters?      How many?      Ages?      Marital  
Statuses?      Children?      Ages of Children?
16. Where do they live?
17. Frequency and nature of contact?
18. Including yourself, how many people live here?  
Adults?      Children?
19. Please give me their names, ages, and relationship to  
you.

20. Do you have any other children, who are not living here? (If yes) Where? Ages?
21. Are there any others who live with you for a period of time?
22. How long have you lived here? (If less than ten years) How many times have you moved in the last ten years? What have been the reasons for these moves?
23. Do you have a religious preference? Involvement?

B. WORK AND LEISURE

Tell me something about the work you do. By "work" we mean what you do both outside the home and in the home.

Let's start with work outside the home.

1. Are you currently employed outside the home?
2. (If not employed outside of home) Was this a conscious decision that you stay home/not work outside of home?
3. Was it a difficult decision?
4. What, in your mind, are the pros and cons of this decision?
5. Did you ever work outside of the home? Type of work in last job?
6. (If unemployed) How long have you been unemployed?
7. How often has this happened in the past five years?
8. What type of work did you do at your last job?

9. (If every employed outside of home) What type of work do you do?
10. How long have you done this?
11. Tell me something about where you work? Do you work for yourself or for someone else?
12. (If work for self) Does anyone work for you?
13. (If yes) How many?
14. (If for someone else) How many people are employed where you work?
15. Is supervising other people a major part of your work?
16. (If yes) How many people are you responsible for?
17. Would you say that your job requires a high level of skill?
18. Does your job require that you keep learning new things, or do you basically do the same things over and over?
19. Does your job require you to be creative? Does it allow you to use your skills and abilities?
20. Would you say that it is basically your own responsibility to decide how your job gets done?
21. As a rule, how many hours do you usually work each week? Month? Seasonal? Occasional?
22. Does this fluctuate?
23. Does your job require you to be away from home more than one day at a time?

24. (If yes) On the average, how many days are you usually away at a time?
25. Do you work shifts, weekends?
26. Do you do unpaid work outside the home? (If yes) How many hours do you estimate you spend at this type of work?
27. How do you feel about working? How do you feel about the type of work you do? If you had the choice to make again, would you choose the same type of work you now do?
28. Could you tell me what non-salary benefits you receive through your job?
29. (If working for Self) You have told me that you work for yourself. Would you prefer to work for someone else?
30. (If working for someone else) You have told me you work for someone else - would you prefer to work for yourself?
31. How do your children feel about your work?
32. Taking everything into account, how satisfactory is your work situation in terms of your children?
33. In every home there are certain tasks which must get done - cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, decorating, painting, etc. What tasks do you do regularly?  
(CARD 1)
34. What do other members of the household do?
35. Do you do some things together? What? With whom?
36. Have you always done it this way? If no, elaborate on changes and reasons for changes.

37. Do you get outside help for any of these tasks?  
Who? Costs?
38. (If yes) When did you start getting this help?
39. How do you feel about work? How do you feel about  
the type of things you have to do around the home?
40. How do you feel about the demands of children and  
housework?
41. Is your former/spouse employed?
42. (If yes) Does his/her job effect your life or your  
family's life in any way?

B. LEISURE

1. Can you describe a typical school-day evening in your  
family?
2. Can you describe a typical weekend day and evening in  
your family?
3. When you have free time in the evening, what do you  
like best to do?
4. How about holidays, what do you usually do?
5. How many people in your neighbourhood do you know by  
name?
6. How often do you get together?
7. On what sort of occasion does this happen?
8. How often do you get together with friends?

9. Where?
10. On what occasions?
11. We would like to know something about the groups and organizations to which you belong. Would you name them, beginning with the most important ones to you?
12. What is your involvement?

C. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Relatives and Friends

1. All of us need support, both emotional and financial. Whom do you count on for love, and for help of any kind? On what occasion? Under what circumstances? Frequency? (CARD II)
2. Have you ever turned to some organization or agency for help? Who? On what occasion? What type of service? Frequency?
3. Have you ever felt the need for outside help but were unable to obtain it?
4. How satisfied are you with the services the community/school provides for your family?

D. ATTITUDES

Marriage

1. When you were first married, what expectations did you have about marriage?
2. What are your expectations about marriage now?
3. Was there some period of adjustment after you were married?

4. Do you feel that adjustment is an ongoing process throughout marriage?
5. Why do you say that?
6. Whose life would you say is easier - a man's or a woman's?
7. Why?
8. When you were living with the former/spouse, how were decisions made?
9. What happened if he/she/they said "No" to something you wanted?
10. Do you ever wished you had not married?
11. Why?
12. How about now? How are decisions made in your family now?
13. What happens if they disagree with your decision?
14. Do you ever talk to your friends and relatives about some of these things?
15. (If divorced) Do you ever wish you had not separated/divorced?
16. Why?
17. Would you like to marry again? Why?

Children

18. What do you think is the ideal number of children for the average Canadian family to have?
19. Do you think people today are having fewer or more children?
20. Why do you think this is happening?
21. Are children a source of strength for you personally?
22. Were children a source of strength for your marriage?
23. What are some of the good things about having children?
24. What things have not been so good about having children?

Divorce

25. Generally speaking, what do you think about the present day divorce laws?
26. Do you have friends who are presently separated or divorced? (If yes) How many? How do you think things are working out for them?

E. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPSHusbands and Wives

1. Can you tell me something about you and your former/spouse? Where does your former/spouse now live?
2. How often do you see each other? (Frequency and nature of contact)



3. How would you describe your present relationship with your former/spouse? How do you get along now?
4. Looking back, has the relationship between you changed since you've separated? If you compare your present relationship with what you had when you were still living together, has there been any change?
5. (If changed) In what way?
6. All couples agree on some things and disagree about others. What are some of the things that you and your former/spouse agree about? (CARD VII)
7. What are some of the things that you and your former/spouse disagree about? (CARD VII)
8. When you and your former/spouse were still living together do you feel you argued or disagreed more than other couples?
9. When you argued, did you usually do so in front of the children?
10. Did it ever reach the stage when you lost control?
11. Before you separated/divorced, if you had a bad day, did you usually tell your spouse about your troubles?
12. Did you listen to hers/his?
13. How about now, now that you are separated/divorced, whom do you take your troubles to?

#### Parents and Children

1. How do you get along with your child?
2. Are there particular time when you especially enjoy him/her or when she/he is especially difficult?

3. What are some of the things you do with her/him?
4. Overall, how close a relationship do you have with\_\_\_\_\_?
5. Looking back, has your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_changed in the last five years (or since you separated)?
6. (If yes) In what way?
7. (If a change) What do you attribute these changes to?
8. Now I'd like to talk about\_\_\_\_\_and her/his father/mother for a while. How would you describe their relationship?
9. How much time does\_\_\_\_\_spend with his father/mother (hours per day,week month?) Is this on a regular basis? What kinds of things do they do together?
10. Has the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_and her/his father/mother changed since the separation/divorce?
11. (If yes) In what way? What would you attribute this to?
12. Are you satisfied with the amount of help and cooperation you get from your former/spouse with the children?

F. CHILDREN

1. How is he/she doing in school?
2. Any difficulties? What about in the past five years? Elaborate.
3. Does he/she help about the house? Doing what?

4. How does he/she get along with other children?  
Friends?
5. How would you describe your child's personality?
6. First of all, what sort of things do you think a child in grade 4 or 5 can do for him/herself?
7. Do you think a child of his/her age should be made to do these things?
8. Is it difficult to get \_\_\_\_\_ to do things for him/herself? Are you satisfied with the amount he/she does now?
9. How much attention does \_\_\_\_\_ seem to want from you?
10. How do you usually react if he/she demands attention when you're busy?
11. I'd like to get some idea of the sort of rules you have for \_\_\_\_\_; the sort of things he/she is allowed to do and the sort of things he/she isn't allowed to do?
12. Some parents expect their children to obey immediately when they tell them to do something. Others don't think it's so important for a child to obey right away. How do you feel about this?
13. How does your former/spouse feel about this?
14. If \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't do what you ask, do you ever drop the subject or do you always follow through?
15. In general, how do you get \_\_\_\_\_ to behave as you want him/her to? If he/she needs to be punished what do you do?
16. On the whole, are you satisfied with the way you discipline your children?

G. RESOURCES

1. Do all of your children attend school?
2. (If has pre-schoolers) Do you make use of day care?  
How often? Costs? Transportation?
3. Do you find getting someone to take care of your pre-school children much of a problem?
4. How does \_\_\_\_\_ (pre-schooler) generally react when you leave him/her at day care or in the care of someone else?
5. Is there an after school, before school, or lunch hour program available? Do you make use of it?  
Cost?
6. Do you have someone come into your home?
7. Does child go to someone else's home?
8. How satisfied are you with the care your children get at home/school when you're not around?

Housing

9. Do you presently own or rent? Costs?
10. How many rooms do you have? Bedrooms?
11. Taking everything into account, the house (apartment) furnishing, number of people and so on, how satisfied are you with your living arrangements?

Health

12. Has anyone in the family been sick, had a health problem, or been hospitalized during the past year?
13. (If sick for a long time) Who took care of them?

14. How did that work out?
15. If your child is sick, who takes care of him/her?
16. Do you lose income if you miss work to stay home with a sick child?

Transportation

17. Do you drive/have a driver's licence?
18. Do you/your family own a car? Two?
19. Is transportation a problem for you?

Neighbourhood

20. What is it like for children in this neighbourhood? Are there things that help or make it harder for you to bring up \_\_\_\_\_ the way you want to?
21. Overall, how satisfied are you with this neighbourhood as a place to raise \_\_\_\_\_?

Education

22. How far did you go in school?
23. When?
24. Have you had any further education/training since then?
25. Tell me a bit about your parent's educational background. (Mother and father) What type of expectations did they have for you?
26. Are you presently enrolled in any education/training program?
27. Where? Doing?

THE SEPARATION/DIVORCE

1. How would you describe your marriage at the end?
2. Had it always been this way? In the beginning?
3. How long before your separation/divorce did you suspect that your marriage was in trouble?
4. Did you talk to one another about it?
5. Did you talk to anyone else? Who?
6. Did you and your former/spouse seek professional help before you actually separated?
7. Did one of you want to? Who?
8. (If yes) Whose idea was it to seek help?
9. Where did you get it?
10. At the time of your marital problems, did you know about any services or professional help, groups, and so forth, where you could have gone for assistance?
11. Whose idea was it to separate?
12. Who actually moved out first?
13. Do you remember your feelings?
14. Did you consult a lawyer when you separated?
15. (If yes) Were you satisfied with the legal assistance you received?

16. Did you seek professional help after the separation?
17. At the time of your separation who was the most helpful to you - gave you a shoulder to cry on?
18. (If divorced) Who filed for divorce?
19. What were the grounds for the divorce?
20. Looking back, what would you say was the most difficult time of your marriage breakdown?
21. Do you remember how you felt about the divorce?
22. How old were your children when you and your spouse separated? Divorced?
23. How did you decide about custody?
24. Was it a difficult decision?
25. Did you consult with anyone (for example - lawyer, friend, psychologist) on the question of custody?
26. Was there any conflict over that decision?
27. Could you tell me about your present arrangement?
28. Was this what had originally been settled when you first separated/divorced?
29. (If no) In what way is it different? Why the change?
30. Are you basically satisfied with the present arrangement?
31. What are the advantages? What do you like about it?

32. What are the disadvantages? What would you like changed? Have you tried to change it? How?
33. Did you consult the children about custody?
34. How did you handle it? Who told them? How?
35. How did you tell the children about the separation? Divorce? What type of explanation did you give them? When did you do it? Who told them?
36. How did they handle it? How did they react?
37. Has your life changed since your separation/divorce?  
CARD VI

#### Income

1. What is the main source of your income? (CARD IV)
2. Do you have any other sources of income, (family allowance, U.I.C. disability, compensation)?
3. Would you tell me the number (on card) which best represents how much you earned last year before taxes? Former/spouse's income? Other?
4. Has this fluctuated very much in the last five years?
5. In general, how satisfied are you with your present money situation?
6. Looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off money wise, or worse off, or just about the same as now?
7. What would happen in an emergency if you needed some money? Where and to whom would you turn?
8. Have you anything that you would like to add about family life and children? Things that you feel make



your life easier?  
done differently?

Harder?

Things you would have

Interview: Schedule for ChildrenME AND THE PEOPLE I LIVE WITH

The first section we've called "Me and the People I Live With". We'd like you to tell us a few things about yourself, things like your birthday, your age, and if you have any brothers and sisters.

Let's start with your age.

1. How old were you on your last birthday?
2. When was your birthday?      Month?      Year?
3. Do you know where you were born?
4. Do you have any brothers and sisters?
5. (If yes) Could you tell me their names?      Ages?
6. Do all of your sisters and brothers live at home with you? (If not) Where do they live?      Why?
7. Do you see them very often?      Daily?      Weekly?  
Monthly?      Yearly? (Frequency and nature of contact)
8. Before I forget, what grade are you in?

Well, that ends the first section. The next section we have called "Relatives and Friends". We'd like to hear about some of your relatives and friends. Those you see and visit. Let's start with grandparents.

RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

1. Are your grandparents living?
2. (If yes) Which ones?

3. Do you know which side of the family they are on? Are they your mother's parents, or your father's?
4. Where do they live?
5. How often do you see, speak, or visit them? (nature and frequency of contact)
6. How about other relatives? Do you have any relatives that you are particularly fond of?
7. (If yes) Where do they live?
8. How often do you see, speak, or visit them?
9. Let's say something very nice has happened to you. Are there any grown-ups you like to tell? Share it with?
10. How about if you've had a really bad day. Are there any grown-ups you like to talk it over with?
11. How about friends of your own age? Do you have any special friends who you talk to? Share secrets? Make plans? Discuss problems?
12. (If yes) Where do they live?
13. How often do you seek, speak, visit? (Frequency and nature of contact)

Well, that ends the second section. The next part is about "Your Day". We'd like to hear about your daily routine - the things you and your family do everyday.

#### DAILY ROUTINE

1. Let's start with a school day. Can you describe for me a typical day during the school week in your family? Mornings? Meals? Evenings? Does this happen every day during the week?

2. How about on the weekends and days when there isn't any school, what do you usually do?
3. How much time do you spend?
4. Do you belong to any groups?
5. (If yes) How much time do you spend at \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Are there any chores you are expected to do in the house or yard?

### ME AND MY FAMILY

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about you and the people in your family.

1. How would you describe the relationship between you and your mother? How do you and your mother get along?
2. Do you like to be with your mother?
3. What kinds of things do you do together?
4. Do you ever just talk about things? Do you ever just hug?
5. Does she help you with your school work?
6. Does she go to things at school? Frequency?
7. How about activities outside of school, does she go to any of those things with you?
8. Does your mom know most of your friends? Do they come to your house? Does your mother let them play in? Do your friends sleep over sometimes?

9. Do you sometimes not get along with your mother? What happens then? How do you feel about it? Do you think that most of the time she is fair?
10. Now I'd like to ask you the same sort of questions about you and your dad. What kind of relationship do you have with him? How do the two of you get along together?
11. Do you like to be with your dad?
12. What kinds of things do you do together?
13. Do you ever just talk about things? Do you ever just hug?
14. Does he help you with your school work?
15. Does he go to your things at school? Most? A few?
16. How about activities outside of school, does he go to any of those things with you?
17. How about activities outside of school, does he go to any of those things with you?
18. Does your dad know most of your friends? Does he mind if they come to your house? Does he let them play in? Does he let them sleep over sometimes?
19. Do you sometimes not get along with your father? What happens then? How do you feel about it? Do you think most of the time he is fair?
20. Could you tell me a little bit about you and your brother(s) and/or sister(s)? How about \_\_\_\_\_, can you describe your relationship with him/her?
21. If something happens to you, if you are hurt playing, your friends are mean to you, you need money, something like that - which parent do you usually go to? Why?

22. How about your parents? How would you describe the kind of relationship they have?
23. In every family decisions have to be made - about where to live, what to buy, what to do on weekends. In your family, how are these decisions made?
24. Do you have a say in these decisions?
25. (If yes) Which decisions?

### SCHOOL AND FRIENDS

1. How are you doing in school?
2. Was this always the case? (If no) determine when school performance changed)
3. What do you like about school? What is your favourite subject?
4. What do you dislike about school? What is your worst subject?
5. How are your teachers?
6. How about the children at school? Do you have any special friends that go to your school?
7. (If yes) Do you spend very much time with them?
8. Are some of the children at school hard to get along with? (If yes) How many?
9. (If yes) What are some of the things they do that bother you?
10. How about children outside of school? Have you got any good friends that do not go to your school?

11. (If yes) Where do they live?
12. Are any of the kids in your neighbourhood hard to get along with?
13. (If yes) Where do they live?
14. What are some of the things they do that bother you?
15. How do you handle it?

### MY IDEAS

In this next part I'd like you to tell me some of your ideas about families, marriage, divorce, and children.

1. Will you get married someday? Why?
2. Will you want to have children? How many? Why?
3. Could you tell me what the word "mother" means to you?
4. What about "father", how would you define a "father"?
5. Can you describe what your mother does?
6. What do you think of your mother's work (inside and outside of home)? How does it affect your life?
7. Can you describe what your father does?
8. What do you think of your father's work (inside and outside of home)? How does it affect your life?
9. If you were married, what sort of things would you expect your husband/wife to do?

10. What sort of things do you think your husband/wife will expect you to do?
11. What does the word "divorce" mean to you?
12. How do you feel about divorce?
13. Do you have any friends whose parents are separated or divorced? How many?
14. How are they coping?

### MY LIFESTYLE

This part is a little bit of everything - economics, housing, transportation, health.

Let's start with health.

#### Health

1. How often do you get sick; sick enough to stay home from school?
2. Who takes care of you?
3. How do you feel about this arrangement?
4. What about other times? Is anyone home with you at lunch time?
5. How about after school? Is anyone home when you arrive?

How do you feel about that?

#### Economics

1. Do you earn money? How?



2. Do you get an allowance? How much? Regularly? Sometimes?
3. How about other money? Do you sometimes receive money from other people?
4. How about gifts, do you get them often?
5. Do you think you have about the same amount of spending money and things as your friends?
6. In general, are you happy with the amount of money and things you have?
7. At times do you find that your parent(s) can't give you things either at school or at home that you think are necessary? (If yes) Examples?

### Housing

1. I forgot to ask you at the beginning, but how long have you lived in this house/apartment? How often have you moved? How do you feel about moving?
2. Is it a pretty good neighbourhood for kids? Why?
3. How about this house/apartment, do you like this place? Why? Why not? How do you feel about living here?

### MY PAST

In this last section I'd like to ask you a little bit about your past and then about your future.

1. Looking back, can you think of anything that has happened in the last three or four years in your family which you thought was really good?
2. How about anything bad? Has anything happened in the past three or four years which you found particularly upsetting?

3. How do you feel about these things now?

### MY FUTURE

1. Looking ahead, what are some of the things you would like to do?
2. Do you think you will get to do them? Do you think they will happen? Why? Why not?
3. If you had one wish for yourself, what would it be?
4. If you had one wish for your family, what would it be?

### THE SEPARATION/DIVORCE

I understand your parents are separated/divorced?

1. How old were you when this happened?
2. Do you remember anything about it?
3. Do you know why they separated/divorced?
4. Did anyone explain to you about the separation/divorce? Who?
5. Can you remember what they said? Did he or she explain it well? Were you confused? Are you still confused?
6. Do you remember how you felt about it?
7. How do you feel about it now?
8. Do you think your parents will get back together again? Do you wish they would? Did you wish they would get back together when you were younger?

9. Where does your other parent live?
10. Do you see him/her very often? How often? Where?  
Regularly?
11. Have you lived with your other parent since your parents separated/divorced?
12. Do you do chores at his/her place? Do you do more chores in this house or that one?
13. Do Mom and Dad have different rules? Say, about bed-times, T.V., chores, homework, friends, and so on? (Examples) Is it ever confusing to have two sets of rules to follow? What do you do about it?
14. (If say parents have different rules) Did they have different rules before they separated? How did you handle it then?
15. (For joint custody homes) What is it like living in two houses? What do you like about it? What are the problems? Is it ever confusing to have to move back and forth? Why? Do you prefer it this way? Why?
16. When your parents were married, how would you describe their relationship? How did they get along?
17. Does one parent say things about the other (good or bad things)? What do you do when this happens?
18. Would you say you live about the same way, or quite differently since your parents separated/divorced? (Housing, friends, relatives, chores, money)
19. Did anyone help you through the divorce? Who? How did they help?
20. Since the divorce, have you become closer to any other adults such as a teacher, a relative, or a neighbour?

21. Are many of your friends' parents separated or divorced? Do you discuss it with them? How are they doing?
22. Do your other friends know about the divorce? Is it ever embarrassing when someone finds out?
23. Has anyone ever treated you differently because of the divorce, for example, teased you or acted sympathetic? Who?
24. Was your school work affected by the divorce? Did your grades go up or down? Are you doing better now than before the divorce? Why?
25. How did the divorce affect you?
26. If you had a friend whose parents were about to separate, what advice would you give him/her?
27. If you were asked to talk to a group of parents who were about to separate what advice would you give them?
28. Is there anything else you feel you want to tell us about divorce and children which you feel people should know?



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THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG  
WINNIPEG, CANADA R3B 2E9

January 24, 1983

Dear Parent(s):

In recent years a number of concerns have been voiced about how families are dealing with modern day living. We need your help. We are conducting a study on Canadian families and are asking you to take some of your time to tell us about your family. We are interested in everyday family life. Since a parent's and a child's views of family life may be quite different, we would like to talk to both you and your child in Grade 4 or 5.

The word 'family' covers a lot of different situations. For example, some families have two parents; some have one. We are interested in this variety and would like to hear from both single parent and two-parent families.

The interview with each parent takes about one to two hours. It will cover such topics as work and leisure activities, parent-child relationships, and children's social and school activities. The interview with your child will take about thirty to sixty minutes. It will deal with their daily routine and their ideas of families. Each interview will be conducted privately. However, we would be happy to show parents the child's interview outline in advance.

Although your name (or the name of your child) has not been given to us by the school, this research has the approval of both the school board and a responsible Inter-University Research Committee.

Your help with the project would be very much appreciated. All your responses will be guarded with strict confidence. The interview will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and place. An interviewer will phone you to make the arrangements.

If your family is interested in participating in our project please complete the enclosed card and return it to your child's classroom teacher by the end of this week.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to phone us at extension between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., or at in the evenings.

Sincerely,

John R. Hofley  
Project Director  
Family Study  
University of Winnipeg

Anne Champion  
Family Study  
University of Winnipeg

JRH/js  
Enclosure

### Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality

Great care will be taken to protect the identity of all parents and children who participate in our study.

#### The following steps will be taken:

1. No names - either first or surnames - will be used to identify interviews (written, taped, or transcribed).
2. The tapes will be transcribed by the researchers. No other persons outside of those directly involved with the study will have access to the tapes without prior permission from the Project Director, Dr. John Hofley and the respondent.
3. Names which appear in the tapes will be deleted in the transcriptions.
4. In the advent that verbatim excerpts of the interviews are used in publications, the researchers will guard against disclosure of the individuals to the best of their ability.
5. To allow us to keep track of interviews during the study, each family will be given a number (1, 2, 3). Mothers will be identified by "M" (1M, 2M, 3M) and fathers by an "F" (1F, 2F, 3F); children by C. In the case of more than one child, 1C1, 1C2, 1C3 will be used.
6. The master file recording the family name and the assigned number will be kept in a locked file cabinet at all times. No one will have access to this record without permission of the Project Director, Dr. John Hofley and the respondent.

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