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Diversity issues in recruitment and retention of clients for parenting classes

Rachel Elizabeth Davis
University of Nevada Las Vegas

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DIVERSITY ISSUES IN RECRUITMENT AND
RETENTION OF CLIENTS FOR
PARENTING CLASSES

by

Rachel Elizabeth Davis

Bachelor of Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2004

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

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ABSTRACT

Diversity Issues in Recruitment and Retention of Clients for Parenting Classes

by

Rachel E. Davis

Dr. Cortney Warren, Examination Committee Chair
Assistant Professor of Psychology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Parenting skills classes are an effective means of preventing and remediating juvenile delinquency, youth violence, and child maltreatment. In particular, juvenile delinquency and child maltreatment disproportionately affect low-income African American families. Unfortunately, data from most parenting classes suggest dismal attendance and participation rates for racial- and ethnic-minorities from low-income backgrounds. The lack of effective recruitment may be due, in part, to the level of cultural competency inherent in the design, content, and implementation of existing parenting classes. Using semi-structured interviews and the qualitative methodology of grounded theory, this study explored the self-reported parenting beliefs, values, and struggles of a sample of low-income African American mothers whose children are at high risk for juvenile delinquency, youth violence, and child maltreatment and explicated a theory that connects such beliefs to parenting skills classes. These data may be useful in guiding parenting program design to increase the relevancy and effectiveness of parenting skills classes for this population.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency, youth violence, and child maltreatment affect a significant proportion of African American youth in the United States today (Dembo, Pacheco, et al., 1998; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2006; Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1997). Although parent involvement is one of the most effective means of early prevention and initial remediation for such problems, many parents find themselves unable to intervene effectively. To aid parents, various training classes have been designed and implemented that teach parents readily-useable skills to overcome obstacles and help their children (Burns, et al., 2003; Centers for Disease Control [CDC-NCIPC], 2006b; Dembo, Dudell, Livingston, & Schmeidler, 2001; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003; Patchin, Huebner, McCluskey, Varano, & Bynum, 2006). When attended, parent skills classes generally demonstrate efficacy in preventing child maltreatment (Hussey, Chang, & Kotch, 2006), juvenile delinquency (Burns, et al., 2003; Dembo, et al., 2001; Larzelere & Patterson, 1990; Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1997), and juvenile violence (Patterson, Chamberlain, & Reid, 1982; Reid, Eddy, Fetrow, Stoolmiller, 1999; Webster-Stratton & Taylor, 2001).

Despite the existence of well-intentioned parent training programs and their apparent effectiveness, many parents seem reluctant to participate and, once enrolled, retention rates are dismal (August, Realmuto, Hectner, & Bloomquist, 2001; Caspe & Lopez, 2006; Chow, Jaffee, & Snowden, 2003). One possible reason for the lack of participation and retention in parenting programs is a lack of attention to cultural factors. Most parenting programs were originally designed for use with middle-class, White, European-

American parents and youth (Smith, Perou, & Lesesne, 2002). Consequently, existing programs may not adequately address the competencies and difficulties specific to low SES African American families (Chow, et al., 2003; Gorman & Balter, 1997; Parke, 2000). Given that these are problems that occur at disproportionately high rates among African American families from lower socioeconomic (SES) classes (Dembo, Pacheco, et al., 1998; USDHHS, 2006; Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1997), the lack of attendance and efficacy of existing parenting programs is particularly problematic.

If parenting programs targeting these problems are not sensitive to the cultural make-up of the population in which the problem is most prevalent (in this case, lower socioeconomic African American families), the program itself may not be attractive to, or might even deter, those in greatest need from participating. To provide culturally sensitive parent training to diverse populations, program designers must understand the parenting beliefs, problems, and competencies that are unique to minority, at-risk populations who currently underutilize their programs. Towards that end, the overarching purpose of this study is to gather qualitative information about the parenting beliefs, values, and struggles of low-income African American parents. These data can then be used to guide parenting program design so that future classes are more relevant and specific to the parenting needs and goals of this population.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Juvenile Delinquency, Youth Violence, and Child Maltreatment

Juvenile delinquency, youth violence, and child maltreatment affect a significant proportion of youth in the United States. Juvenile delinquency is generally defined as “conduct by a juvenile characterized by antisocial behavior that is beyond parental control and therefore subject to legal action” because it violates the law (Mish, et al., 2006). Common acts of juvenile delinquency include property offenses (e.g., stealing, use or sale of drugs) and status offenses (e.g., truancy) (Parsons & Alexander, 1973). Youth violence is a form of juvenile delinquency in which a person under age 18 intentionally uses threatened or actual physical force towards another that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington, & Cerdá, 2002). Youth violence often manifests as aggressive behaviors such as verbal abuse, bullying, hitting, slapping, or fist fighting, however, it can also take the form of serious violent acts such as aggravated assault, robbery, rape, and homicide (Centers for Disease Control [CDC-NCIPC], 2006a). These types of delinquent acts are both committed by and against youth but, when committed by a juvenile, are not punishable by death or life imprisonment.

Child maltreatment is also a considerable problem in the United States. Child maltreatment is defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act as physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, or negligent treatment of a child under the age of 18 in which the health or welfare of the child is harmed or threatened (United States Congress [U.S.C], 2003). Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse are all forms of child

maltreatment. Physical abuse is any non-accidental injury to a child resulting from actions by the child's caregiver and includes shaking, slapping, punching, beating, biting, kicking, and burning (Oates, 1996). Sexual abuse is the involvement of youth in sexual activities who, by virtue of their age and maturity, are unable to give informed consent for those activities or do not want to engage in such activities. Sexual activities include physical contact as well as visual exposure and exploitative endeavors such as taking pictures (Oates, 1996). Emotional abuse is the verbal harassment of a child using criticism, threat, disparagement, or ridicule (Oates, 1996). In contrast to the overt nature of abuse, neglect is the failure of caretakers to provide for a child's fundamental needs such as food, clothing, medical care, education, or housing (Oates, 1996).

Rates of juvenile delinquency, youth violence, and child maltreatment are at nearly epidemic proportions in the United States. With regard to juvenile delinquency and youth violence, a nation-wide survey found that physical fights affected 36% of high school students during 2004 (Centers for Disease Control [CDC-NCIPC], 2005). Statistics on juvenile violence in 2003 indicated that 5,570 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 were murdered (CDC-NCIPC, 2006b). Doctors in U.S. emergency rooms treated over 780,000 youth violence-related injuries in 2004. Furthermore, the financial cost of youth violence in the U.S. exceeds \$158 billion each year, mostly because of increased health-care costs, decreased property values, and disruption of social services (CDC-NCIPC, 2006b). In actuality, these statistics may underestimate the prevalence of youth violence and delinquency because youths often self-report more delinquent behaviors than are documented by their probation records or parental reports (Cashel, 2003).

With regard to child maltreatment, data from Child Protective Services (CPS, as reported by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System) in the 50 U.S. states indicate that 872,000 (11.9 per 1000) children were victims of child maltreatment in 2004 (USDHHS, 2006). In addition, these data indicated that parents committed 83.4% of the maltreatment, children who experience one instance of maltreatment are 84% more likely to experience another, and children 3 years and under experience significantly higher rates of maltreatment than children in either the 12-15 or 16-17 age ranges (16.1, 9.3, and 6.1 per 1000, respectively: USDHHS, 2006).

Disparities

Although juvenile delinquency, violence, and child maltreatment negatively affect children of all ethnic and racial groups, ethnic and racial minority youth are disproportionately affected. Data on juvenile delinquency and violence suggest that minority youth, particularly low-income African American youth, are disproportionately in trouble with the law. African American youth represent 16.9% of the average population of youth from 10 to 17 years of age (Lieber, 2002; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). However, in a study of 9,583 juvenile offenders in a Florida juvenile assessment center, Dembo and colleagues found that about 44% were African American (Dembo, Schmeidler, Nini-Gough, & Manning, 1998). Further, in 2003, African American youth in the juvenile justice system represent 38% of youth in residential placement in juvenile facilities (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

In fact, according to Lieber's (2002) review of data on disproportionate minority confinement from 43 states and the District of Columbia, African American youth comprise 37% of youth arrested; 56% of youth in secure detention centers; 57% of youth

in secure correction facilities; 30% of youth in adult jails; 21% of youth in adult lockups; 51% of youth transferred to adult criminal courts for adjudication; and 43% of youth on probation. These data suggest that the percentage of African American youth arrested, detained, and adjudicated is more than twice as high as their representation in the general youth population (i.e., 16%). Furthermore, African American youth are accused of more serious crimes at rates approximately three times their population ratio (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). For instance, African American youth comprise 48% of the murders and non-negligent manslaughters, 38% of the aggravated assaults, and 63% of the robbery arrests (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). It is notable that these data result from a mandate of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to identify, assess, and remediate the causes of disproportionate confinement of minority youth (Lieber, 2002).

Overall, juvenile delinquency and youth violence disproportionately influence racial and ethnic minorities such that they are overrepresented in the legal system. These statistics do not take into account the loss of human resources, such as reductions in educational attainment and increased risk for future delinquency (Dembo, Pacheco, et al., 1998); deficits in interpersonal relationships and reductions in prosocial behaviors (Amendola & Scozzie, 2004); or the perpetuation of stereotypes for minority youth that are also results of juvenile delinquency (Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Rozie-Battle, 2002). Moreover, this disturbing trend continues in adult incarceration rates as African Americans represent 37.5% of the over 2 million inmates in state, federal, and local jails (Sabol, Minton, & Harrison, 2007). In 2006, for example, African American adult males were 6.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than White males (Sabol, et al., 2007).

With regard to child maltreatment, African-American, Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaska Native children have the highest rates of child victimization. For every 1,000 children, an estimated 19.8 African-American, 15.9 American Indian or Alaskan Native, 15.4 Multiple Race, and 14.6 Pacific Islander children are victims of maltreatment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2008). This is compared to approximately 10.7 European-American and 10.8 Latino/Latina children per 1,000. Asian American children had the lowest rate of abuse, at 2.5 per 1,000 children (USDHHS, 2008). These data suggest a trend in the overrepresentation of African American children suffering from child maltreatment, similar to that found among delinquent youth.

Not only do African American youth endure maltreatment at disproportionate rates, they also appear to experience more severe maltreatment resulting in death at higher rates than expected given their representation in the population. Data from 38 states show that African American youth have the second highest proportion of fatalities from maltreatment (29.4%) compared to White (43%), Hispanic (17%), youth of unknown/undetermined race (7.4%), multiple/mixed race (1.3%), Asian (1.1%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.8%), and Pacific Islander (0.1%) youth (USDHHS, 2008).

In addition to suffering from maltreatment and fatality at high rates, Child Protective Services place African American youth in foster care and family courts terminate their families' parental rights at disproportionately high rates. For example, in 2002, African American youth represented 38% of all children in the foster care system nationally (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). This rate was compared to 40% Caucasian, 17% Hispanic,

2% American Indian and 1% Asian American youth (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). During the same year, African American youth comprised 37% of the children in foster care for whom the courts terminated parental rights prior to adoption proceedings (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). This rate is significantly higher than could be expected given that African American children comprised only 15% of the U.S. population under age 18 (US Census Bureau, 2000).

Intervention Efforts

Given the prevalence and severe consequences of juvenile delinquency, youth violence, and child maltreatment, particularly in ethnic and racial minorities, researchers have developed and evaluated efforts to prevent or intervene in such behaviors. Empirically supported risk factors are generally used to design prevention and intervention efforts. Most programs target reductions in risk factors for all three of these constructs (i.e., juvenile delinquency, youth violence, and child maltreatment) simultaneously because of the highly intertwined nature of these risk factors. Theoretically, child maltreatment and low levels of parental involvement are commonly believed to be epidemiological risk factors for juvenile delinquency and violence (CDC-NCIPC, 2006b; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003; Hawkins, et al., 2000; Dahlberg & Potter, 2001). For example, five domains of predictors of juvenile violence are described in a meta-analysis of 66 longitudinal studies conducted by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Study Group (Hawkins, et al., 2000). Poor family management practices, child maltreatment, and low levels of parental involvement were identified as risk factors from familial influences (i.e., the family factors domain).

In their review of 44 studies Black, Heyman and Slep (2000) found moderate to large effect sizes for family and community variables associated with higher risk for child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency. These included living in an impoverished neighborhood, parental drinking, early parenthood, mother's emotional problems (e.g., anxiety, distress, unhappiness), and parenting or family stress (Black, Heyman, & Slep, 2001). Risk factors common to child maltreatment, juvenile delinquency, and youth violence include harsh, inconsistent, or punitive styles of discipline (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003; Black, et al., 2001). Other recognized risk factors for youth violence include a prior history of violence; living in a disadvantaged neighborhood; drug or alcohol use by youth or parents; poor emotional and psychological functioning in the youth or parent; and poor educational functioning in the youth or parent (CDC-NCIPC, 2006b).

Youth in the juvenile justice system who have experienced multiple problems with physical and sexual victimization are also at higher risk for future delinquency (Dembo, Pacheco, et al., 1998). For example, in a five year study of 119 juvenile delinquents conducted in the Tampa juvenile assessment center, Dembo and colleagues found that incarcerated youth were likely to have experienced traumatic events such as physical or sexual victimization to the extent that one out of five youths had previously been referred to juvenile court for neglect or physical abuse and 75% reported being a victim of physical abuse. Furthermore, 32% of the youth had been sexually victimized. Dembo and colleagues concluded that youth who endure physical and sexual abuse are at greater risk for future delinquency.

Centered on changing or eliminating these risk factors, many intervention programs have been developed to reduce child maltreatment, youth violence, and juvenile delinquency. Such intervention efforts often target the modification of youth behaviors through interventions with the child, parents, and/or community and frequently include individual treatment for the child or parent(s), school-based programs, or group interventions (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003; Howard, Flora, & Griffin, 1999; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Reid, et al., 1999; Webster-Stratton & Taylor, 2001). Domitrovich and Greenberg (2003) suggest that there are three primary categories or types of interventions. First, some are parent-focused and strive to improve parental functioning, parental child-rearing skills, and/or the quality of the parent-child relationship to reduce maltreatment, aggression, and delinquency in young children. A second category includes interventions that focus primarily on the child. These efforts strive to reduce children's risk by improving social, emotional, or cognitive skills in the child. A third method focuses on multi-component interventions that involve both the parent and child and, at times, other entities (e.g., school- or community- based interventions).

Some existing intervention programs have been effective at reducing rates of youth violence and child maltreatment (Burns, et al., 2003; Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency [DOJOJJD], 2002; Hussey, et al., 2006; Lutzker, 2006; Webster-Stratton, & Hammond, 1997). However, some research suggests that the final aforementioned interventions, which involved parents and children, may be the most effective. For example, in a study of 97 four to seven year old children referred for conduct problems, Webster-Stratton and Hammond (1997) compared the efficacy of four conditions 1) child training alone, 2) parent training alone, 3) parent and child training

together, and 4) control. Immediately post study parents reported improvements in child behavior for all groups. However, the parent and child training condition had the most significant improvements in child behavior at a one-year follow up, suggesting that interventions aimed at both parents and children may be most effective for long-term change.

There are limitations inherent to each of these approaches. Individual interventions are costly (Dembo, et al., 2001; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994b; Sexton & Alexander, 2000; Sexton & Alexander, 2002) and although group interventions tend to be the most cost effective method, they may be less than effective for groups of children. Additionally, more than one study found iatrogenic effects whereby proximity to other delinquent youth increased delinquency in treatment participants (Buehler & Patterson, 1966; Dishion & Kavanagh, 2003; Poulin, Dishion, & Burraston, 2001). One meta-analysis found that the effect of congregating delinquent youth resulted in a negative effect for 29% of the interventions analyzed (Lipsey, 1992). Such results indicate that group interventions with youth, such as school violence prevention programs or juvenile incarceration, may not be the most effective method of delinquency or youth violence prevention. Nonetheless, these are the most widely used methods. Given that interventions with youth alone appear to be less effective than those that include parents, many researchers argue that interventions should involve parents (August, Realmuto, Hectner, & Bloomquist, 2001; Dishion & Kavanagh, 2003).

Parent-Based Interventions

Somewhat paradoxically, family is the most important factor in both triggering the onset of delinquent behaviors and in bringing them under control (Mendel, 2000).

Parenting styles can be a significant risk factor for children's behavior problems (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003). Consequently, family interventions are a highly recommended method to prevent or remediate juvenile violence and delinquency issues (Dembo, et al., 2001). Parent and family-based programs improve family relations, parenting skills, communication skills, and problem solving in nonviolent ways (CDC-NCIPC, 2006b). For example, in their review of 13 family-strengthening intervention programs, Caspe and Lopez (2006) argue that family strengthening programs improve outcomes for children and youth by reducing problematic conduct, aggressive behavior, substance use, and emotional problems and improving social competence, self-control, and social skills.

Parental interventions are even recommended before a child appears to have significant behavior problems. According to a group of 39 experts in child delinquency and child psychopathology, juveniles who commit serious and violent offenses often demonstrate persistent disruptive behavior in early childhood and minor delinquent acts when young (Burns, et al., 2003). Therefore, Burns and colleagues (2003) promote early intervention for children who persistently behave disruptively and display delinquent tendencies. They list several programs, such as parent training programs, that researchers have found to be effective interventions and posit that the most effective interventions for younger children focus on the parent and are either home-based or school-based. Finally, early intervention is paramount in preventing delinquency and gang involvement, particularly for disruptive children (Burns, et al., 2003).

Given that research has demonstrated that parenting programs can be effective in reducing youth violence, juvenile delinquency, and child maltreatment, the CDC has

identified the development and evaluation of parenting intervention programs designed to address these issues as one of the primary goals of their research agenda (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control [NCIPC], 2002). Caspe and Lopez (2006) stressed that even programs with strong theoretical underpinnings and designs must have families sign up for and maintain participation for a program to create change. Therefore, in addition to developing solid, theoretically grounded programs, parenting programs must also address issues of recruitment and retention.

Recruitment and retention in parenting classes present particular difficulties for researchers (August, et al., 2003; Coatsworth, Santisteban, McBride, & Szapocznik, 2001; Kumpfer, et al., 2002; McCurdy & Daro, 2001). Recruitment for parenting programs is typically successful with only 20-50% of families contacted (August, et al., 2003; Coie, et al., 1991; Coie, et al., 1993; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994; Weinberger, et al., 1990). Attrition rates can range as high as 50-75% for programs working with at-risk youth and their families (Sexton & Alexander, 2004). However, rates commonly fall between 29% and 40% (August, et al., 2003; Gottfredson, et al., 2006; Kazdin, Siegel, & Bass, 1992; Lieberman, 1990). Furthermore, recruitment and retention of minority families can fall as low as 10% (Biglan & Metzler, 1999).

Parents, particularly those from ethnic, racial, or economic minorities, are reluctant to participate in parenting programs (Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith, & Bellamy, 2002; Perrino, Coatsworth, Briones, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2001; Weinberger, Tublin, Ford, & Feldman, 1990). For example, Perrino and colleagues (2001) conducted a study on engagement (retention) with 143 families (33% African American, 67% Latino) already enrolled in a violence prevention parenting program. They found that African American parents were

less likely than Latino parents to engage in the program (43.6% versus 80.2%, respectively). Similarly, Hahn (1995) found the African American parents were significantly less likely to participate in a drug prevention parenting program than Caucasian parents.

In fact, many programs fail to achieve their objectives because the parents do not attend sessions often enough to achieve maximum program benefits. For example, an evaluation of the Early Risers Program demonstrated this effect when parents with high program attendance (minimum 50% of sessions) reported improved use of effective discipline methods and those with low attendance did not (August, et al., 2001). Participants in this program designed for children with aggressive behaviors, were 245 European-American youth and their parents from a low SES rural area. However, due to insufficient parent enrollment in a secondary evaluation of the effectiveness of the Early Risers Program, researchers found it necessary to drop the parent-training component completely (August, et al., 2003). This development is particularly distressing given that the first evaluation of the program demonstrated better outcomes for the combined parent training and child intervention than for the child only intervention. Additionally, the combined condition maintained gains better than the other conditions at the one-year follow-up (August, et al., 2001).

Researchers have undertaken extensive efforts to counter this phenomenon. For instance, Dumka, Garza, Roosa, and Stoerzinger (1997) developed and evaluated an intense recruitment and retention process that included consulting the target population about barriers to recruitment and retention using focus groups. Recruitment strategies included incorporating some cultural perspectives within the intervention design,

meetings held in neighborhood schools with prizes offered for classes who had highest parental attendance, intensive information sessions, and in-person home visit recruitment efforts by individuals from within the community. Personnel were predominantly community members who shared demographic characteristics with participants. Program facilitators were both skilled in working with groups similar to study participants and were bilingual. All program personnel attended cultural sensitivity training and received weekly supervision. Additionally, the intense process addressed many of the logistic barriers to participation by holding sessions within the neighborhood no more than once a week, providing childcare, transportation, and meals for participants and their families.

Despite the intensive recruitment and retention strategies, of the recruitable families (i.e., those able to be contacted and living within the neighborhood when the study began, $N=156$) only 70% ($n = 110$) participated and only 48% ($n = 75$) attended more than half of the 8 sessions offered (Dumka, et al., 1997). Higher rates of participation could be expected given the effort expended to recruit and retain these families. As demonstrated by this study, even large-scale efforts to recruit and retain participants have yielded less-than-ideal attendance.

Additionally, although this program sought to incorporate some cultural sensitivity into the program design, it is highly likely that the programs core components, based on traditional Eurocentric values and beliefs, continued to remain culturally insensitive. For instance, the initial interventions introduced during the program focused on discipline practices that prohibit corporal punishment. Although there are other parenting methods that may be better than corporal punishment, this is a highly culturally relevant subject for the targeted populations. The prohibition against corporal punishment is based on

research with predominantly middle class European American samples that demonstrate deleterious effects for children (Cryan, 1995; Flynn, 1999; McCown, Driscoll, & Roop, 1996; Strauss, 1991). Conversely, parents from low income ethnic and racial minority groups similar to the sample in Dumka et al.'s (1997) study believe in the efficacy of corporal punishment (Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit & Zelli, 2000) and research with African American families indicate that corporal punishment may be a protective factor for these children (Deater-Deckard, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2003). Hence, recruitment and retention of the parents in Dumka et al. (1997) study may have been lower because parents found the interventions less than optimally sensitive to their beliefs and practices.

Cultural Sensitivity of Interventions

Historically, psychologists designed many programs using an ethnocentric European American worldview that may be ineffective and unappealing to ethnic/racial minorities (Gorman & Balter, 1997). For example, Dembo and colleagues (2001) based their program, the Family Empowerment Intervention (FEI), on four theoretical approaches: systemic, structural, transgenerational, and psychoeducational. Indeed, according to information on counseling cultural diverse groups (Sue & Sue, 2003) some of the objectives and methods used by these theoretical approaches could be offensive to some minority groups. For instance, the structural theory approach endorses a hierarchal power structure, where the parents hold the highest position of authority within the family and set boundaries for other family members, a system whereby individuals within the family are ascribed static roles. For example, Native Americans endorse a non-interference worldview that precludes parental dominance in favor of cooperation and respect for

elders (Herring, 1999). Similarly, one of the strengths of African American families is their ability to have family members adopt multiple roles within the family (Sue & Sue, 2003). Consequently, some ethnic and cultural groups could find such a power structure offensive or non-relevant.

Yet another example of the lack of cultural sensitivity found in current parenting programs is the prevalent attitude against the use of corporal punishment. Numerous programs espouse the concept that corporal punishment (e.g., spanking) is detrimental to children's well-being (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2003; Heffer & Kelly, 1987; Pinderhughes, et al., 2000). Interestingly, Deater-Deckard et al. (1996) found that higher levels of physical punishment correlated with higher levels of child externalizing and aggressive behaviors (as rated by parents, teachers, and peers) only for European American children. Indeed, among African American children they found a modest negative correlation between sub-abuse levels of physical punishment and externalizing behaviors as rated by mothers, even when controlling statistically for SES, marital status of mother, and child gender. Deater-Deckard et al. (1996) posit that commonly held theories of authoritarian parenting might not hold across ethno-cultural groups.

Unfortunately, not many parenting training programs incorporate multicultural perspectives within their designs (Gorman & Balter, 1997). For instance, Gorman and Balter's comparison of two prominent parenting programs (i.e., Parent Effectiveness Training: PET and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting: STEP) found both programs to be Eurocentric and culturally insensitive in that they used two parent families with adequate education and finances as exemplary models. These authors reviewed programs commonly used with ethnic/racial minorities and found the goal of

most programs is to improve deficits in parenting. This goal is inconsistent with multicultural sensitivity as culturally sensitive programs do not automatically view differences in parenting beliefs or practices as deficits but rather view them as differences that may or may not be effective (Gorman & Balter, 1997).

In their review, Gorman and Balter (1997) discuss three main ways that programs attempt to incorporate multicultural factors into their protocols. First, translated programs are traditional programs translated into another language to increase availability of the program. Second, culturally adapted programs share the same content of a traditional Eurocentric program, although modified to include values and traditions of the target group. Finally, culture-specific programs are those designed to assist in successful parenting within a group's culture. The authors' review of the literature revealed few culture-specific programs and found outcome studies for most of the programs plagued by methodological problems such as: inadequate reporting of demographic data, failure to include control groups, failure to use standardized measures, use of only self report measures, poor sampling procedures, and non-random assignment to groups for studies that did use control groups.

The paucity of culture-specific programs may explain why ethnic/racial minorities seek out mental health care, such as parenting training classes, at significantly lower rates than the European American majority. Underutilization of the mental health care system, particularly preventive treatments, is not a new phenomenon for minority individuals. Chow and colleagues (2003) looked at mental health care utilization in high ($\geq 20\%$ of the population living below the poverty level) and low ($< 20\%$ of population living below poverty level) urban poverty areas. They found that despite being overrepresented in high

poverty areas, individuals from ethnic/racial minorities were more likely to use emergency mental health care than standard outpatient services. In addition, Asian Americans seeking emergency services were less likely to have had prior mental health care and had higher rates of severe mental illness, particularly diagnoses of schizophrenia, than did Whites, Blacks, or Hispanics. In low poverty areas, African Americans and Latino Americans were less likely to be self, family, or friend referred and more likely to receive referrals for services by law enforcement agencies. For those who self-referred, they were more likely to seek services from ethnic specific agencies. These findings speak to the general reluctance of ethnic/racial minority individuals to seek standard European American based mental health care, a reluctance that is particularly poignant for minority children whose agency referrals predominantly relate to disruptive behaviors. The authors stressed the importance of prioritizing the development of programs tailored to meet the unique needs of minority children.

Richardson (2001) explored parental expectations and beliefs about treatment effectiveness, therapist/client relationship, accessibility of mental health services, and socio-cultural factors in seeking and obtaining mental health services for their children. Using structured interviews of 235 low-income parents (57.9% African American) of children ranging from 5 to 19 years, Richardson found that African American parents were significantly more likely to expect mental health care providers to be untrustworthy, disrespectful, and to provide poor care than were European American parents. These findings suggest possible reasons for the underutilization of mental health care services by African American parents.

Use of adaptive culturally sensitive interventions may increase parents' participation, retention, and offer better alternatives to establishing a productive therapeutic relationship. As a result of not forcing families to adopt European American values and parenting styles, Lieberman et al. (1989: cited in Lieberman, 1990) found that they had a significant lower attrition rate for their Infant-Parent Program of 18% versus the 40% that is found traditionally in similar programs. They designed the program to enhance quality of mother-infant attachment in an at-risk immigrant Latina population. Program personnel focused on understanding the subjective experience of the participants and their beliefs. They then used that information to assist the participants in modifying the expression of their belief and realization of their maternal goals by incorporating more adaptive skills into that worldview through the gentle use of non-confrontational means.

Similarly, collaboration in program design can result in greater acceptance of, participation in, and efficacy for community-based programs among program recipients, particularly minority families (Fraenkel, 2006). Using collaborative family program development (CFPD), Fraenkel outlines how researchers and program designers establish a respectful and therapeutic relationship with program recipients through consultation with them prior to and during program design and implementation. Additionally, the unique cultural perspectives, strengths, and needs of recipients can thus be incorporated into program designs (Fraenkel, 2006). One of the key elements in initiating this approach entails eliciting information and open communication from potential program recipients using qualitative methods (Fraenkel, 2006). In this manner, prevention program designers can incorporate the perspectives of the program participants on

efficacious program design while minimizing the effects of the program designers' biases when creating the program.

Study Objectives

As demonstrated by the literature, there are a paucity of interventions designed to prevent child maltreatment, juvenile delinquency, and youth violence that effectively target African American low-income parents and families. Given the disproportionate numbers of African American youth who live with these dysfunctional behaviors, this paucity is particularly problematic. Furthermore, recruitment and retention methods directed toward minority families for inclusion in interventions, particularly parent training classes, are currently ineffectual despite intensive efforts to improve recruitment and retention (Dumka, et al., 1997). It is imperative to provide remediation for the aforementioned problems in recruitment, retention, and intervention to the African American families who pay the high costs, both monetarily and in human suffering, associated with child maltreatment, juvenile delinquency, and youth violence.

Consistent with the current focus and debate about culturally-sensitive interventions (Duhaney, 2000; Gorman & Balter, 1997; Lutzker, 2006; Parke, 2000) and historical reliance on parenting programs whose design may be less culturally sensitive (Gorman & Balter, 1997; Lieberman, 1990), it would be beneficial to understand the parenting beliefs, problems, and competencies that are unique to minority at-risk populations. Additionally, information from this population on their perceived objections and impediments to seeking out and participating in parenting programs may greatly improve

program designers' ability to successfully recruit and retain these parents in their programs.

The overarching purpose of this study is to gather qualitative information about parenting beliefs that will enable development of a grounded theory of African American parenting beliefs and enhance our understanding of how to provide culturally sensitive parent training to that population. Towards this end, it is essential to gather data from individuals about their parenting beliefs and experiences to develop more comprehensive and utilitarian theories. Such theories may provide the basis for future research and program design specific to these populations. One of the most effective ways to gather qualitative data is to conduct semi-structured interviews (Krahn & Eisert, 2000). Consequently, African American parents were interviewed to gather qualitative information about parenting beliefs, problems, competencies, and perceived impediments to treatment or participation in parenting classes. Data from these interviews were analyzed using grounded theory methodology to construct a theoretical model of parenting to inform future parenting class design and implementation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research Approach

The grounded theory approach to qualitative data analysis originated in 1967 through the efforts of two sociologists, Glaser and Strauss, to combine the benefits of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative methodology allows for the generation or discovery of theory based on the socially constructed experience of participants, while quantitative methodology typically is used to test or verify theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). *Grounded theory* is a data gathering and analytic approach that combines the systematic and detailed procedures of quantitative research methods with the flexibility and richness of theories derived from qualitative data (Fassinger, 2005). Grounded theory emerges from the data: In essence it is *grounded* in the data, rather than the preconceived ideas of the researcher. Additionally, it allows the use of disconfirming instances as a method of refining the theory as opposed to negating or damaging it (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory is particularly useful in areas where no theory currently exists or when researchers desire a particular population's perspective (Stern, 1980). In such cases, the theory is induced from the relationships among thematic categories, which are grounded in the data (Becker, 1993). This methodology is also useful for novice qualitative researchers or research teams as it is highly structured, relatively easy to learn, and its reflexivity assists the researcher in keeping close to the data and monitoring potential biases (Fassinger, 2005).

In the grounded theory approach, the researcher collects data using qualitative methods such as direct observation, document examination, open-ended focus group discussions, and in-depth unstructured or semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions (Krahn & Eisert, 2000). Data is simultaneously collected and analyzed for emerging themes. As themes emerge, they are integrated in subsequent data collection endeavors (Charmaz, 2002). For instance, when conducting interviews, data from one individual is gathered and analyzed prior to the next interview so that subsequent interviews can include questions about the emerging themes from the first interview. This process continues until *saturation*, when no new themes emerge from new data, occurs and data collection ceases (Glasser & Strauss, 1967).

Themes are identified in the data using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) three-tiered coding strategy of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In open coding, the interviews are transcribed and subsequently broken down into discrete parts, which are scrutinized and compared to find similarities resulting in identifying and labeling codes found therein. Charmaz (1995) recommends that during this process the researcher be guided by questions such as: What is going on? What are people doing? What is the person saying? What do these actions assume? Themes are compared, conceptualized, and grouped into categories. The properties and dimensions of the categories are defined in preparation for investigating the relationships between the categories and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In axial coding, identified categories are further refined and connections and relationships among categories and subcategories are distinguished. Questions are also inherent in this process; however, these questions query the relationship between the

categories. The questions are compared to the data for instances that refute or confirm them. If the data support the questions, the questions are then changed to a statement about the relationship between the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Finally, selective coding combines the categories into a coherent whole. This process involves several steps. The first step is clarifying the story line, the descriptive narrative on the central experience or event of the study. While doing this step, the researcher identifies the underlying core category to which all the other categories are related. The second step is relating all the categories to the core category using a paradigm. The third step involves determining how the categories relate at the dimensional level. The fourth step is validating the relationships among categories against the data. The final step is filling in any gaps or insufficiencies in the categories by collecting more data. These steps do not necessarily occur sequentially as the researcher often moves back and forth between them.

Overall, emerging theory is continuously scrutinized throughout the coding process in what Glaser and Strauss (1967) termed, the constant comparative method of grounded theory. Throughout the entire process, by means of memo writing, the researcher thoroughly documents all assumptions, decisions, thought processes, and observations as they occur such that others can understand the logic behind how the theory emerged (Charmaz, 1995).

Several researchers have developed criteria to evaluate the rigor of qualitative research methods (Krahn & Eisert, 2000). As discussed above, Strauss and Corbin (1990) outline principles of good theory construction. Additionally, they recommend that a good theory should fit the phenomenon under consideration, provide knowledge, and are

comprehensible as viewed by both participants and those versed in the field. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed criteria to categorize data while Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) developed criteria that reflect the uniqueness of qualitative methods.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the concept of trustworthiness, which is similar to the terms of reliability and validity in quantitative methods. They use the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to delineate the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Credibility relates to how much confidence is placed in the accuracy of the data. This criterion can be established through triangulation, which is collecting information regarding the same case from multiple sources or by checking the summarized information with the informant. Transferability relates to the generalizability of the findings to other groups or contexts. Dependability is similar to inter-rater reliability in that it is the extent of agreement in coding or categorizing the data. Confirmability is the ability of the procedures to hold up to an audit, the ability of another researcher to follow the logic behind them and arrive at the same conclusions.

Alternately, Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) developed seven criteria that both reflect the uniqueness of qualitative methods and assess their merit: keeping close to the data, integrating theory at diverse levels of abstraction, reflexivity, documentation of the research, theoretical sampling and negative case analysis, sensitivity to negotiated realities, and transferability of findings. Keeping close to the data is the requirement that all emerging codes, categories, and information be derived directly from the data and that their labels reflect their origin. Integrating theory at diverse levels of abstraction is the concept that the synthesized data clearly reflect the theory on all levels of coding. Reflexivity is the awareness and acknowledgment of the procedures and the potential

effects of the researcher's own biases and research on the theory or subject of study. Documentation of the research requires the institution and maintenance of detailed recording of all aspects of the research process such that all aspects of the process are open to scrutiny. Theoretical sampling and negative case analysis refer to assuring a sufficiently broad sample such that the effect of exceptions to the rules may be considered. Sensitivity to negotiated realities involves having the study participants check interpretations of the data for accuracy in researcher interpretation. Transferability of findings refers to the generalizability of the findings to other contexts.

Given that the objective of this study is to understand the parenting beliefs, problems, and competencies of minority at-risk populations, grounded theory methodology is ideal in that it is both rigorous and systematic while minimizing the biases inherent in previous research. Through using this format, I hope to provide a grounded theory upon which to base more effective prevention efforts and to avoid some of the biases inherent in the use of traditional preset questionnaires.

Measures

Demographic Form

A demographic form was used to collect information regarding age, ethnicity, race, relationship status, number and ages of children, level of education, and income (See APPENDIX I).

Semi-Structured Interview

The primary investigator, who is a master level clinical psychology graduate student, and a research team comprised of ethnically diverse undergraduate research assistants

developed a semi-structured interview for use in collecting data (See APPENDIX II). Information on areas of diversity related to parenting views: family composition, roles, discipline practices, support networks, views on education (Harvey & Rauch, 1997; Sue & Sue, 2003), graduate level coursework in diversity, and the personal experiences of team members guided question development. The primary investigator asked participants questions regarding parenting beliefs and views on parenting classes. Questions and prompts were used to assist parents in elaborating on the following: how parents view their and their children's roles, roles of support networks, what constitutes appropriate child behavior, disciplinary practices, perceptions on children's education, their perceptions of parenting classes and the facilitators who teach them, what circumstances would cause them to actively pursue some form of parent training and what factors could potentially prevent them from doing so.

Participants

Thirteen African American mothers from the Healthy Families Project, a program of Westcare Nevada, voluntarily participated in this study. The Healthy Families Project is a residential treatment program for adult pregnant, post-partum women, and their children under age 10. The program offers transitional living accommodations for 34 women, outpatient counseling services, case management, family support groups, and domestic violence prevention for women recovering from addictions. It was reasonably expected that women in this facility would closely match the at-risk minority and SES demographic required for this study design because most mothers in this program evidence several of the risk factors common to child maltreatment and juvenile

delinquency. In particular, mothers in this program all have a history of substance abuse, poor emotional and/or psychological functioning, and are impoverished (Black et al., 2001; DCD-NCIPC, 2006b). All of the mothers were recovering from substance abuse issues and most were in the program due to a court order. To protect their identities, participants are identified by fictitious names throughout this document.

The average age of participants was 27.69 years (SD = 10.12, range = 18-55). All 13 women self-identified as African American racially and ethnically; however, four self-identified as multiracial (African American, Asian American, Native American; African American and European American; African American and Native American; and African American, European American, and Other) and three as multiethnic (one Latina, one Native American, and one Pacific Islander). With regard to marital status, eight women were single, three were divorced, one was married, and one was separated at the time of the interview. The women had from one to six children (Mean = 3.5, Mode = 5) who ranged in age from 12 days to 34 years (Mean = 8.63 years, SD = 10.17). Two women were pregnant at the time of the interview. Seven women did not have any of their children living with them, five lived with some of their children, and one had all of her children living with her. All women were a minimum of fourth generation U.S. citizens, spoke English as their first language, and were unemployed. Formal education for participants, with completion of high school representing 13 years of education, ranged from completion of 8th grade to college graduate (Mean = 11.85 years of education, SD = 1.39). Nine of the women reported educational attainment for their mothers (Mean = 12.89 years of education, SD = 2.26, range 9-17 years of education) and ten reported

educational attainment for their fathers (Mean = 13.7 years of education, SD = 2.06, range 10-17 years of education).

Procedure

The primary investigator and research advisor obtained approval to conduct the study from the Social and Behavioral Sciences Committee of the University of Nevada Las Vegas Institutional Review Board (IRB) on January 22, 2008, prior to commencing study procedures (SEE APPENDIX III). The primary investigator recruited participants with two personal presentations and via flyers handed out at the Healthy Families Project. The flyers provided potential participants with a brief overview of the study and contact information for the primary investigator.

Following contact initiated by potential participants, a mutually agreed upon time for conducting the interviews was arranged to take place at the Westcare Nevada facility where the participants lived. Upon arrival to the meeting, the primary investigator explained to participants the purpose of the study (i.e., understanding parenting beliefs and views on parenting classes), the confidentiality of the interview, and their rights as research participants (including the right to withdraw from the study at any time). She further informed them that they would receive a \$20 gift certificate in exchange for participation. Given that contacting participants to verify interview information may have been problematic, the researcher also obtained additional contact information should the participant leave the program (Cauce, Ryan, & Grove, 1998), obtained permission to contact participants to clarify interview data, and obtained permission to audio tape the

interview. The primary investigator also answered any questions participants had about the study.

The primary investigator took several steps in an attempt to put the participants at ease and to minimize potential intimidation due to cultural and educational differences between the interviewer and interviewees. First, the primary investigator conducted interviews in one of three different rooms in the facility. The majority of the interviews were conducted in a room utilized during the week by the program counselors. Two interviews were conducted in a room used for visiting with family members and two were conducted in a room used for support group meetings. Hence, interviews occurred privately in rooms the women typically associated with trust and open conversation. Second, the primary investigator attempted to minimize visible differences in socio-economic status by not dressing in business attire. Instead, she wore dark jeans and conservative blouses, no make-up, and minimal jewelry. Finally, the primary investigator spoke using plain English and avoided using an extensive vocabulary to minimize differences in educational attainment. She also used appropriate empathic statements and paraphrasing of participants' statements as means of establishing rapport during the interviews.

Interviews occurred over a ten-month period. They took approximately one and a half hours each to complete (Mean = 81 minutes, range = 31-147 minutes). Saturation was achieved when open coding revealed no new themes in the data. This occurred for the twelfth and thirteenth interviews and, consequently, data collection ceased.

Data analysis

All audiotaped interviews were transcribed by a member of the research team. Transcriptions were subsequently checked by another team member, and underwent a final review for accuracy by the primary investigator. The primary investigator and a member of the research team each reviewed the transcriptions using the three coding steps in the process outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1995). Each line of text was analyzed to ascertain if a code was present (i.e., open coding). Codes were then compared and organized into categories (i.e., axial coding). Axial codes were reviewed for themes, overarching ideas within and among axial codes. These two coding processes were completed after each interview and prior to conducting any subsequent interviews to ensure that emerging themes were thereafter included in the interview format (see the revised semi-structured interview, APPENDIX IV). Selective coding occurred after all interviews were completed.

To maintain the rigor of the research method and inculcate reliability and validity in the process, data collection and analysis followed Henwood and Pidgeon's (1992) recommendations as previously discussed. Prior to data collection, coders endeavored to incorporate the underlying concepts of reflexivity by acknowledging their biases about parenting beliefs and parenting programs through the process of bracketing. Bracketing is a method of researcher disclosure used in qualitative research to both raise awareness of biases that may interfere with the process and to inform readers of the grounded theory of those biases (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). All individuals involved in the coding and data analysis completed a brief bracketing statement about their parenting beliefs. Appendix V displays a summary of each person's bracket (i.e., the main points highlighted by each

person) and the consequent biases that were monitored for each person based on the bracket data are found in Table 1 (SEE APPENDIX VI).

Detailed documentation of the research process was facilitated through the use of the Atlas.ti 5.5© software program (Muhr, 2004). This program was used by the primary investigator to organize the manual coding, provide lists of open-codes and the hierarchy of axial and selective codes under which responses were categorized, and for memo-writing. The narrative exposition of how the theory emerged from this information as well as the lists of codes and their hierarchy are discussed in Chapter 4. Thus the research process and theory building was open to review (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). Keeping close to the data, the requirement that the theory reflects the data (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992), was initiated by having a second research team member independently engage in the coding of data in the initial two coding stages (i.e., open and axial coding). Research meetings were held to discuss and resolve any disagreements on codes so that both coders discussed discrepancies until they felt the codes accurately reflect the data (Fassinger, 2005).

Negative case analysis was actualized by examining and comparing exceptions to the theory. This process allowed the researcher to test the accuracy of categories and to assist in modifying the theory, thereby enhancing its complexity (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). The criterion of sensitivity to negotiated realities was instituted by contacting participants and having them verify that the interpretations of the data are accurate (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). Attempts were made to contact all participants to verify accuracy of interpretations; however, these attempts were only successful with four of the interviewees. Following the first unsuccessful contact attempt,

the primary investigator began a system of paraphrasing within the interview as a means to verify the accuracy of her initial interpretations of the data. Finally, the theory was evaluated for its contribution to the knowledge about parental beliefs and ideas about parenting classes among low SES African American mothers and the extent to which this knowledge may contribute to future program design.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Protocol Adherence Reliability Analysis

During each interview, the primary investigator tracked her adherence to protocol by checking off questions as she administered them. Following the interviews, a member of the research team conducted a reliability check on adherence to protocol by listening to each interview and checking off questions as she heard them administered. The percent agreement between raters on protocol adherence during the interviews was .995, indicating excellent protocol adherence.

Open, Axial, and Selective Codes

The initial process of open and axial coding resulted in 2,210 quotes distributed among 530 codes. The number of codes was reduced to 285 open and axial codes through the interactive process of categorizing open codes into axial codes and developing the selective codes. During this process, as open codes were categorized into axial codes, similarities between codes resulted in condensing those codes into more comprehensive and cohesive codes. Themes arose during further analysis of these codes and the relationships between them in the selective coding process. The final selective coding did not reveal one central theme; rather it revealed seven interconnected overarching themes.

Influences on Parenting: Core Themes

Many themes emerged from participants about what affected their parenting beliefs, styles, and behaviors. Seven overarching themes emerged: 1) parental worldview; 2)

family relationships; 3) parents' job and roles; 4) understanding children's nature, abilities, and characteristics; 5) parenting challenges, strengths, and expectations for help; 6) views on parenting classes and the issues that inhibit recruitment and retention; and, 7) issues that promote recruitment, retention, and suggestions to make parenting classes more appealing to families.

Each theme and its corresponding axial codes, found in Table 2 (SEE APPENDIX VI), are discussed in depth and excerpts from the interviews that illustrate each component of the theory are presented. This exposition is followed by a conceptual emergent theory that ties the themes together. Diagram representations of the parenting beliefs are presented throughout to summarize these findings visually. Although the themes and information on the diagrams overlap, they are meant to guide the development of the emergent theory and to tie all of the information together into a coherent whole.

World View

One major theme that emerged from the interviews was that participants' perspectives on the world colored their interactions with it and their beliefs about parenting. Furthermore, their perspective on the world was the lens through which they view their children's present and future and seemed to influence their goals for themselves and their children. Additionally, their racial beliefs influenced how they perceive their place within the world (See Figure 1).

Perspectives on the World

Eleven of the 13 mothers reported that they view their external world as dangerous and "messed up". They feared that the danger they perceive is inescapable and express

significant concerns for their children's safety and well-being. Furthermore, they believed that one must have strong will power to resist the negativity in the world. The comments below demonstrate several of these beliefs.

Ilisa: Hm.. the world is...full of sin, so that's ill. Umm it's harsh society if you are not strong enough, if your will power is not strong, it'll suck you in.

Chantoya: But the world, ... I feel the world is changing a lot you know what I'm saying but still. I mean kids are learning and growing up so fast and learning so much. Negative stuff I mean it's ridiculous. So ya the world's crazy.

Participants attributed the current state of the world to a lack of social responsibility. Mothers were concerned that people no longer care about each other and that there is a loss of social accountability because of that lack of caring. Acts of greed, selfishness, and laziness run rampant, setting off a chain reactions and inciting more negativity in the world. Mothers commented that the community, not just parents, should discipline children so that they can learn to listen to others and feel cared about by their surrounding community. They felt this community involvement would prevent behavioral issues that have become rampant in our society. Children would learn accountability to society if everyone took an interest in promoting positive behaviors. The passages below exemplify this theme.

Gemma: You know where that come from, I'll say this to everyone of them it's from us as a parent and as a people to stop caring. We just stopped caring, we just stopped caring. We stopped loving other kids,

other people, and so if you don't love them and show them that you care enough to stop them from doing what they doing.

Harriet: We all have choices, you know, and we all make decisions and some of us aren't bad people but we make bad decisions, you know. So that effects the world. Every cause has an effect. You know, everything somebody do really has a motive behind it, you know. So, uhm, we choose to do wrong things and it has bad effects, you know. And, and it makes the world like it is today. Everyone's selfish. We are selfish people. People's selfish, people self-centered, you know. People don't probably don't, don't, don't respect themselves enough or don't know enough about themselves to respect somebody else. So, I mean, so, that's how the world is.

Future

Despite their negative perspective on external environmental factors, 11 of these mothers reported also viewing aspects of the world that are within their control with positivity. Four of these mothers endorsed believing that it is possible to change the world, that children should try to do so, and that action to promote a better world should start at the level at which the individual is capable (no matter how small it seems). At a minimum, mothers noted that people could donate time and energy to worthwhile causes and, if the individual is financially able, donate supplies, clothes, material things, or money. The passage below exemplifies this perspective.

Jalene: They should want to, uhm, help make the world better, you know, a better place to live in. For themselves for their, their children, you know. Uhm I know they can't make the whole world better but, you know, the parts of, the parts that they can contribute to. Just just you can be able to do it then I believe that you should do it. If the kids they can be able to do it, then they should do it, you know. . . If you don't have a lot, then I mean... I'm just saying if you could be can be able to contribute something then, then go ahead and do it. I mean whether it be clothes uhm shoes, material things, money uhm, advice, uh knowledge, whatever, you know.

Overall, mothers also had a relatively positive perspective on their future. Although four stated that the future is uncertain, nine perceived the future as being within their control to shape as they choose. Furthermore, they wanted their children to perceive their future positively and feel it is within their control. The comments below demonstrate several of these beliefs.

Latasha: My future. Umm, on my own personal level is definitely going to be better. It's definitely going to be better. Uumm, it's going to be successful. It it's just going to be all all kinds of good things. I, I see myself being like so happy with my family and with my children. Lots of friends around me, you know. Like I, I, I totally see that.

Harriet: My opinion about the future. The future is. . .the future is something that I decide, you know. The future is what I choose to do

today, you know. The future is who I am right now, you know. The choices I decide to make, that will, that will better my future, you know.

Chantoya: I feel that if I keep on in this path making a plan and living just for today that I would, that my future will be great and my, especially my kids’.

Racial Beliefs

With regard to their view of race and race relations, all but one of the mothers stated that they are “color-blind”. They reported that prejudice is learned from one’s parents and family. Although some of them acknowledged exposure to statements about race by family members when they were younger, they did not embrace them or currently endorse them. Further, only three of the women stated that they have personally felt discriminated against. Several proudly described their own preference to associate with individuals from many different racial and ethnic groups, even to the exclusion of people from their own racial or ethnic group, and believe that their children should be equally color-blind. The comments below demonstrate this theme.

Jalene: Yea, felt that way. Like, uhm, when I go into stores and stuff sometimes, and uhm I feel like, you know, they watch me uhm.

Gemma: They should love em regardless. Cause we all equal no matter what color we are, we all equal, we all bleed the same, we all look the same, we all blessed with the same things. So we should be treated the same. Where its nice, I like that.

Only one mother did not share this opinion about race. She reported that there was greater strength in unity, working in an organization run by African Americans would

translate into having more advancement opportunities, and being more comfortable being herself with members of her own race. Antoinette stated, “I think, ahm, races, well I do, ahm, I do kinda like it when like if culture matches closer. Like if you black you should be around black and if you white, you should be around white.”

Family Relationships

Another primary theme that emerged from interviews revolved around family dynamics and the family of origin. Participants reported that both negative and positive interactions with their families of origin shaped their current perspectives on parenting. Whom the mothers defined as family members varied as does the process of becoming a family member. Mothers reported their ideals for relationships with family members and their children (see Figure 2).

Family of Origin

When asked about parenting beliefs, many participants spoke about their relationships with their own parents. This dialogue included both positive and negative memories about the parenting styles and behaviors of their parents, as exemplified below.

Gemma: But the bond I have with her, she don't have with me. And I'll never get it. And it's ok today. But that's what I was seeking for all this time and I- it end up to a relapse because I kept wanting it.

Ilisa: My mom she's lovely. She's the greatest thing that ever happened to me. She's always been there. She's raised four kids by herself. Umm, I wouldn't change her for the world. She's been there through thick and thin, when I was all alone and had nobody else, she's my best friend.

Some participants also discussed the challenges of being raised in a single-parent home. For some mothers, this caused long lasting issues and an intense belief that children need two parental role models and may predispose them to selecting inappropriate adult relationships, as evidenced by the comments made below.

Antoinette: That made childhood hard because if she fucked up there was nobody to pick up the slack. And if she fucked up, there was nobody to tell her she was fucking up.

Belle: My dad? Um, hmm. He's alright. He's alright. He, um, he, he, like him and my mom got divorced when I was 8 so he moved out of state.

And I didn't see my dad again till I was like 18. So the reason that he left us was 'cause he didn't want to work and he didn't want to stay home and help raise us kids so I think that he coulda showed a better example of a father, like he coulda been a better role model for my brother. . .I think it affected the way I choose my relationships. Like, um, for a long time I chose like men that were a lot like him, like didn't want to work or um like didn't want to help me raise our children.

One of the most common themes regarding changes the mother would make about her child-raising behaviors from those of their family of origin was being a better role model. For example, ideally, mothers frequently reported that they would not use drugs and would have good relationships with their family members. Mothers also noted that in the future they would provide more structure and consistency for their children, teach them lessons from their own lives, and communicate better. Some other notable comments included a desire to decrease the use of corporal punishment, to have a more

traditional family structure in which the father was involved in the children's lives, and have a better relationship with their children by showing them more love and attention.

The following excerpts illustrate this point.

Ilisa: I would have my kids in a different atmosphere than my mom had me. And I would be more stable.

Chantoya: I'm breaking the cycle that I was raised. I'm going to break that cycle.

Ilisa: I wouldn't have them around violence like I was. My family was always arguing and fighting. Umm, never going to have a family around women getting beat all the time. I was around that. Uhh, I wouldn't, I wouldn't let my kids see negative, violence, shit like that, exploiting no alcohol, I mean I might drink wine or something- I'm not going to say I'm not. There never no drunks no alcohol that's nothing like that.

Defining Family

Mothers noted that people who are considered family members do not all have to be related by blood. Furthermore, not all people who are related by blood are family, particularly if there is some unhealthy aspect to the relationship. Few mothers endorsed all blood relatives as being members of the family and only one person said that only blood relatives are members of the family. The extended family, for most mothers, included distant relatives, long-time friends, people with whom they have become close, those who share their perspectives and beliefs, people that behave like family, and the support network they have found in the other women in the program (their 'sisters'). Non-blood relatives become family when they act like family. This process involves learning

to trust the other and meet each other's needs. Sometimes this process takes a considerable amount of time (e.g., being around since participants birth) and sometimes it happens quickly (e.g., within weeks). Further, the new family members tend to have similar beliefs. An example of how an individual not related by blood becomes family is provided below.

Gemma: Just share the same relations. We share the same feelings and beliefs... And always looked after each other. Like whatever I needed or they needed we I make sure their needs was met and they make sure mine was met. And we stay close and we always called and check on each other no matter what we got separated or despite what our family had to go through. We always still tend to check on each other.

Importance of Contact with Family

Participants stated that it is important to have regular contact with family members. The frequency of contact may vary depending on how physically distant the family is from each other; however, there should be some regular contact. Family members should love and support each other. Positive qualities desired in family members included being supportive, truthful, honest, being open, good communication, sticking together, being non-judgmental, loving, being able to compromise, forgiveness, soulful, and having a spiritual base. Regular contact helps the family members build good relationships in which they can support each other. The comments below demonstrate several of these beliefs.

Latasha: to stay pretty close whether, you know, it be over the phone or whatever, you know. Cuz a lot of family members do live in different

places, um, but just so that like so you don't fall off track of where you come from and, you know, things like that um.

Faye: A soulful family. Uhm that would be a soulful family. Very good communication, uhm love, understanding, uhm no lies, be open.

Only healthy relationships, please. It is important to note that many mothers commented that it is not necessary to maintain relationships with family members that are unhealthy or dangerous. Some family members are dangerous and interactions with them are hurtful and may even cause relapse, pain, or general mental dysfunction. When that is the case, it is best to avoid those individuals, as Gemma states, “But we don't talk because it's unhealthy for me. It's it's just makes me use drugs because of the way they treat me.”

Ideal Parent and Child Relationships

Participants described the optimal relationship between parent and child. Overall, mothers reported that children should think positively about their parents and feel that their parents think positively about them. These feelings include the children feeling loved by parents and loving their parents, feeling that they come first to parents, and feeling protected by them. In addition to their shared feelings, children and parents should exhibit certain behaviors. Parents should be good role models for children's actions. Parents and children should treat each other as they would like to be treated, they should play together, and they should have open, honest communication in their relationship. This relationship continues even though the child may not always understand the parent's actions. Some examples of this theme are included here.

Dalinda: That their parents are great and, that they can love their parents they could trust their parents for anything

Harriet: They should feel like mom loves them.

Harriet: They actually should treat us like we treat them

Faye: be honest to have that, have that bonding with them, where they can come talk to you about anything that they don't wanna have to be scared, or feel they have to hide or sneak and do this here. If you have that open and honest relationship with your child, then I feel that your child will be open and honest with you.

Differences in opinions. When children have opinions that differ from their parent's, the majority of the participants agree that children's individuality should be supported. They would do this by discussing the differences in opinion and doing their best to understand the child's view. For example:

Belle: I try to understand their opinion. And like I would want to know why they think, you know, what makes them think what they think and stuff like that. Like I would like to know their opinion so that I can have, look at it from a different perspective maybe.

Parents' Job and Role

Mothers had strong beliefs about what a good parent needed to do and aspire to be. Mothers stated they expected to teach their children morals, values, respect, and how to communicate. Mothers discussed their goals for themselves and their children. They described how parents should be involved in children's lives and the importance of education for their children. Finally, they described how a parent should show children

love and the necessity of protecting children from numerous sources of danger (see Figure 3).

Parent as Teacher

Mothers frequently commented that one of the parents' core jobs is to teach the child to develop desirable qualities like good values, how to respect themselves, and respect others. These tend to be qualities that mothers emphasize for themselves as well as in their child. Additionally, teaching children to communicate (e.g. how to talk to people), about specific life situations (e.g., sex, pitfalls to avoid, experiences needed to be learned outside of formal education) and practical issues (learning to write, tie shoe, potty train, personal grooming) are part of the role of a parent. The predominant focus (i.e., 30 statements) appeared to be on teaching values like honesty, good morals, and high importance on teaching right from wrong and respect as exemplified by the excerpts below.

Faye: Honesty, trust, definitely good communication, umm right and wrong uhh say no to drugs, uhh tell em about the signs of people get, even people in school now is, is trying to get kids hooked on drugs and into violence. An uhh drugs and gangs and stuff like that. It's very important.

Latasha: just to show them umm you know what's good and bad and what's right and wrong what. . .

Spirituality. Most of the mothers endorsed a belief in a high power or God. In later interviews, the women included the necessity of daily belief (regular prayer) and the firm belief that they benefited greatly from their belief in a higher power and without it would

not be alive. This belief is one that they also wished for their children. The comments below demonstrate this theme.

Ilisa: I feel that it's important, I feel that you could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you don't have to go to church to be a strong believer as long as you have that personal relationship. And I believe that when you pray you shouldn't just pray when you want something, you should pray everyday and thank him for it.

Jalene: It's extremely important to me. Umm, because I know that without Him that I wouldn't be here today. And each day that that has passed has been nothing but Him and without him, there's no me.

Mothers also suggested that children should believe in a higher power and be given the opportunity to acquire knowledge about God but not be forced to believe. It is the parent's responsibility to teach them about their belief system, as explicated below.

Jalene: Uhm I believe they should go to church, I believe they should go to church yea. I believe so, uhm, or just be talked to about, you know, uhm, like whatever kinda religion their family is with, or the kind of religion they grow in, grow up with. I mean talk to them about it so that they can have some kind of idea what religion is. But, like, just don't try to like force a child to just do whatever the the family is, you know, beliefs are, you know.

Respect. Mothers frequently reported that children should learn about respect when they are young. Learning respect can begin as early as toddlerhood. Parents usually teach respect to children through observational learning and interactions with parents. Parents

are the first people children learn to respect; however, respect can and should eventually extend to other relatives and even the public. Some parents view this as an automatic extension whereas others believe that respect is earned. However, they believe that children should not simply respect all elders indiscriminately. Participants stated that it is important that children learn when it is appropriate to disrespect authority figures by not following demands that are not in the child's best interest. For example, Harriet stated, "If they know something's wrong and someone's telling them to do something, then they shouldn't do it." Otherwise, children should respect their parents, family members, and anyone with whom they interact. Children learn how to give respect from their parents' teaching them and treating them with respect, as exemplified below.

Jalene: As well as they would want their kids to treat them with respect, you know. and treat others with respect. because if you can't get, if you can't teach your kids respect if you don't, if you don't show 'em you know what respect is. You can tell them what respect is but that don't mean nothing. You have to put it in action.

Faye: when the parents teach the kids how to respect them how to respect themselves, it's gonna automatically fall. They respect ah, school teachers, uh uh babysitter, the people in daycare

Mothers also stated that children should be respected, in part because they can feel an emotional impact from not receiving respect lasting into adulthood. When people are disrespected as children, many mothers reported that they think they will grow into adults who do not respect others. Participants also reported that children would learn how to give respect to others only through learning how to evaluate the appropriateness of giving

respect. If they are allowed to experiment with not giving respect (e.g., being disrespectful) they will learn through cause and effect, for example, how they feel and the consequences of their action of being disrespectful. If they are denied this opportunity, they may very well indulge in indiscriminate disrespect as an adult. This theme is explicated below.

Antoinette: I think children, ahm, should have a chance to give respect, or respect their parents. Just as adults do. Cause, um...If you teach a child to respect their parent, ahm, that doesn't necessarily mean that they going to respect everybody. Um. Like, when I was young, I was taught to respect my elders. Today, I don't have to. So I don't know where that changed in me, but um, it basically it came down to if this old person doesn't respect me I'm not gonna respect them. Period. I mean I'm not going to give somebody respect who doesn't give any respect back. As for when I was a child, I gave them respect anyway. You know what I'm saying? And I feel like, if they like, if I was taken advantage of just for being respectful and not only that but brought down from, from being disrespected. When you are disrespected it, it hits you emotionally and um not only are you then being disrespected as a child has some emotional impact on me to where I'm not afraid to express that emotion today. Ahm. And that's cause I didn't express it when I was young. I feel like if I had been able to express my opinion of when to disrespect and how, how to respect then I would have the meaning of always giving respect today instead of having my meaning of disrespecting when I can.

Goals

Another common theme that emerged related to a parents' job or role was that mothers reported having various goals for their future related to parenting, including obtaining financially based necessities like housing, employment, and money. For example, Chantoya stated: "you have to have a uhh reliable income for them cause kids are expensive." Further, mothers reported that they would prefer to be self-sufficient financially than rely on others. For example, Belle stated, "Self-sufficient to me is like not on assistance like not on welfare and not, um, catching the bus and no food stamps, like totally paying your own way." Other goals reported by mothers included finishing her education, remaining clean and sober, and regaining custody of her children.

For some mothers, the concept of having a goal or getting ahead involved having a positive attitude about life more than monetary or materialistic gain. Attitudes about the importance of getting ahead varied from it will happen if meant to, to being impatient to begin the process, to reporting that it is not important.

Mothers also had goals for and related to their children. Mothers reported that they strive to give their children better opportunities than they had, to develop beneficial characteristics in their children, and to have their children learn the consequences of their actions while they are young. Mothers often made comments about wanting to spend more time with their children, perhaps even travel with them, and to be involved in children's lives.

Additionally, mothers had a number of concerns for the future of their children. In particular, mother were worried that their children would make similar mistakes to their

own such as using drugs, being in abusive relationships, and dropping out of school. The comments below demonstrate several of these concerns.

Ilisa: I want her to not have abusive relationships, she must have a healthy relationship.

Malika: Is my children going to be gangbangers, selling drugs, my daughter ended up pregnant at a young age.

Belle: I just worried about because I had problems with addiction I worry about my kids falling into that pattern; so I'm here where I'm at right now to kinda try to break that cycle and so that my kids know that if they do foul up that way then there's ways to get help and stuff like that.

Be the Boss

Participants strongly believed that parents should be the boss and have more power than their children. That is, parents should set limits and rules for their children. Participants stated that parents are also responsible for enforcing the rules they establish (e.g., through discipline), although they may consider the child's input, preferences, or suggestions in the process. Additionally, it is the parent's responsibility to help the child feel better after receiving disciplinary consequences. This theme is exemplified below.

Belle: Like, um, firm in their beliefs. And let them know that there's consequences and rewards for their actions whether they be good or bad.

Um. Just to let them know that there is a friend, there is relationship there but who's the parent. You know.

Faye: A parent should sit down and explain to a child, look this is how this is supposed to go, and I understand how you feel, but because I'm the

parent and you're the child you know I will take your advice and your suggestions but the last say so will be coming from me.

Discipline

All participants except one agreed that the objective of discipline is to correct behavior. Although all agree that discipline is necessary, the lone dissenter is not certain that discipline is effective. All mothers reported using communication and restriction of privileges as discipline methods. Time-out and giving the parental "look" are also methods used by some mothers. Some mothers also noted that *punishment* and *discipline* are different constructs: punishment does not teach or inform the child of the rationale and therefore may not result in children learning to correct behavior whereas discipline is explained. Prior to engaging in a disciplinary method, mothers believed that the parent should discuss the reasons for discipline with the child. The difference between punishment and discipline is explicated in the statement below.

Belle: Um. I don't think that a parent should, um, like punish their children. I think there's a difference between discipline and punishment. . . . to punish your child would be, like, to spank them or something, which would, I feel like, would take away from their personal character.

Mothers reported conflicting beliefs about using spanking or other forms of corporal punishment as a discipline method. The mothers in this program are not allowed to use corporal punishment and are taught alternative discipline techniques. A number of mothers stated they want to learn these alternative discipline methods, however, they do not believe that they would be as effective as corporal punishment. Subsequently, most mothers endorsed corporal punishment and noted that they approve of it because their

parents used it effectively on them. For example, one mother remembered why she was disciplined after a spanking but not after time-out and changed her behavior accordingly. Alternatively, one mother stated that she is glad that parenting classes do not teach that corporal punishment is a viable alternative as a disciplinary method. Some of the issues with discipline methods discussed by these mothers are illustrated below.

Antoinette: Because when you put a child in time-out by the time time-out is over they don't know what the time-out is for. Ahm. Okay you got, ah you put a child in time-out providing that the ten minutes that they are in time-out or away from children, they forget why they're there, they just think they're there for punishment. And, um, they don't know why they're being punished.

Dalinda: Like there could be some extremely bad kids and like talking and putting them in time out does not work. . . Sometimes facilitators don't understand that corporal punishment is the only thing that works for some children.

Latasha: Umm, just timeout. Sometimes I don't think that works- Because I can tell him all day long not to do the same thing and he does it. You know, so and he don't want to sit in time out. You know I'll put him in the corner and then, like as I'm walking away he'll walk behind me. So it's like I don't know. I'm hoping this positive, you know, reinforcement thing with the stickers is going to engage him but umm I don't know. But as far as, umm umm, disciplining them it's really here all you do is timeout, so.

Mothers reported that the method of discipline used depends on the child's age and circumstances. They reported using time-outs with younger children. As children age, restriction of privileges and grounding became the preferred disciplinary methods. Furthermore, mothers reported that the best option is to prevent inappropriate behavior first by communicating effectively with children. An example of this theme follows.

Faye: As long as you don't throw a little temper tantrum it's not going to get you nowhere. But, you know, act up. If they like, uhm, from 8 to 12, I will take whatever is the most important thing that they like, I will take that from them and put 'em on restriction. . . Depends on their age, absolutely, and what the circumstances.

Involvement in Child's Life

Mothers reported that parents should be involved in their children's lives. This is not simply existing in their lives, but interacting with their children. Mothers stated that parents should play with their children, know what their children like to do, and support them in their interests. Additionally, most mothers said that parents and children need to do activities together regularly to facilitate forming a connection and bond. For example, parents should take children to afterschool games or activities and encourage them to participate.

Mothers also reported that parents should meet their children's needs before their own. Parents should be responsible for their children. Parents provide support emotionally and financially to help them maximize their potential, achieve their goals, and meet their basic needs (e.g., food, clothes, education, church). However, mothers

reported that parents should not spoil children with too many material things. The example below is representative of the mothers' view on supporting children.

Chantoya: No matter what, umm, a good parent is to be there for their kids no matter what, like support. A good parent gets up at 8:00 o' clock in the morning goes to work and drop their kids off at daycare or take them to school and makes sure they go to school cause you want them to have education that you didn't have. Umm, make sure they're fed. Umm. Around good and positive people. Yup. That's what I think.

Importance of Education.

All of the mothers placed a good deal of emphasis on the importance of at least a high school education for their children. Many stated that their children should be able to attend college if that was his or her desire. Mothers reported that parents should be involved in their children's education. For example, parents should attend school meetings, make children attend school, and help their children learn at home. The high value these mothers placed on education is related to the mothers' perceived deficiencies in their own education. Some of the activities parents can do to support their children's education are illustrated below.

Eliya: if you want them grown up in school and make sure your kids get, um, do their homework don't let them just like, cut school and do what they want to do, you what I'm saying, you gotta be on top of that kind of stuff.

Belle: I would just like start educating them as young as possible like by reading to them and teaching them their numbers and ABC's and stuff so that they would like school once they got into school.

Show Love

Mothers reported that children need their parents' to show them unconditional love. There are many ways that a parent can show the child love: physically hugging and kissing them; telling them they are loved; providing them material goods; playing with them; and, communicating openly and non-judgmentally. Other demonstrations of love include supporting and encouraging their involvement in extra-curricular activities. The comments below demonstrate several of these methods to demonstrate love.

Jalene: even just giving them love you know, hugs and kisses, and letting them know that they loved, that you love them and you know and showing affection and and and just being there when they wanna play, you play with them you know. That, I believe that that helps with with the child knowing that their parents love them, you know.

Gemma: African American women we always buy our kids something, we always buy em clothes, shoes, take em out to eat, or give em some money.

One thing we got, we got bad at is giving em money.

Protect Children

Mothers consistently reported that parents should keep their children safe from danger at all times. Danger can be from the parent's own actions, like abuse (e.g., mental, physical, emotional), neglect, or being verbally harsh (scream, yell, say negative things about child). Additionally, seeing the parent do drugs or being abused is dangerous to the

child. Parents need to protect children from others doing things to hurt the child or from the bad influences in the world like being in gangs, being around guns, or taking health risks (e.g., smoking). Other dangers from which the parent should protect the child are those found in the home, such as uncovered electrical outlets or kitchen hazards. Several of these points are illustrated below.

Ilisa: If you know that this child is smokin' doing drugs I'd totally keep my kid away from them. And I wouldn't have them in that atmosphere even that it wouldn't even come upon them or have them in a school like that, you know what I mean.

Latasha: Um, scream and yell all the time. Cuz I know that was one of my things like when my kids would do something that would annoy me.

Harriet: we should keep them safe you know.

Understanding Children's Nature, Abilities, and Characteristics

In addition to themes related to the essential characteristics needed to be a good parent, another important theme that emerged was understanding the nature, abilities, and general characteristics of children. Mothers discussed their view of children's basic nature, the qualities they expect to help their children develop, and their role in their children's self-esteem. There are certain skills, abilities, and activities that they expect children to develop and pursue. Finally, they describe the goals they hope their children will have and their role in developing them (See Figure 4).

Children's Nature

Although a majority of mothers stated that children are not inherently bad, they did discuss a number of negative actions and types of behaviors in which some children

engage. Being disruptive during adult conversations, disobedient, disrespectful, cursing, hurting others, truant, using drugs or alcohol, and fighting are just some of the bad behaviors described by the mothers. Primary among these are violent actions (e.g., hit, bite, hurt others). Others include status offenses like breaking curfew, leaving room dirty, or running away; however, participants endorse few of these actions. Some prohibitions refer to how children treat other people, e.g., being disrespectful or manipulative, with being disrespectful endorsed as negative by most participants.

Most of the mothers reported that children learn their bad actions from their families at home. They are the child's attempt to get attention and test the boundaries, which may result from poor communication between the parent and child. This theme is illustrated in the comments below.

Belle: I think that children are made that way. Like their influences make them bad. I think that all children are like created good but it's just depends on how they are raised and their experiences and they kinda go the other way.

Dalinda: a kid that wants attention. And they do bad things to get attention,

Essential Qualities

There are a number of positive qualities that mothers wished for their children. The quality most often mentioned is being respectful. Respect appears to be an extremely important concept to these mothers as discussed previously. These qualities also include being honest and loyal, forgiving, and non-judgmental. Examples of this theme are provided below.

Gemma: You have to be loyal as a responsible person you have to take up on your own actions. You have to take consequences on your own actions. You have to, and when I say loyal I mean as a friend, as your friend. Even if you don't want to be that friend you still have to be a friend because it reflects on what type of person you are.

Jalene: Just give, give people a chance, you know, uhm don't, I don't feel that people should think negatively of others, you know. Cuz I always, me personally I give people the benefit of the doubt you know. I don't judge people just because they're somebody else, you know, or that I don't know them

Obedience

Mothers' reported that children should obey their parents' rules. Some of the rules described by these mothers include: maintaining curfew, doing homework after school, being responsible, going to school, doing chores. Other items revolve around some of the positive attributes parents hope their children will develop, like being honest and talking respectfully. Obedience to parental authority is a highly desirable child trait that demonstrates that the child respects the parent. This trait is one that parents need to teach their children. Even toddlers are perceived as being capable of learning to follow rules and be responsible, as explicated below.

Faye: show toddler's how to be a little responsible, how to pick up their toys after its time to clean up, help us clean up the nursery,

Faye: You have to let them know from right and wrong, curfew times, bedtimes, when you get home from school you must do homework first before anything,

Malika: by following directions and that's how they would be respectful to their parents

Self-Esteem

Mothers reported that parents should help children develop a positive self-esteem through their interactions. How parents phrase criticism, or whether they even criticize at all, can greatly affect a child's self-esteem. Parents should be cautious to not use derogatory comments about the child's inherent ability. Rather, they should diffuse the impact of failures by taking a collaborative role and encouraging better efforts in the future. Many of these parents feel that having good self-esteem is a protective factor for their children. This theme is exemplified below.

Antoinette: take a child's self-esteem when they're young by just, ahm, ahm, emotional abuse, physical abuse, or verbal abuse . . . I would want to develop self-esteem in my, in my children by telling them they are somebody, they are someone who can be great. . . Like great job. Ahm. We'll try again next time. Ahm. You're wonderful; I love you. ahm. Good girl, good boy or big girl, big boy. Ahm. Things like that.

Skills and Activities

Friendships. Children should learn to build healthy relationships with other age appropriate peers as a learning mechanism and precursor to adult interactions with society. Jalene illustrates this in her statement, "learn how to you know interact with

other children. Because without that, then they don't have no way of knowing how to, uhm, act in society, you know."

Education. Mothers repeatedly stressed that children should pursue their education and complete at least a high school degree. Children must attend school and do their homework. Even when they find school difficult, they should persevere in the goal to complete their education. The emphasis on the importance of education results from their life experience. Some of the activities participants expected their children to undertake in pursuing their education are represented below.

Eliya: Go to school, do as teacher told, do your homework

Belle: I think that they know that like sometimes it won't be easy but I think that they should stick to it.

Gemma: I think you should relax and hang in there for 12 years, whether you want to or not because that's the most important thing of your life that you have to continue for the rest of your life

Dalinda: I want my kids to finish schools because you know I haven't finish school.

Children's Goals

Participants reported that children should have a variety of goals for themselves. These goals vary by the child's age and include simple activities like playing, educational goals, and long-term goals. Educational goals consist of attending school and graduating from school. Children's long-term goals involve becoming independent, determining their job or career, and becoming a good parent. These long-term goals seem to reflect some of the same objectives that parents embrace for themselves, as shown below.

Eliya: They should have, they should know what they wanna be when they, when they, what kind of job they wanna you know work at or what kind of you know what I'm saying what they want to be when they grow up

Jalene: being a good parent

Parents were divided in their opinions on whether children should decide their goals by themselves or whether parents should guide them in the process. Regardless of who determines the goals, the goals themselves should be beneficial to the child and not become an obsession.

Parenting Challenges

In addition to noting the nature of children and the essential characteristics of a great parent, another theme that emerged centered around difficulties commonly encountered while parenting, the strengths mothers possess to be a good parent, and the assistance they expect in dealing with those challenges. Mothers reported various challenges to being a good parent, including being more involved in the child's life, understanding the child, communicating with child, having patience with child, and disciplining the child (See Figure 3). Mothers reported experiencing these challenges as frustrating, particularly when they feel they lack the knowledge on how to successfully deal with them, as exemplified below.

Latasha: so when I do communicate with them I could get them to understand more why I'm asking them to do, you know, these things that I'm asking them. Um so then, you know, maybe I wouldn't have to ask them the same thing a million times in a day. You know. Like, so, yeah, I

definitely need to learn how to do that cuz I feels it's very important to learn to do. . . Um, in how to discipline them without, um, feeling that I need to spank them or something like that.

Faye: Patience is the number, patience and understanding.

Additionally, being a single parent and not having a positive male role model for children were frequently described by the mothers. Additional challenges that face the parent and family of origin included issues with communication, having a stressed relationship, not being close, and not being violent. Some of the mothers' views on single parenthood and relationships with their family of origin are discussed below.

Belle: Like just being a single parent, like my mom was a single parent, um, right now I'm not married so I consider myself a single parent.

Belle: I wish that my kids had more positive male role models

Ilisa: Not being violent. Becoming together family, being closer. They need come closer, to learn the most right beliefs, some of us, not argue so much. A lot of my family they're two faced I feel like. They need to come together and have each other's back instead of knocking them in, you know. I don't know...

Mothers reported various problems related to society and the sociocultural environment in which they live that are viewed as external to them and their children. Societal challenges included regaining custody of their children and trusting other individuals with their children. Of particular concern to these parents were fears of children experiencing physical or sexual abuse. In addition, they reported concerns over

financial issues, such as not having enough money or problems finding work, as discussed below.

Belle: Well I'm a convicted felon so that it's difficult, it's difficult to find work and even with my education like it's hard to work in the field that I went to school for because of that. So... ummm ... that's about it.

Chantoya: And sometimes you hear all this stuff that goes on in the news about foster parents beating on kids and police officers beating on little girls and women. And a lot of things go on that you just , just like, just like, just not to trust no one, no more, you know? So I just like I'm not scared but I'm just like...threatened, frightened for other people's lives you know

Antoinette: Umm ...male trust. Umm...I think that being a parent it's hard to be, I'll be very, untrusting the males around my daughter because I was molested. And, umm...I would have a big issue with males around my daughter.

Parenting Strengths

Mothers rarely mentioned their current parenting strengths and tended to minimize those that they did acknowledge. Among those that were mentioned were the amount of time the mother spends with her children, her willingness to learn to be a better parent, being a strong single parent, and her ability to relate to her children. Her ability to love and feel compassion for her children were also strengths. The two most endorsed strengths were being responsible for her children and being clean and sober, as exemplified by the passages below.

Malika: Patience and compassion.

Jalene: I feel that my consistency umm, the umm, the the time that I give, my time, you know, that I give to my children. I try to give them as much time as I can.

Eliya: I think I was a strong parent. Just raising boys despite all the boys and the fact of being a single mother.

Faye: My strength are that I'm sober, that I have a clear mind to think

Sources of Help

Although mothers considered family, friends, and staff their support networks, which provide assistance in a number of material and emotional areas, there was no overt mention of learning parenting skills or techniques from the mothers' support system. Instead, family, friends, and staff members were stated to help them with practical issues like money, transportation, and babysitting and through emotional support. Some mothers stated that God provides them assistance through the actions of others. His help can take the same form as help from family. Similar to the reporting deficit for parents' strengths, parents reported few sources of help and had difficulty providing examples of how they are helped, as demonstrated below.

Belle: like they help with their school clothes, and to like, like get my girls' hair done and provide their needs and stuff like that.

Jalene: he helps us out with like financial, like money and stuff like that.

Parenting Skills Classes

Mothers in the current study had some specific feedback about parenting skills classes related to issues of recruitment, retention, and program effectiveness (See Figure 5).

Major themes include issues that serve to inhibit recruitment or retention, issues that promote recruitment and retention, and methods to improve the appeal and efficacy of parenting classes.

Issues That Inhibit Recruitment or Retention

One of the themes related to parenting skills classes that these mothers described are the issues that inhibit recruitment and retention. Primary among these issues is the mothers' perception of failure and blame for their children's problems or their lack of parenting skills. Additionally, the mothers' history of issues with authority figures can increase her likelihood of rejecting offers or edicts to attend parenting classes by individuals perceived as being authority figures.

Mother at Fault

As elucidated above, participants tended to believe that they teach their children the skills they need; the desirable and essential qualities children should possess; and how to behave. When mothers had a difficult time raising their children, or when the children misbehaved, the parent often felt that situation was their fault. Below is one participant's illustration of this theme,

Latasha: I really couldn't say for that. Umm cuz a lot of people think that bad children are kids who don't listen or umm just constantly do bad things but that doesn't necessarily mean that they are a bad child, I feel that that means that they were taught wrong. That they just weren't brought up the right way.

Furthermore, these mothers also have histories remarkable for problems with drug abuse, child neglect, and criminal histories, which further reinforce their belief that they are at fault for poor parenting practices and child outcomes.

Mother needs help script. Participants' history influenced how they perceived themselves. This effect was particularly true when the mothers' childhood experiences with their family of origin were unpleasant. Given that a mother may have had a poor perception of herself, when she felt inadequate as a parent, she reacted poorly to the idea of taking a parenting class. This scenario is the equivalence of activating a "mother needs help" script in which she perceives offers of assistance as accusation and confirmation of her underlying insecurities, as illustrated below.

Gemma: a person that you that feels that you are accusing them of being an um, um, a neglect, neglective mother their going to trip out. Especially if they are black they are going to trip out . . . Exactly. Cuz if you haven't had a good upbringing you have never had to be loved before. You're gonna lash out. You're gonna lash out. You're going to feel that person is putting you down because of who you are.

Problems with Authority Figures

One of the themes that participants described which affected their likelihood of participate in parenting skills classes was their history of interactions with a variety of authority figures. Participants reported that their reaction to directives from authority figures historically depended on the circumstances, identity, and motivation of person making the request. Requests from friends, employers or law enforcement seemed to pose little problem in comparison to directives from "entitled" individuals who were

themselves experiencing similar problems (e.g., other addicts) or strangers. Similarly, mothers reported that directives made by people with the mother's best interests in mind were more welcome than those made from a controlling "bossy" motivation. This theme is illustrated below.

Harriet: was like when I first came here, it's just like, how can you like, how can another addict tell me what to do, you know what I'm saying? I used to think like that. I used to think like that, but now I found a better way of thinking. Kuz my thinking was messed up, apparently, you know

Antoinette: You know but, ahm, that's kinda where I'm at um when it, when it comes to when I'm getting' told to do something like that. Like I know they didn't tell me to do it. But some people, you just know, they only got your best interest out, you know and yo- I'm the type of person that feel when somebody puts me up to something that's not in my best interest it's in their best interest. And I'm somebody when they asked me to do stuff that's not open in my best interest and theirs or being represented with caring and think that they're lying about those feelings.

One participant described how requests from authority figures are easy to dismiss immediately, perhaps out of rebellion: however, when given time to think about the request or when asked to do the same thing by someone else an increased feeling of autonomy allowed her to change her mind, as described below.

Antoinette: That's like when you asked me to do, you know, they asked me for my opinion naw I'm not going to do it when you asked before but when they asked me to do it, it was different and it let's me make my own

mind up myself to do it. I'm not disappointed in, in not who I was last week and being who I was last week but and so that's why I'm saying I'm not really embarrassed or into why certain, certain emotions really define the way you feel about things just because time , time changes a lot of things. People change a lot of things. And, um, so that's why I still don't know how I feel about that.

Issues that Promote Recruitment or Retention

Issues that promote recruitment and retention included methods to reduce the mother's self-blame, like how to approach the mother using collaboration and the recruiter's motivation to deactivate the "mother needs help" script. Other issues included consideration of practical issues like transportation and childcare. The mothers' perception of the benefits she could gain from attending parenting classes also affected their likelihood to attend as did their perception of facilitators that teach the class. Previous positive experiences with parenting classes had the potential to improve the likelihood they would attend parenting classes again. Several participants made suggestions for improvements to parenting classes that would increase the appeal of the class for them.

Deactivation of Mother Needs Help

The "mother needs help" script can be deactivated using several different tactics to promote recruitment and retention. How the mother is approached during recruitment, her perception of the parenting class facilitator, consideration of practical issues that may inhibit participation, and the class structure itself may all serve to assist her in accepting recruitment efforts.

Approach. A number of the women avoided facing their lack of parenting skills, as they believed that they were already parents and therefore did not need parenting classes. Additionally, how they are approached during recruitment is extremely important to their perception of accusation and subsequent participation in parenting classes. The theme is described below.

Malika: Actually I never have I never thought about, I mean I thought maybe they wasn- I'm like I don't need parenting classes. I was like I don't need parenting classes I'm a parent so

Jalene: Before it would make me feel like, that they want, they're telling me that I need that I don't know what I'm doing as a parent. That I need to get more skills as a parent, you know. . . Because I, I thought that. . . I just thought that people. . . I don't know, I just thought that they just felt that I didn't know how to take care of my kids, so. But I see now that they. . . it's not about that they don't know I can't take care of my kids, it's about helping me learn more about being a parent.

Collaboration. Taking a collaborative approach to attending parenting classes may normalize the experience and remove some of the negative self-perception these women feel at the perceived accusation of poor parenting. This approach is not one that necessarily will work for all situations, such as court ordered attendance.

Gemma: So it depends on how you come across it. When you say hey lets go to a parenting, would you like to go WITH me to a parenting class, they may not trip out. They think you then offer to somewhere to go or hang out. But if you just say, "how about you go take up a parenting"

they're not going to do it. They are going to think you are talking bad about them how they are taking care of their kids.

Motivation. The attitude and motivation of the individual that suggested parenting classes either allayed or activated the mothers' latent problems with authority figures and poor self-esteem related to parenting. Any implication of an accusatory air of condescension, such as that often inherent in a court edict, further acerbated the mothers' feelings of inadequacy. An alternative suggested by parents is to approach them from the motivation of genuinely caring for them and their families' well being. This approach is one that is applicable in almost any recruitment situation and is illustrated below.

Latasha: Um, like how I said it earlier if it's said out of concern or and, you know, out of caring for my, you know, for me and how they see me with my kids or whatever then, you know, then I would accept that. But if it's like, um, like, you know, what are you doing, uh, you need to take some kind of class or something, you know. Cuz, you know, like if they, if they.

Practical Issues

Most of the women stated that there really were no practical concerns (e.g., time/day class held, transportation, childcare) that would prevent them from attending parenting classes. The mothers stated that consideration of certain practical issues would promote their recruitment or retention for parenting classes. Having new classes starting frequently and having those classes offered at different times and days of the week would promote recruitment for four of the women. Only one person said face-to-face

recruitment would improve the likelihood of her taking a parenting class. Being court ordered made some mothers attend; however, it is notable that such attendance did not result in actual utilization of the information presented, as illustrated below.

Jalene: I went to one, I think one time and umm, but I was just there cuz I had to be. I wasn't paying no attention to what they were saying. It wasn't interesting to me at all.

Interviewer: You had to be there, were you court ordered to be there, so you just went and filled the chair?

Jalene: Yeah. Pretty much.

Although most of the mothers stated that no practical or logistic issues would prevent them from attending parenting classes, it is notable that these mothers do not face such issues in their current inpatient situation. Some of the mothers reflected on the potential issues they could face outside of the program that could potentially prevent their attending parenting classes. Of these mothers six stated transportation could be an issue, four listed fees for the class, three mentioned time of day classes were held, three said not having childcare during class, one said being too busy, one said potentially child illness, one said not knowing location of classes, and one said poor note taking ability were issues that could potentially prohibit their future attendance.

Benefits of Parenting Classes

Participants enumerated a number of benefits they believed they would obtain by attending parenting classes. They listed among these benefits learning new skills like potty training, how to hold infants, and dealing with temper tantrums. Mothers also stated that they would learn how to implement things that they already knew would be

useful but did not exactly know how to do (e.g., time-out or other discipline strategies). Additionally, learning new communication skills and how to connect with a child were important areas that these mothers believed they would learn more about in a parenting class. The theme of learning new skills and understanding how or when to implement current skills, was the predominant benefit endorsed by the mothers. Indeed, one mother even stated that the skills she learned in parenting classes would be applicable to her interactions with other adults as well.

Another frequently endorsed benefit was just generally being a better parent. That included more parenting knowledge, a sense of efficacy, and feeling supported in their parenting practices. Although parenting class benefits predominantly consisted of actions the mothers could perform (i.e., skills), they also included new mental states that the parent experienced. Several of these benefits are exemplified below.

Ilisa: I've learned different handlin positions for baby, how you're supposed to talk to a baby when you're changing their diaper. Let 'em know what you're doing and, you know, to let them know what it helps them to develop their motor skills by talking also, you know. So it helps it helps them out a lot too by talking to them. And keeps them more of a happy child instead of you not don't pay attention to the child you're always supposed to give babies attention even though they are just sitting there doing their own thing you still gotta show them that you acknowledge them. So all of that.

Gemma: how even you don't use this parenting with just kids. You can use it with adults as well because somethings you didn't know.

Antoinette: As in important the more parenting skills I learn the more of a parent I want to be. Um and also, um, the more unafraid I am of being a parent.

Facilitator Efficacy

Among the themes subsumed in the issues that promote recruitment and retention mothers spoke about the importance of their perception of the facilitator who leads parenting classes in their continued class attendance. They described several different aspects of the facilitator that would promote their attendance including the amount of knowledge and education about parenting, personal characteristics, and perceived efficacy.

Demographic characteristics. All of the participants stated that the race and ethnicity of the facilitator would not influence their decision to take or not take a parenting class. Most of the mothers (10) said that the facilitators' age also would not matter to them. Six of the mothers said that the facilitator would need to have experience parenting, preferably with children of their own. Five of the mothers stated that parental status would not matter with three adding the caveat that the facilitator was educated or well trained in parenting skills. Five mothers stated that they preferred the facilitator have some specialized training in parenting.

Perception of knowledge. Several factors serve to enhance the participants' perspective on the facilitator's knowledge. They tend to believe that the facilitator knows what he/she is talking about when what the skills taught in class actually work for the mothers or when trusted sources tell them about how well the skill worked for them. Trusted sources for these mothers potentially include friends, family members, programs,

or personnel with whom they have a good relationship. When the parenting class is offered through a trusted source, they infer expertise based on the facilitators authority to teach or who recommended the parenting class. The following statements exemplify this theme.

Antoinette: because if you go to a parenting class and you know this person has the skills and curriculum to teach this class you're going to believe mostly everything that they say.

Latasha: Because, um, if they didn't have any, you know, knowledge of anything what they're talking about then the classes probably wouldn't be held. Cuz I know you have to go through schooling and things like that in order to be able teach someone else, you know. So if they didn't know or didn't have that schooling then they couldn't teach it. I feel.

Eliya: They like what you doing? They, they, you got to be doing something. You ain't coming in doing something illegal until they get past them doors. Cause they have to protect them --we are patients you know? So that's the way I look at it.

Interviewer: So if it was recommended by the program here you would trust it?

Eliya: Yeah.

Yet another component of the participants' perception of the facilitator was whether they believed the facilitator had their best interest in mind. If the facilitator understands the mothers and/or the problems they face, the facilitator was perceived as being

motivated to help and acting in the mothers' best interests. This theme is explicated below.

Interviewer: . . . Do you think that the people who teach the parenting classes understand you?

Faye: Yes, because that's where they went and they got the knowledge of, of how to come help me. Because because I am an addict. Because uhm uhm I never used with my kids, that's a blessing. But I wasn't in my kids life. So now they come and teach me how to be a different parent in a different way, because I'm not abusing now. . . . the people from the outside is taking up they time to come to us, to relearn, to relearn us all the things that we probably forgot or our brain cells don't remember, thinking tank doesn't remember no more kuz of all the drugs we did. They tryin' to help us become better parents for our kids because they have been there, or they have got they uhm uhm master degree or whatever to teach us. So they go out they way and they care for us. The best thing for us to do is to listen and respect what they saying to help us. And I been trying to soak it all in. Yeah, like a sponge I'm soaking it.

Latasha: Um, I would hope that they do. Um, because then, uh, it will be easier uh for them to explain, you know, things that way that you- the way you need it, you know. If, um, it will be really helpful, you know, with them you know also being a parent. Cuz then they'll more than likely know where you're coming from with your problems.

Some of the mothers stated that the facilitator did not need to understand them and that lack of understanding would not negatively affect the facilitators efficacy. As Belle stated: “I don’t know if they would understand my unique experience. I think they’d understand my reason for wanting a parenting class.”

Level of education. The mothers report a wide range of desired education levels for facilitators from eighth grade to college degree or specialized training in the area. Of the mothers who desired formal training in parenting, three specified college level training and one added the requirement that someone with an advanced degree supervise the facilitator. Only one mother said that eighth grade was the minimal education level she thought appropriate. Level of education does infer some authority and legitimacy of information facilitators teach in the parenting classes; however, mere presence and willingness to teach the class also infer authority and expertise as noted below.

Antoinette: And You know, and there’s all kinds of things that I think um once the person has the um position to say and tell people things then people think that they’re, what they’re telling them is okay, um.

Sometimes they misuse it, um, because if you go to a parenting class and you know this person has the skills and curriculum to teach this class you’re going to believe mostly everything that they say.

Additionally, one participant preferred that the facilitators teach empirically validated information, which may be a factor moderated by her own higher level of education (some college) and middle class background. She stated: “Belle: they’ve been trained on the information that they’re teaching, like and I think they’d be teaching information that’s been like studied and proven.” Finally, mothers stated that seeing the techniques

work, successfully implementing techniques, or hearing testimonial of their efficacy also validates facilitators' knowledge and expertise.

Conflicting information. The participants stated that when facilitators gave them information that conflicted with the mothers' current beliefs the mothers had difficulty trusting that information. For instance, mothers often firmly believed that spanking is an effective method of discipline, although they may not wish to use it as a method of discipline. Additionally, quite often mothers' had little faith in the long-term utility of the alternative discipline techniques taught in their parenting class (e.g., time-out) and retain the belief in spanking. When mothers encountered a situation in which time-out did not work effectively, they frequently resorted to spanking and may have lost confidence in the facilitator and his or her alternative disciplinary techniques. This theme is illustrated below.

Dalinda: And they'll be like you shouldn't whoop your kids you know what I mean that's not the right way to go about it. So like sometimes they don't understand that whoopin' would help a kid, like cause I know there are a few kids that I see that should get a whoopin' because they just do not listen regardless of what it is. You have to bribe them to stop being the way that they're acting and they still do the same thing. So I feel like there is some kids that should be whooped. But like just because they're like not like, not listening that they should be whooped all the time and that's why sometimes I feel like they don't understand the problem. Like there could be some extremely bad kids and like talking and putting them in time out does not work.

Interviewer: Do you think that people who teach parenting classes know what they are talking about?

Harriet: Yea, I mean yea they do but like everybody is raised differently. You know what I'm saying. So, if someone is just raising a child off how they was raised, if somebody was raising their child without facts, you know what I'm saying, if somebody was then, you know their teaching right but then there's also other ways. There's also, you know, other problems. There's also other things that that person haven't experienced or been through you know.

One participant offered a way to counter conflicting information. She suggested asking questions specific to the parent's situation. Another is to seek out a second opinion about the information received in the parenting class.

Gemma: And asking questions and you always get a second advice anyway no matter what. You don't just take someone's advice and run with it. You always get a second opinion no matter what the question was that you asked the person you always get a second advice. If you get-know how they say it look like a duck, quack like a duck, it's a duck. You get a second advice that way you know that's what it is.

Likelihood to Attend Again

Participants reported that the likelihood of attending a parenting class would depend on their previous experience with parenting classes. Roughly half of the mothers said that they would have refused to go to a parenting class prior to their current situation and five of them had never been approached about parenting classes. One woman had attended

parenting classes previously; however, she only did so because she was court-ordered to attend and she did not really participate or feel that class helped her. Eight of the 13 mothers attended parenting classes since being in this program and had changed their opinions to a more positive perspective about parenting classes. Overall, 10 of the 13 women stated during their interviews that they would attend a parenting class again. Some of their endorsements for parenting classes are shown below.

Faye: I would be the first person to be in that seat. Yes, absolutely.

Keesha: It would, it would make me feel like, it would make me feel like, good cuz I still be going there to learn something so.

Suggested Improvements

Mothers in the current sample offered suggestions to improve the structure and curriculum of parenting classes as to make them more appealing and useful to other parents. They said facilitators may be more effective in teaching when a varied approach and teaching styles are used. Participants made several suggestions specific to improving classes for their consumption. Common comments included incorporating frequent comprehension checks of the materials covered in class, reviewing materials missed when a parent is absent, creating a more interactive class with less reading, and having classes taught in smaller sections with frequent reviews of the information covered. Other class structure issues include having classes targeting fathers and non-parents (e.g., other relatives, classes prior to becoming a parent) and offering the classes by child's developmental level (i.e., broken down by age).

Other suggestions for parenting classes were to include the child in parenting class activities (when possible) and to provide childcare for those classes in which they cannot

participate. To this end, mothers would gain more hands-on experience in implementing the learned skills with their children. Some of the aspects of this theme are exemplified below.

Chantoya: I think sometimes they should like, like do parenting classes with the kids so the kids could interact more with them, and more, so learning to like I don't have a lot of parenting I don't have it with my kids, because my kids are not here. But I think they should do more parenting classes with one on one with the children. Cause if they do more one on one with their children then the kids could learn how to, how to, no the parents could basically learn how to interact with their kids, you know.

Jalene: And there are other parenting classes you couldn't even bring your kids to. These ones its about your kids, So the kids are there and we do things with our kids and and and then, you know, like they tell us teach us stuff on potty training stuff, the other classes they just tell you about what you shouldn't do, you know, to/ with your child or to a child and I don't feel like it was trying to benefit you.

Finally, mothers said that the facilitator being aware of their learning objectives demonstrates a true interest in meeting their needs. Some suggestions for improving parenting classes included offering varied curriculum, such as developing classes that specifically address the issues relevant to single parenting, proper nutrition, and problems that occur with older children (e.g., how to keep children away from gangs, drugs, and teen pregnancy). Mothers stated that considering these parental concerns improved their

perception of whether the facilitator had their best interests in mind. This theme is explicated below.

Antoinette: . . . just um be more aware of what the parent wants to learn about. . . I would, um, suggest like just open questions on what they want to learn. Instead of not what they were do to learn in the past because of it was already programmed into the class, forget about it.

Interviewer: Do you think that parenting classes should incorporate your input? Do you want to be able to pick the topics that are discussed?

Latasha: Um, I think that that would be very helpful. Um, when like, you know, they could have their, their uh certain things planned out- but maybe for some classes, you know, that the parents can put in what they think should be a topic. You know, if they haven't covered it all ready or whatever. I think that would be very helpful because not everybody's um weaknesses in their parenting are the same thing.

The Emergent Theory: Parenting Beliefs of an Inpatient Sample of African American Mothers

As discussed and detailed above, many themes emerged from data collected during the interviews about parenting beliefs and behaviors (See Figure 6 for a summary).

Overall, participant responses suggested that experiences with their family of origin, authority figures, and drugs influenced their current parenting beliefs and behaviors.

Furthermore, the parents' worldview and perspective on the future affected parenting beliefs and behaviors. These beliefs and behaviors, in turn, affected participants' goals

for the future and often resulted in a desire to raise their children differently than they were raised by their own parents.

Participants described facing challenges related to children, their family, and society. Mothers listed being drug free, having previous life experiences, and loving their children among their best strengths. They reported that they can count on family, friends, and the staff of the rehabilitation center to help them with practical issues like money, transportation, or babysitting. Social networks also assist them by providing moral support. Many of the mothers reported that God provides much of this assistance by acting through their family, friends, and staff members. Being taught how to parent did not seem to be an inherent part of the conscious socialization of these women.

One primary theme that emerged from the interviews was that a parent's job is to raise her children. This object requires the parent to serve as a teacher for the children. Mothers reported that they often have goals that they want to accomplish and goals for their children. Parents' are responsible for providing rules and structure for their children's benefit. When children do not follow the rules, the parent must discipline them. Participants stressed familial relationships as particularly important to the socialization of their children; however, whom the mothers considered part of the family varied, as did the methods and the length of time it takes to become a family member. The importance of family is paramount with the caveat that those relationships must be healthy for both the child and the parent. Children and parents may elect not to maintain unhealthy relationships with family members. Mothers emphasized the importance of open, honest communication as a hallmark of healthy family relationships. Additionally,

it is important for the child and parent to have a good relationship and for the child to have sufficient parental role models.

Mothers reported that the children are not inherently bad when they misbehave. Rather, most are inherently good but behave in ways that are sometimes bad. Children learn these bad behaviors at home. In contrast, children also learn a number of beneficial behaviors from their family. Children should learn to have and demonstrate certain essential qualities like being respectful and obedient to their parents and others. They should develop good self-esteem and be able to learn and do a number of skills and activities. Finally, children should have goals that benefit them, although, the goals may vary by the child's age and how the goals are developed.

When children do not behave appropriately or the parent needs help with parenting skills, the mother may perceive herself at fault. This self-blame arises out of the idea that the mother is somehow lacking as a parent and is not inherently capable of teaching or raising her child correctly. Furthermore, the parent's history, problems with authority figures, and how the problems with parenting are broached may prevent her from seeking help or affect her reaction to and acceptance of such offers. These situations can establish a "parent needs help" script in which any perceived parenting deficit could evoke denial and an immediate rejection of the offer.

With regard to parenting classes, when someone (e.g., an authority figure) approaches the mother to take a parenting class, activating the "parent needs help" script may lead the parent to refuse recruitment. There are steps and approaches that the authority figure may utilize to allay the script activation. Limiting accusations of poor parenting and approaching the parent with the motivation of caring about her and her children's well

being is an approach that any authority figure may implement. Using terminology that suggests the parent go with someone as a collaborative effort instead of an accusatory “you need to take” a class phrasing will also assist in short circuiting the script. In addition, suggestions to attend a parenting class by someone whom the mother trusts will likely facilitate recruitment. Although rare, there are practical issues, such as class fees, transportation, or childcare that may also inhibit recruitment or retention of parents in parenting classes.

Once a parent actually begins attending parenting classes, there are a number of issues that can influence her likelihood of continuing in the class. Mothers reported that her perception of the class facilitator is extremely important. The facilitator must appear knowledgeable about the subject matter. The parent and /or facilitator must be able to resolve information that conflicts with the parents’ beliefs or the parent will stop attending the class. Parents’ may be enticed to suspend their firmly held beliefs long enough to “give it a try”; however, seeing the effectiveness of newly learned skills or hearing of them from a trusted source greatly enhance the parents’ willingness to continue implementing the skill. Despite the inferred utility of the skill through word-of-mouth, parents with fewer completed years of education do not give as much weight to the universality of evidence-based practices as do parents with at least some college.

Finally, parents are more likely to attend parenting classes that they perceive as meeting their specific needs. Utilitarian suggestions include class scheduling, structure (e.g., teaching methods, review, amount of material covered), including children in at least some sessions for in vivo skill practice, and focusing on the specific needs of single parents. Mothers would prefer to have classes address the topics that they fear most for

their children's futures (e.g., preventing teen pregnancy, drug use, gang involvement). Parenting classes should address the needs of specific age ranges of children to prevent parent boredom and target information specific to their children.

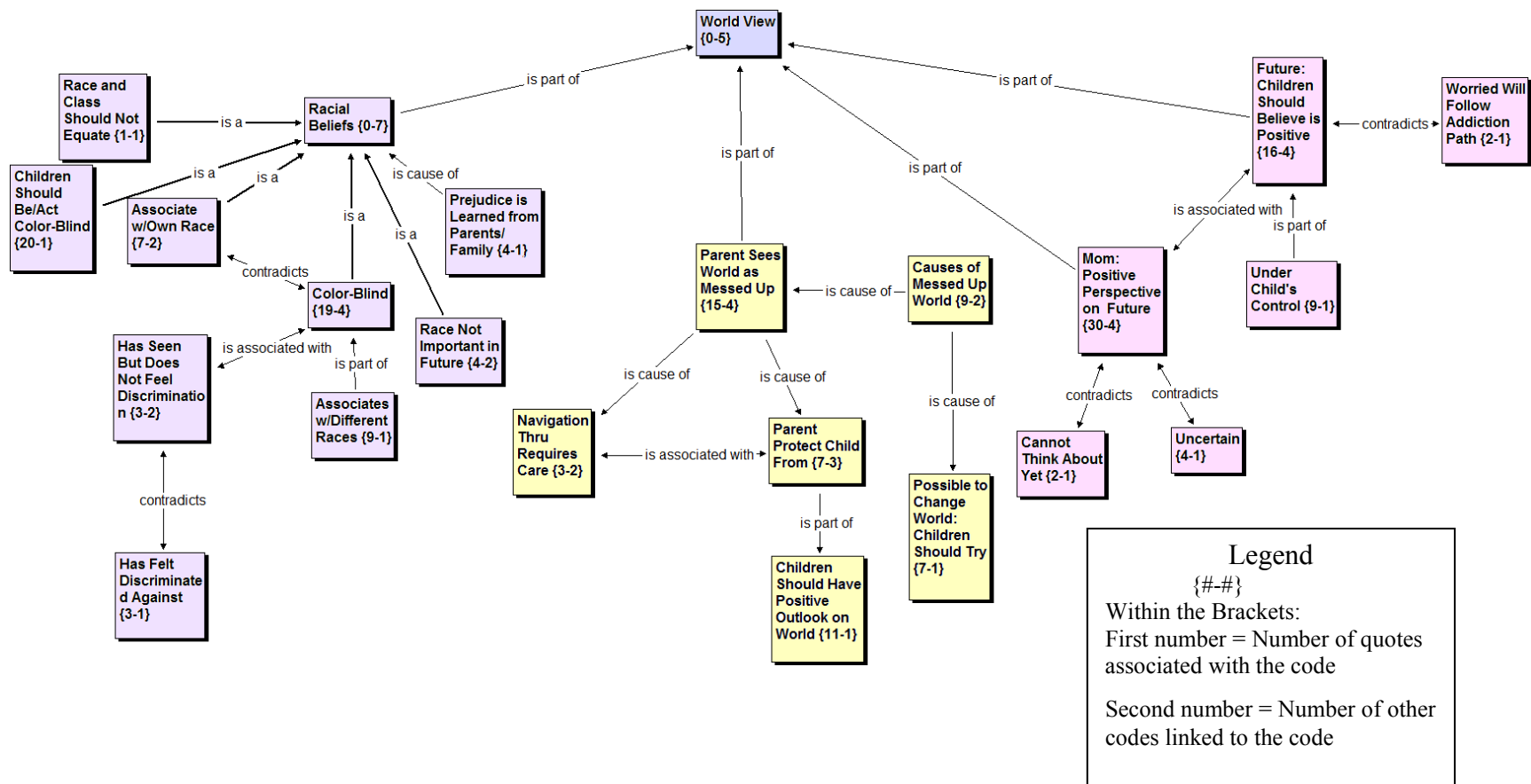


Figure 1. Worldview, Racial Beliefs, and Perspective on Future

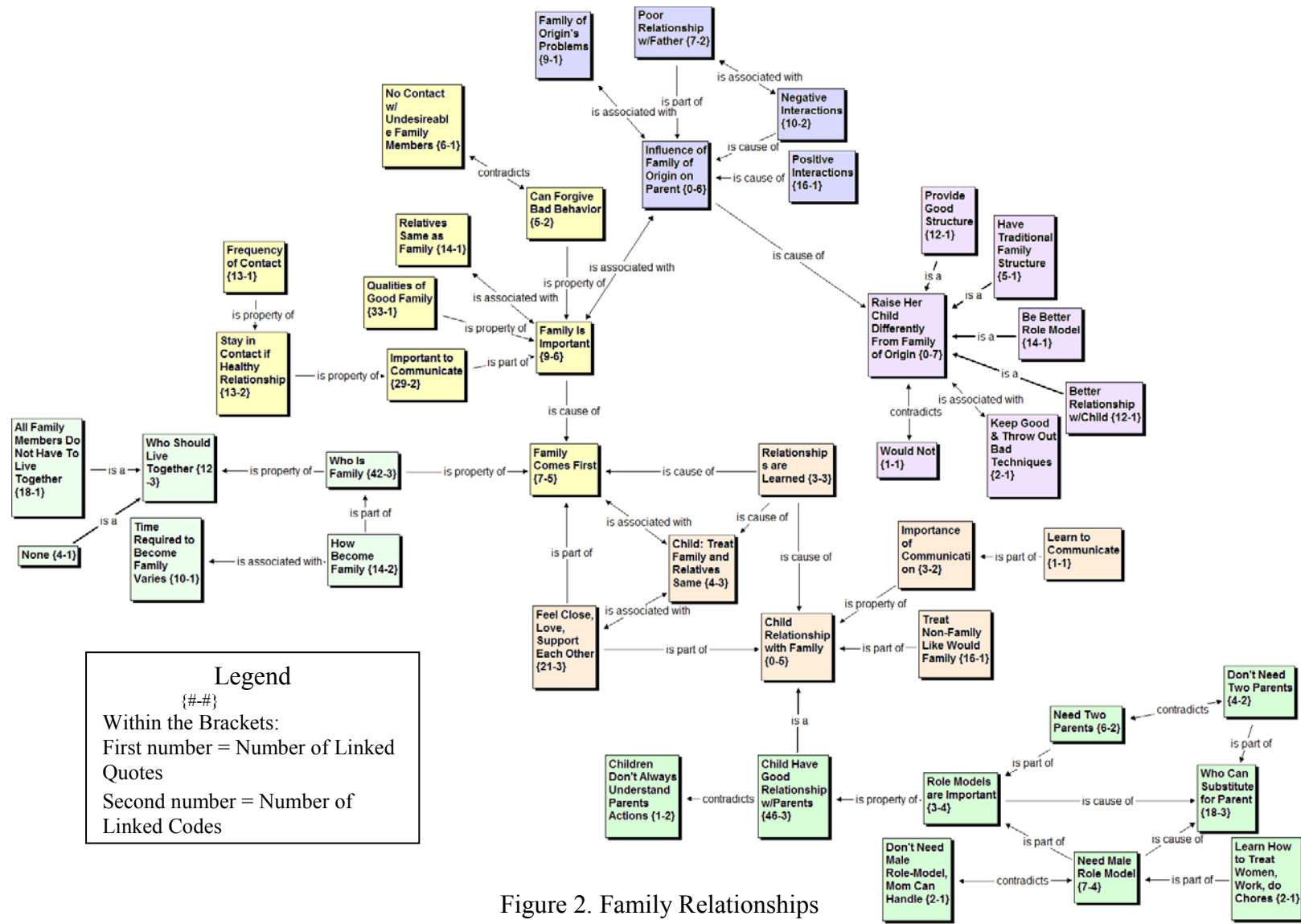


Figure 2. Family Relationships

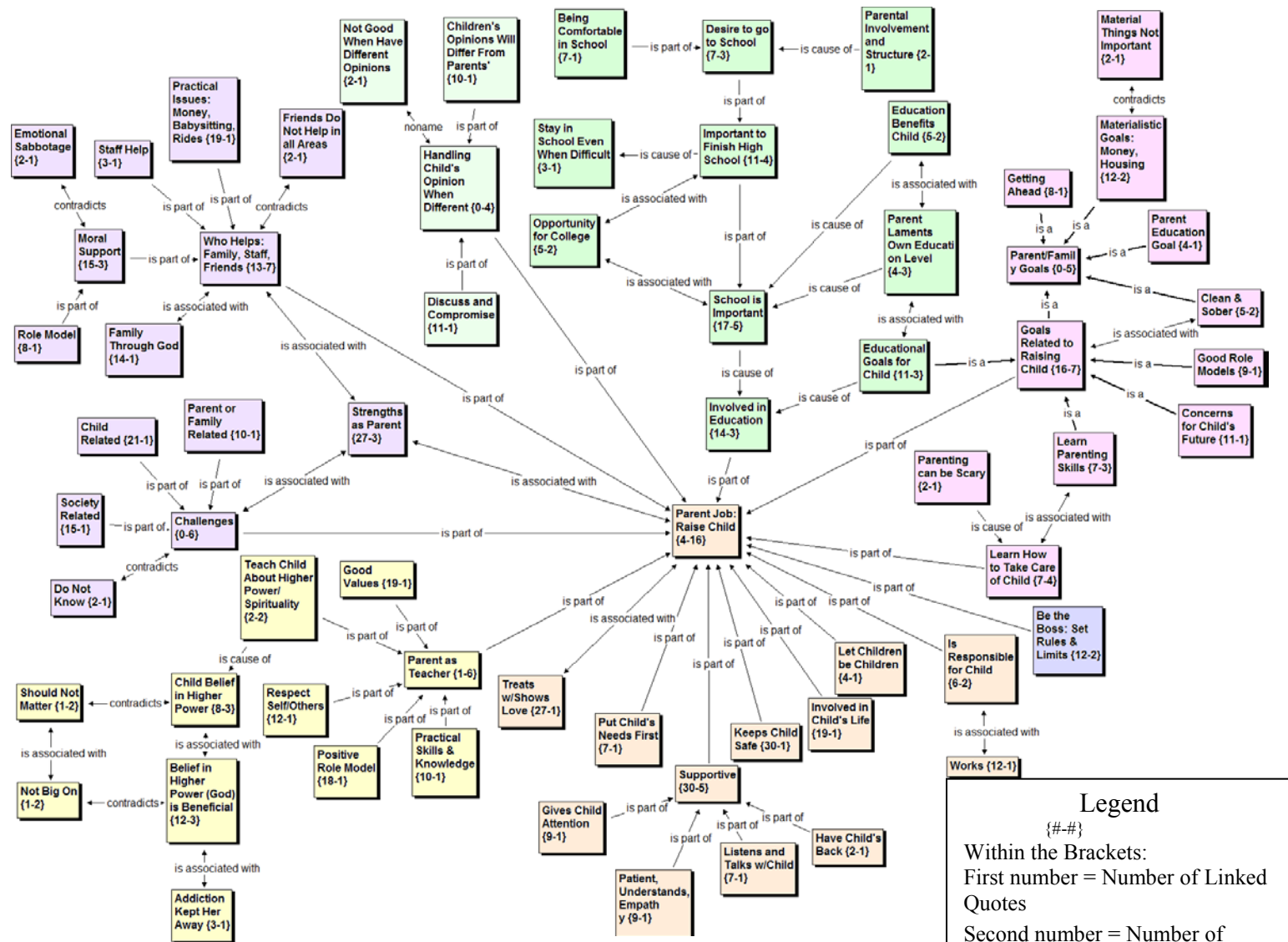


Figure 3. Parent Job, Challenges, Strengths, and Goals

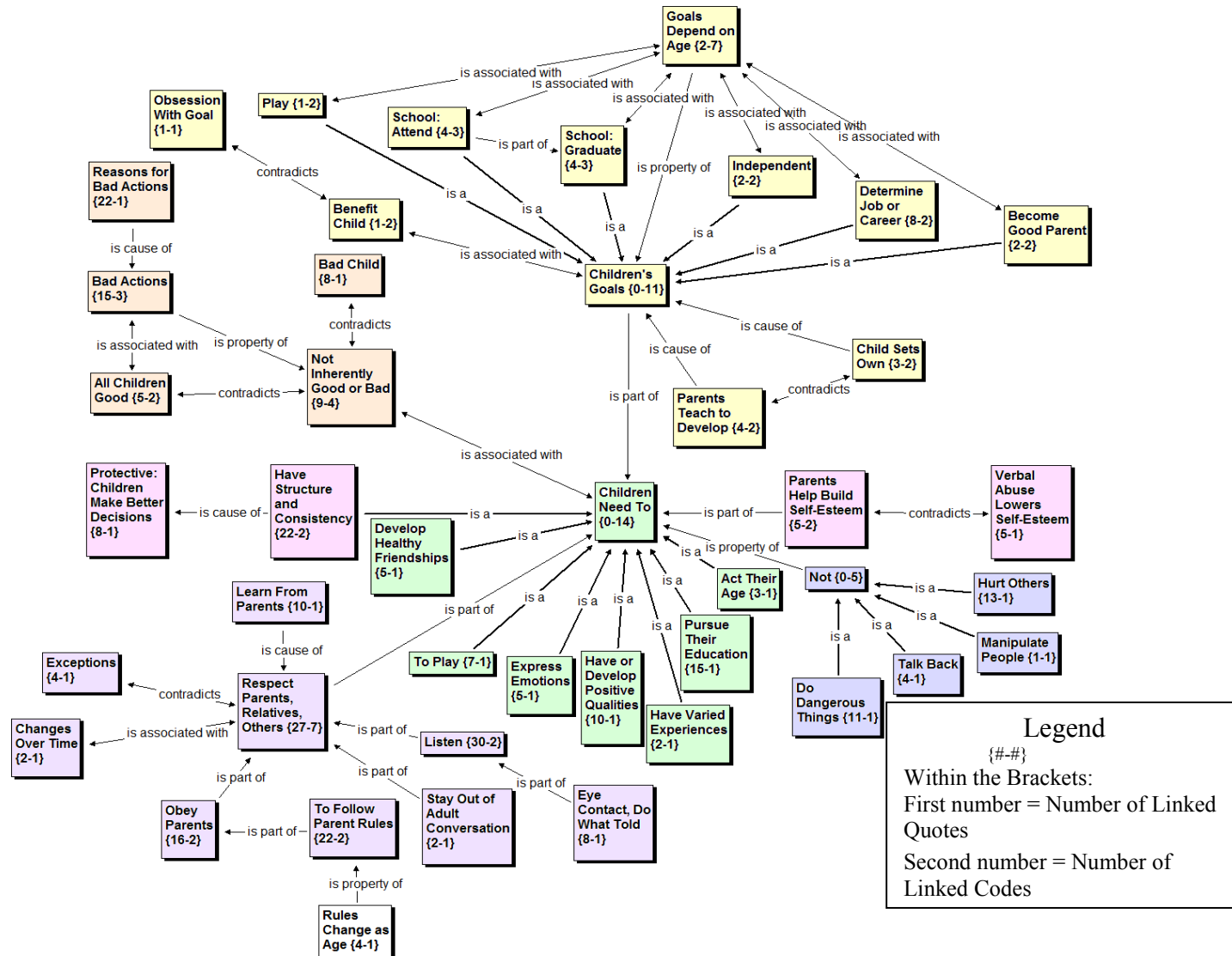


Figure 4. Children's Nature, Abilities, and Characteristics

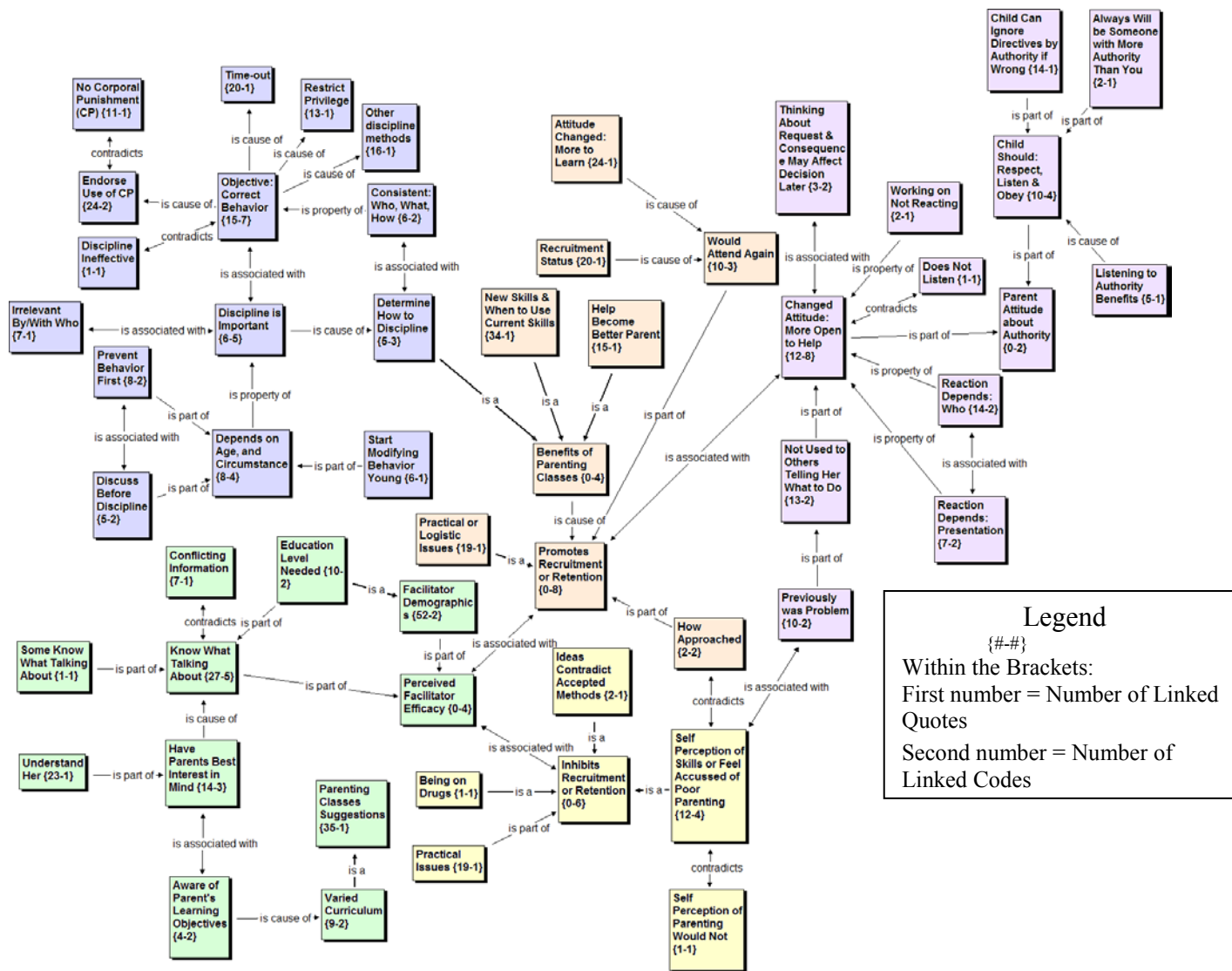


Figure 5. Factors in Recruitment and Retention for Parenting Classes

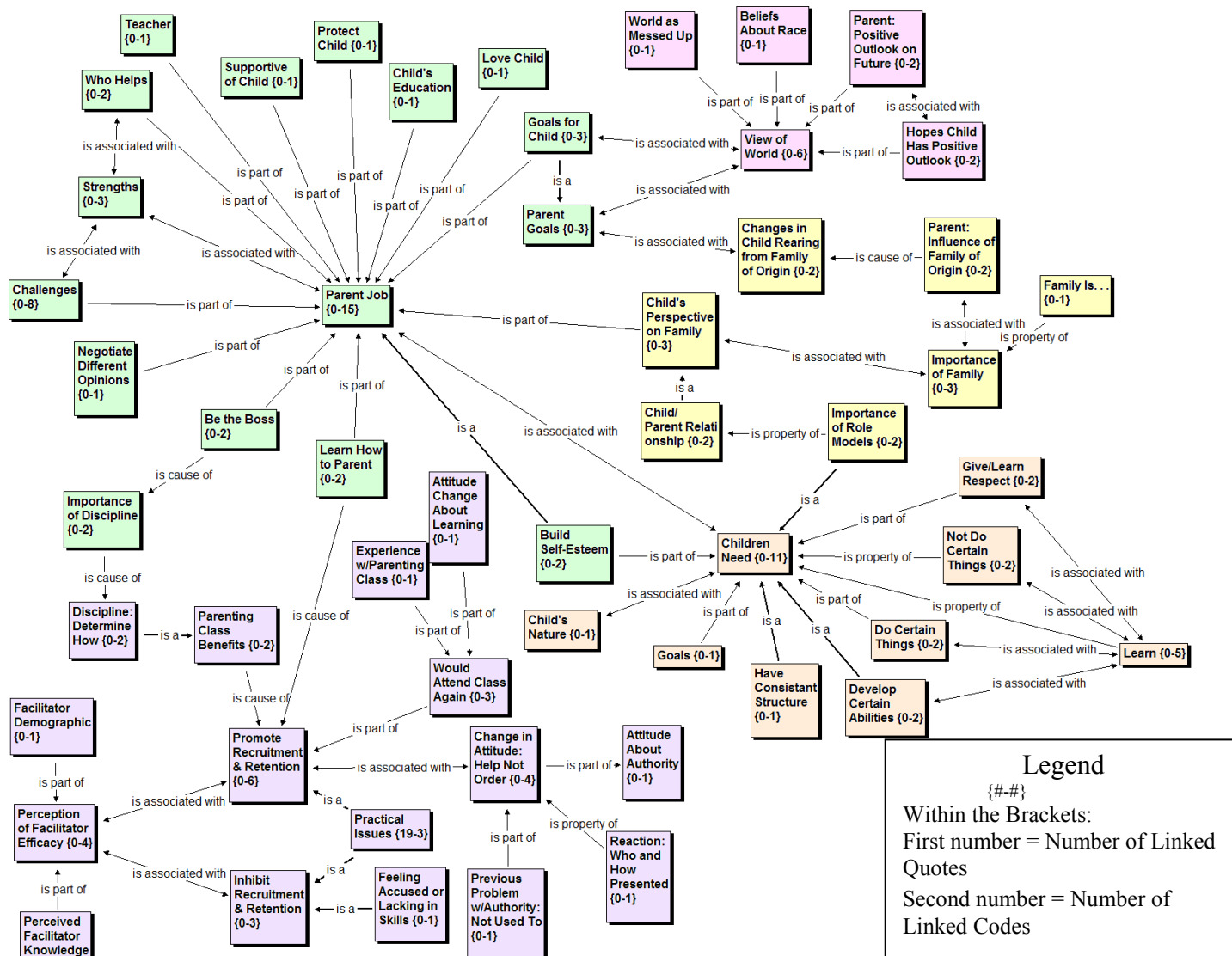


Figure 6. Parenting Beliefs of an Inpatient Sample of African American Mothers

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The objective of the current study was to gather information about parenting beliefs, problems, competencies, and perceived impediments to treatment or participation in parenting classes in a sample of low-income African American mothers. Mothers in this study were all inpatients in a drug rehabilitation facility and evidence several of the risk factors common to child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency. In particular, mothers in this program all have a history of substance abuse, poor emotional and/or psychological functioning, and are impoverished (Black et al., 2001; DCD-NCIPC, 2006b). In the current sample, numerous factors shaped mothers parenting beliefs. A summary of the major themes of the emergent theory that address these issues are discussed below as well as limitations of the current study and future directions.

World View

The concept of worldview derives from the German word *Weltanschauung*, which translated is an overall perception of the world formed by the collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by the group (Worldview, 2003). Worldviews form a map of reality that individuals in the group use for living. Although there are some common themes among them, worldviews are relative rather than absolute as they are based on previous experiences of a group of people (Hiebert, 2008). Personal experiences also play a role in how each individual incorporates the worldview of his or her group into the individual's perspective (Hiebert, 2008). In the current sample, participants' family of origin, general worldview, perspectives on the future, and perception of their challenges

and strengths strongly influenced their worldview and consequent beliefs about parenting. The worldview of these participants incorporates strong beliefs in a sense of social interdependence and communal responsibility in child rearing.

Mothers' perspectives on the future tended to become more positive as they developed a better sense of self-efficacy. Mothers who had been in the program for a longer period of time tended to think of themselves as the agent of change in building a better, more positive future for them and their families. One of the prevalent concerns among participants was related to the cyclic nature of addiction such that mothers feared their children would follow in their addiction cycle as the mother herself had followed that of her parents. Hence, future parenting programs may want to focus on identifying and addressing familial cycles that concern parents in their programs. In particular, recognizing and dealing with issues of drug addiction, gang involvement, and criminal activity are salient familial patterns to address.

Another interesting finding was that most of the mothers in the current study stated they are "color-blind" and, indeed, endorsed the desire and tendency to associate with individuals from many different racial and ethnic groups, sometimes to the exclusion of other African Americans. It is important to note that these women are likely influenced in some ways by the history of oppression in the African American community in the United States and their current social status (Mays, 1986). One explanation for the endorsement of being color-blind may be a direct result of their current stage of racial identity formation. Cross (1991) describes a five-stage model of identity formation, what he terms psychological nigrescence, through which African Americans change from a European American frame of reference to developing a positive African American

identity. Individuals in the first stage, the pre-encounter stage, have a strong desire to assimilate into the majority culture to the extent that they devalue being African American in favor of European American values and actions. Similarly, many participants in this study seem to have embraced this stage by disregarding the effect that being African American may have in their lives and embracing a color-blind perspective instead of valuing the richness and complexity the African American culture has to offer them. This stage was not evident among all of the participants.

An alternate explanation for the apparent disregard of African American culture as described by these women is the possibility that the terms race and ethnicity as they relate to African American culture are not as salient issues for them as other factors like stressors related to SES or recovering from addiction. Hence, these women may not easily generate responses to questions about identifying with a specific ethnic or cultural perspective. Some evidence for this explanation is in research on alcohol related disorders conducted with Mexican-American male immigrants (Strada, 2007). In this qualitative study on the effects of culture and immigration stress on alcohol related disorders, participants had difficulty answering questions about their experiences with culture as they interpreted the word culture in its “sophistication, worldly” sense as opposed to the “ethnic, country of origin” meaning intended by the researchers (Strada, 2007). One hypothesis for this interpretation is that other stressors (e.g., language barriers, immigration status, problems finding jobs, etc.) are more salient than culture for that population and thus are reported as less significant to the participants (Meana, personal communication, May 14, 2009).

However, it is notable that the Mexican American male immigrants in Strada's (2007) study may not have had similar issues with the salience of culture and its effects on identity formation as the African American mothers in this study given that the majority of the males' identity formation occurred in an atmosphere in which they were the dominant majority. Hence, the Mexican-Americans may not experience the same conflicts in identity formation as African Americans because they lack the aforementioned historic and pervasive background of oppression and discrimination that African Americans experience. Therefore, questions about race and ethnicity may be more salient for these mothers than for the participants in Strada's study.

The implications of considering the salience of race and stage of racial identity formation in designing a parenting program are two-fold. First, the racial identity stage of an individual may influence that individual's willingness to listen and accept information presented by either European American or African American facilitators. Second, it may also influence the perception of information presented as certain beliefs (e.g., utility of corporal punishment) may vary depending on cultural orientation (pro-European or African American). Thus, programs may benefit from screening potential participants for the salience of racial identity and offer programs with slightly different foci based on those stages.

It is notable that these mothers acted in opposition to their beliefs while they were using drugs and in trouble with the law. Mothers in this sample reported perceiving many of the world problems as arising from the blatant disregard of the core values of interdependence and social responsibility. However, paradoxically, perhaps some of their own current problems (i.e., addiction and struggling to regain or retain custody of their

children) arose from their own disregard of those values. Consequently, these mothers described striving to inculcate these values and beliefs in their children because they believe that their children have an obligation to work toward the general good. Perhaps these mothers also hope that their children will avoid repeating their own errors through adherence to these values. They believe that this work can take many forms and that even individuals with few monetary resources can and should at least engage in donating time, knowledge, or energy toward making the world a better place.

These beliefs are important to consider for parenting classes because parents may respond better to those programs or facilitators whose objectives are more altruistic and in line with this perspective. Facilitators may consider the importance of their appearance (e.g., presentable but not expensive clothing, less emphasis on displays of material wealth) and statements about their motivation for conducting this type of work as a means to align with the parental beliefs of this population. Further, programmatic considerations could include stressing the utility of certain skills or interventions in helping parents to foster these beliefs in their children.

Family Relationships

For the mothers in the current study, the definition of family was fairly flexible and is not limited to blood relatives, allowing fictive kin status to close friends. Thus, the family is an expandable entity. Further, the mother may exclude those relatives with whom she has a damaging relationship from her familial network, albeit sometimes with great sadness or pain. This flexibility allows her to build a support network with whose

members she can enjoy the benefits of an extended family that are one of the important coping mechanisms and hallmarks of African American family life (McAdoo, 2001).

Unfortunately, for these mothers the family networks tend to be truncated from what could typically be expected. This abbreviated network may be due to the mother's exclusion of unsuitable family members. Another option is that the situation may be caused by the mother's family of origin excluding her because of her drug use or history of criminal activity. This deficit in what is normally a very beneficial aspect of African American families (i.e., large extended family network) is something that future research and program designers may consider addressing. One method of doing so may be to take advantage of the flexibility of the definition of family and actively encourage parents to construct larger fictive kin networks. Another approach may be to promote parenting classes as a social support group for parents.

Relationships between parents and children are important and should be close and loving. Mothers of the current study stressed the importance of open, honest communication and mutual respect in the relationship. The mothers felt they should be good role models for their children and most felt that differences in opinion with their children could be worked out through communication and compromise. Future program designers may want to target these factors when designing or recruiting parents particularly as the mothers' histories would indicate significant difficulties in these areas.

Parents' Job and Role

One of the themes discussed by these mothers is their responsibility to teach their children to communicate and about practical issues like learning to write, tie their shoes,

and personal grooming. This theme seems to conflict with some previous descriptions of parenting practices. For example, Ward (1971) noted that in a sample of Black children in Louisiana, older children and siblings teach the younger children most of these skills and are highly involved in their care giving. Reevaluating theories based on long-standing data about parenting beliefs, particularly of those individuals who may have undergone significant changes in their cultural topology over time is important. This need to reevaluate theories might be particularly true for theories relevant to younger African American families whose life experience may be significantly different from that of previous generations. How these families relate to each other and the rest of society may have been significantly influenced over time by the desegregation of schools and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Further contextual variables to consider are the geographic location of families as beliefs and practices noted above also may be influenced by the differences in general culture between Louisiana and Nevada.

Previous research has demonstrated that spirituality and religion are an extremely important facet in the lives of many African American families (e.g., Kane, 1998). Consistent with that research, many of the mothers in this study spoke about the important role of their higher power in their lives; however, few of them explicitly stated that regular church attendance or teaching their children about that higher power was goal for them. Research has demonstrated that regular church attendance among a sample of low-income African American parents is correlated with their children having fewer problems (Christian & Barbarin, 2001) and hence may be viewed as a protective factor for these families. Facilitators of parenting programs may want to incorporate methods to

bolster existing spiritual or religious beliefs and encourage participation in organized religious activities.

Theoretically, mothers' view of the world as dangerous may translate into their belief in the differential power distribution between them and their children as a necessary means to protect their children. In their position as "the boss", parents should set limits and rules for their children to help keep their children safe. Further, as infractions of rules may place children in danger, mothers' may endorse harsh or stringent childrearing practices as protective measures for their children. The extent literature supports this theme: harsh measures are often used by low-income African American parents to protect their children from their environment (Deater-Deckard, et al., 1996, Willis, 1992). Additionally, the emphasis placed on obedience and respect serve a similar function and provides children with protection, guidance, and discipline (Willis, 1992). Subsequently, mothers' concern over the safety of their children may make them more open to learning new techniques to keep their children safe. Given that in many instances the mother's own actions placed their children in harm's way (e.g., neglect due to drug use), future program design may also stress information on this aspect of the mothers' role in protecting children.

Despite an initial denial of the belief in or use of corporal punishment, many of the mothers in this study stated that there were conditions under which they would revert to using corporal punishment instead of the more Eurocentric, socially accepted methods taught to them in their parenting classes. The endorsement of the belief in and potential use of corporal punishment by these mothers is consistent with research that indicates African American parents are

more likely than European American parents to use corporal punishment (Pinderhughes, et al., 2000). Given that there is a reduction in acting out behaviors for African American children from working class backgrounds whose parents use corporal punishment (Deater-Deckard, et al., 1996), one wonders about the long-term effects or ethics of changing the parenting practices of this population, as is done in many current parenting classes. Deater-Deckard and colleagues (2000) hypothesized that the difference in outcomes between African American children and European American children may be because corporal punishment serves as a protective influence for low SES African American children who face the combined effects of discrimination and living in dangerous neighborhoods. Hence, it may be better to teach African American mothers who already believe in corporal punishment more effective methods to use it.

The emphasis placed on education by the mothers in this sample is consistent with research done by Stevensen, Chen and Uttal (1990). Their findings indicate that African American mothers hold positive views of education; however, they are less likely to expect their children to go beyond high school than European American mothers (63% and 71%, respectively). Unfortunately, there is contradictory information given to children about the value of education in gaining better jobs or careers, material gain, and actual opportunities for African Americans compared to Whites (Ogbu, 1991). This inconsistency between emphasis on educational goals and expected results was not evident in this sample. Mothers in the current sample fully believed that their children would benefit from acquiring the education that they themselves had not gotten. Parenting programs should target methods to help parents foster a love of education in

their children and learn how to effectively deal with environmental factors (e.g., school curriculum, problems with teachers or peers, maximizing learning environment).

Understanding Children's Nature, Abilities, and Characteristics

Many of the skills and attributes these mothers want for their children appear to be focused on helping them survive and thrive in their dangerous world. Indeed, one of the most frequently endorsed themes incorporated by these mothers in the parent's job description is the imperative to protect their children. The predominant focus as a teacher is on teaching values like honesty, good morals, with high importance placed on teaching right from wrong, obedience, and respect. These values appear to be necessary in assisting their children to develop the strong will power necessary to resist the negativity they see in their world. Furthermore, it is essential for African American children to learn how to differentiate between appropriate situations to give respect. For most African American youth, racial prejudice and discrimination are inherent in daily life and they are far more likely to have encounters with law enforcement during which they must act respectful and obedient (McAdoo, 2001). Yet, as these mothers point out, children are vulnerable if they indiscriminately respect and obey.

The focus that these mother placed on helping their children develop self-esteem may also be an attempt to protect their children. Mothers in the current sample historically had issues with their own low self-esteem, which likely resulted in poor outcomes for them. They have also observed others with low self-esteem in their families and neighborhoods fall prey to the dangerous influences in those neighborhoods. Hence, they believe that bolstering self-esteem in their children will help prevent those issues from affecting the

children. Future program design may target helping parents increase children's ability to accurately assess dangerous situations, build desirable characteristics, and increase self-esteem.

Parenting Challenges

The perspective on single parenting participants described may depend on their experiences as a child of a single mother. Single mother headed households are not uncommon among African American families, with as much as 40% of African American children living in single female headed households compared to 20% of White children in the United States (Farley & Haaga, 2005). Thus, having had a negative experience as a child of a single parent may induce the mother to endorse single parenthood as a detrimental challenge she faces whereas the opposite may be true for those whose single mothers provided an acceptable or laudable upbringing. The potential disparate view on single parenthood should be considered when introducing interventions or skills specific to single parents in parenting class curriculum.

These mothers face many external challenges, however, the salience of those challenges may stem from the mothers' own history. For instance, concerns over the potential for their children to experience physical or sexual abuse frequently stems from the mothers' own history of abuse. Similarly, their concerns over their children's future and the desire to protect them from dangers like gang involvement, drug use, and teen pregnancy spring from the mothers' experience or perception of the harmful effects of these situations. Thus, these are particularly germane issues to address in parenting classes for this population.

Furthermore, concerns over financial issues have a considerable impact on parenting. For instance, poverty is associated with diminished parental warmth and support (McLoyd, 1990). Additionally, levels of being psychologically controlling with children increase with rises in economic distress (e.g., lower financial resources) and perceiving the neighborhood as unsafe (Taylor, Jacobson, Rodriguez, Dominguez, Cantic, et al., 2000). Brody, Flor, and Gibson (1999) found that the perception of having family resources led to a higher sense of parenting self-efficacy and subsequent higher endorsement and positive attitudes toward educational goals, respect for others in the community, and concern for others among a sample of rural African American families. Brody et al.'s (1999) results contradict findings from the current study in which the women endorsed positive attitudes toward these goals despite a lower sense of self-efficacy and limited financial resources. It may be prudent, however, to consider the possibility that the salience of lower financial resources may have been temporarily less for this sample due to their relative stability as housing, food, clothing are temporarily supplied by the facility.

These women demonstrated very limited perspectives about their own strengths as parents. The inability of these women to recognize their strengths may be a direct result of the low self-esteem many of the parents endorsed. Parenting classes may benefit from including the identification of existing strengths as means to empower parents.

Although mothers considered family, friends, and staff their support networks, which provide assistance in a number of material and emotional areas, there was no overt mention of learning parenting skills or techniques from them. The lack of seeking or receiving didactic parenting training from support networks seems to reflect the belief

that parenting skills should be inherent. Being taught how to parent does not seem to be an inherent part of the conscious socialization of these women many of whom became mothers as teenagers.

This lack of parent skills teaching conflicts with research that shows high rates of co-residence among African American families with teenage parents. In these families, grandmothers tend to take an active role in both caring for children and educating the mothers with information on developmental norms and modeling responsive less punitive interactions with the infants (Stevens, 1984). It is possible that this sample of women differ in this respect due to their separation from the family of origin and concurrent drug use. Unfortunately, such separations combined with dysfunctional histories with family of origin may inhibit observational learning of parenting skills. Hence, women who fit this profile (i.e., young, single, not co-residing with family, substance users) are at a particular disadvantage for learning adaptive parenting skills. The lack of conscious socialization in parenting skills has the potential to inhibit recruitment for parenting classes as mothers in similar situations may also believe parenting skills are inherent.

The assistance mothers receive from their support networks with practical matters (e.g., money, babysitting, and transportation) and emotional support are extremely important to their overall functioning as parents. Research shows that the amount of social support a mother receives is positively correlated with maternal emotional support and maternal affection and negatively correlated with her being less aggressive and rejecting of her children (Colletta, 1981). Furthermore, according to McAdoo (2001) the size of the mothers' support network is also important as in large networks there are more people available to offer assistance when needed. This is particularly problematic for

women in this study as many of them have become alienated from their traditional support network, the family of origin, through either drug addiction or the necessity to distance themselves from negative influences during their recovery. Given that these mothers reported few sources of assistance and a limited range of assistance available to them, future parenting program designs for this population may want to focus on increasing the number of sources and types of assistance available to their clients.

Parenting Skills Classes

Issues that Inhibit Recruitment or Retention

One of the issues that prevent recruitment and retention for parenting skills classes arises out of the perception of children's nature as being basically good and that the bad behaviors they exhibit are a result of their environmental influences such as negative parental influence. Further, many mothers believe that parenting is an inherent process for which they do not need any sort of didactic instruction. Hence, when problems arise in child rearing, these mothers tend to perceive themselves as the cause. This situation is uncomfortable for mothers and they avoid admitting, even to themselves, that they may need help learning how to raise their children. Furthermore, this "mother needs help" script is activated and compounded by the mothers' issues with authority figures whenever mothers are approached for recruitment into parenting skills classes.

Many mothers disclosed having difficulty with authority figures, particularly with individuals with entitled or patronizing attitudes. This resistance to authority may be a reaction to the history of African American oppression that contributes to their experience of the world (Mays, 1986). It is understandable that they would accept

requests from friends more readily than requests from individuals who they may unconsciously associate as representing their oppressors (i.e., European American, middle to upper class). Additionally, requests from employers are necessary for job security but are not always enthusiastically received.

Mothers frequently stated that they do not have problems with requests from societal authorities, such as law enforcement or other legal entities, perhaps because they must comply with them. However, these women historically have rebelled against even indirect edicts by these sources through their deviant history with felony convictions and drug use. The differential acceptance of requests they want to accept and those they may feel compelled to accept has implications for their potential compliance with or utilization of parenting skills. The acceptance of parent skills that conflict with their cultural beliefs may be reminiscent of dictates by other societal authorities, particularly if their completion of parenting classes is a condition of retaining or regaining custody of their children.

Mothers' history with low educational attainment may also affect their acceptance of recruitment for and participation in parenting classes. Even the term "parenting class", which infers a structured learning environment, may negatively influence the mothers' perception of and participation in programs. Use of alternate terminology (e.g., "parent support group" instead of "parenting class") and presentation of learning objectives (e.g., "discuss new ways to deal with common problems with raising children" or "discuss how we can help our children" instead of "learn new parent skills") may prove beneficial in recruitment efforts.

Issues that Promote Recruitment or Retention

Before committing to the ideas or agendas proposed by an individual, African Americans tend to focus on interpersonal factors like the individual's motivation, personality, or personal history (Gibbs, 1980). This would be particularly relevant in the deactivation of the "parent needs help" script as described in the emergent theory as this process focus' more on the collaborative approach and motivation of the person involved in recruitment. Additionally, the perception of the parenting class facilitator's personality may be particularly salient to the willingness of parents to accept the information learned in the class. Hence, it is imperative that the facilitator be able to relay competence (knowledge) without being aloof or condescending (authority) and express genuine warmth and empathy toward parents (motivation).

Although many of these mothers stated that practical concerns like transportation would not be an issue in recruitment, it is notable that this particular sample has few concerns about such issues due to their current inpatient residence. Hence, it is logical to consider these factors when designing parenting classes. Factors suggested to consider include class scheduling, class costs, childcare, transportation, and face-to-face recruitment. The structure of the parenting class can address some of these. For instance, inclusion of children in the class structure both eliminates the need for childcare and provides the participants with *in vivo* skill practice. Further, many programs are currently held in the neighborhood or homes of their target populations (August, et al., 2003; Dumka, et al., 1997; Lieberman, 1990; Sexton & Alexander, 2000, 2002, 2004).

Mothers in this study demonstrated a desire to learn from the past and expressed feeling empowered to change that which they did not like; however, it is notable that

many, up to this point, had repeated their family histories regarding substance use and child custodial issues. Their recognition of and motivation to change dysfunctional aspects of their history may be due to their current situation and the influence of the counseling and parenting classes they have received through their drug rehabilitation program. Further research investigating methods of helping women with similar histories recognize the ineffective aspects of their history and improving their motivation to change without the necessity of an intensive rehabilitation program is warranted.

Limitations and Future Directions

As a whole, these data provide critical information about the parenting beliefs of African American mothers to be used to guide future parenting programs. However, this study is not without limitations. One key limitation is that the primary investigator is of European American descent. This factor may have subtly, or even blatantly, influenced the responses of at least some of the participants in the study. For at least three of the participants, the investigator considered the possibility that the information provided may not have been a complete exposition of the participants' beliefs. However, given the sometimes extremely personal nature of the discourse with many of the participants, it is fair to assume that much of the information provided by them is accurate. Future research of a similar disposition with an interviewer matched with participants for race and ethnicity may be warranted.

Another limitation is that there is frequently more intra- than inter-group variation (e.g., Matsumoto, Grissom, & Dinnel, 2001). One must also consider the feasibility of generalizing research results across a broad spectrum of individuals who all belong to one

larger category, such as the racial and cultural designation of being an African American. Without a doubt, there is significant variability within the category of “African American”, however, it may be that that within sub-groups of a culture people may be more similar to each other than dissimilar. Future research on the parenting beliefs of a diverse sample of African American parents from multiple socio-economic, stage of racial identity formation, geographic, and family types are necessary to test this hypothesis; however, if the data support this hypothesis it would then be feasible to design parenting classes to meet the needs of each individual group. On the other hand, the number of such specialized programs required to address adequately the needs of all parents could potentially be impractical. Rather, it may be more realistic to offer a few variations of parenting classes based on culturally sensitive theories run by highly trained facilitators who can further tailor the experience of their curriculum to meet the needs of their parenting class members.

Despite these limitations, the current study is important because the emergent theory contributes to the current knowledge about parenting beliefs, problems, competencies, and perceived impediments to treatment or participation in parenting classes in a sample of low-income African American mothers with a history of substance abuse. As aforementioned, mothers in this sample evidence several of the risk factors common to child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency (i.e., history of substance abuse, poor emotional and/or psychological functioning, and are impoverished: Black et al., 2001; DCD-NCIPC, 2006b). Hence, a better understanding of their worldview, the influences of their family of origin on current parenting practices, and the effect of their racial status on

recruitment and retention efforts is crucial to design efforts for future programs. Although some of the beliefs expressed by this sample are consistent with the extent literature, there were some important variations disclosed which might affect future parenting program design and warrant verification through further research. Furthermore, the participants in this sample offer valuable suggestions to consider in increasing the appeal of parenting classes.

APPENDIX I
DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Demographic Questionnaire

Participant Number: _____

Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can.

1. What is your current age in years? _____
2. Do you have a disability? Yes No If yes, what? _____
3. What is your relationship status?
 Single, never married In a committed relationship Divorced
 Married Widowed Other _____
4. How many children do you have? _____
5. What age(s) is/are your child(ren)? _____
6. Do they live with you? Yes Some do No
7. If not, what ages were they when they left your care? _____
8. What is your race? Please check all that apply:
 Asian Black
 Native American White Other _____
9. What is your ethnicity? Please check all that apply:
 African American (e.g., ethnic background is African)
 Asian American (e.g., ethnic background is Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese)
 Euro-American (e.g., ethnic background is Irish, English, Scottish, French, Italian)
 Middle Eastern American (e.g., ethnic background is Iranian, Iraqi, Egyptian)
 Native American. Please specify which tribe if you belong to one: _____
 Pacific Islander (e.g., ethnic background is Hawaiian, Tongan, Pilipino)
 Spanish/Hispanic/Latino (e.g., ethnic background is Mexican, South American, Cuban, Puerto Rican)
 Other: _____
10. Is English your first language? Yes No

If no, what was your first language? _____

11. Generational Status. Check the generation that best applies to you:

- First generation: You were born in another country but live in the USA
- Second generation: You were born in the USA but either parent was born in another Country
- Third generation: You and both your parents were born in the USA and all grandparents were born in another country.
- Fourth generation: You and your parents were born in the USA and at least one grandparent was born in another country with the remainder born in the USA
- Fifth or greater generation: You and your parents were born in the USA and all grandparents were born in the USA.

12. Education:

- A = Grade School: finished grade _____ E = 4-year College: some college
B = High School: finished grade _____ F = 4-year College Degree
C = Technical School: Degree? yes no G = Graduate Degree (Masters)
D = Associate Degree (Jr/community college) H = Graduate Degree (Doctorate)

Please answer the following questions using the letters from the chart above.

What is the highest level of education you completed? _____

What is the highest level of education your mother completed? _____

What is the highest level of education your father completed? _____

13. Are you employed? Yes No

If yes, what is your occupation? _____

14. What is your approximate yearly income? _____

15. What are/were the occupations of your parents?

Mother: _____

Father: _____

APPENDIX II
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

I am going to ask you some questions about your parenting beliefs and experiences. I will also ask you questions about how your parents raised you so that I can better understand your experience. I am also interested in your beliefs about parenting classes. Parenting classes are usually offered by community agencies to teach parents different ways to communicate and interact with their children. Sometimes these classes teach ways to discipline children when they don't do what their parents want them to do. Please take your time and give me as much detail as you want. I may ask you additional questions so that I can really understand what you are saying. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. Everyone's beliefs and experiences are different and I would really like to understand yours.

Do you have any questions?

OK. I will now turn the tape on.

- Who do you consider family?
 - Are there people who are **not** related to you by blood that are family?
 - Who are they?
 - Do all family members live together?
 - What makes a good family?
 - How does your family measure up to that ideal?
- What is a good parent?
 - What kinds of things should a parent do?
 - What kinds of things should a parent **not** do?
 - How should parents treat their children?
 - What kinds of goals should parents have?
 - What is your job as a parent?
 - What is your opinion about:
 - Your parents?
 - Family?
 - School?
 - Relatives?
 - World?
 - The future?
 - People who tell you what to do?
 - People who are not of the same race/ethnicity as you?
- What is a 'good' child?
 - What kinds of things should a child do?
 - What kinds of things should a child **not** do?
 - How should children treat their parents?
 - What kinds of goals should children have?
 - How should children think and feel about their:
 - Parents
 - Family

- School
- Relatives
- World
- The future
- People outside your family?
- People that tell them what to do?
- People who are not of the same race/ethnicity as them?
- What is a 'bad' child?
 - What happens when your child doesn't think the same way you do or has different opinions than you?
 - What do you do when your children misbehave?
 - Are there different kinds of things that you do when your children act up or don't listen to you?
 - What are those things?
 - How should children act after they have been disciplined?
 - Do you raise your children differently than your parents did you?
 - In what way?
- What are your strengths as a parent?
 - What do you wish you could do better as a parent?
 - What kinds of problems or difficulties do you face as a parent?
 - What kinds of problems or challenges does your family face?
 - Are these always there or occasional problems?
- Who do you count on or expect to help you and/or your family when you need it?
 - How do they help you?
 - Money?
 - Babysitting?
 - Instilling values in the child(ren)?
 - Being a role model for your child(ren)?
 - Providing moral support? How does someone do that?
- What do you think about the idea of going to a class to teach you parenting skills?
- Have you ever thought about going to a class like that?
- Has anyone ever asked you to go to a parenting class?
 - Would you go to a parenting class?
 - Why? If not: What are your objections to going to one?
 - What would keep you from going to a parenting class?
 - Transportation?
 - Childcare?
 - Time of day class is held?
 - Other?
 - What do you think you could learn or gain from going to a parenting class?
 - Do you think they are useful?
 - How?
 - Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes know what they are talking about? Why?

- Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes understand you?
- Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes have your interests in mind?
- Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes understand the problems you face?
- Does it matter if the people who teach parenting classes are:
 - The same race as you?
 - Same ethnicity as you?
 - Older or younger than you?
 - Have children?
- Is there anything else about your parenting beliefs or experiences you would like me to know?

APPENDIX III
IRB APPROVAL NOTICE



Social/Behavioral IRB – Expedited Review Approval Notice

NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:

Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation suspension of any research protocol at issue, suspension of additional existing research protocols, invalidation of all research conducted under the research protocol at issue, and further appropriate consequences as determined by the IRB and the Institutional Officer.

DATE: January 22, 2008
TO: Dr. Courtney Warren, Psychology
FROM: Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
RE: Notification of IRB Action by Dr. J. Michael Stitt, Chair
Protocol Title: **Diversity Issues in Recruitment and Retention of Clients for Parenting Classes**
Protocol #: 0712-2559

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46. The protocol has been reviewed and approved.

The protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of IRB approval. The expiration date of this protocol is January 9, 2009. Work on the project may begin as soon as you receive written notification from the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS).

PLEASE NOTE:

Attached to this approval notice is the **official Informed Consent/Assent (IC/IA) Form** for this study. The IC/IA contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/IA form may be used when obtaining consent. Please keep the original for your records.

Should there be *any* change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a **Modification Form** through OPRS. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until modifications have been approved by the IRB.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond January 9, 2009, it would be necessary to submit a **Continuing Review Request Form** 60 days before the expiration date.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at OPRSHumanSubjects@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
4505 Maryland Parkway • Box 451047 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047
(702) 895-2794 • FAX: (702) 895-0805

APPENDIX IV
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW-REVISED

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW-REVISED

I am going to ask you some questions about your parenting beliefs and experiences. I will also ask you questions about how your parents raised you so that I can better understand your experience. I am also interested in your beliefs about parenting classes. Parenting classes are usually offered by community agencies to teach parents different ways to communicate and interact with their children. Sometimes these classes teach ways to discipline children when they don't do what their parents want them to do. Please take your time and give me as much detail as you want. I may ask you additional questions so that I can really understand what you are saying. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. Everyone's beliefs and experiences are different and I would really like to understand yours.

Do you have any questions?

OK. I will now turn the tape on.

- Who do you consider family?
 - Are there people who are **not** related to you by blood that are family?
 - Who are they?
 - How did they become family?
 - How long does that take?
 - Do you consider all people that are related to you by blood family?
 - Why?
 - Do all family members live together?
 - Are there some family members that should live together?
 - Who are they?
 - Is it important for family to stay in touch with each other?
 - How often should that happen?
 - Does it make a difference how far away the family lives?
 - What makes a good family?
 - How does your family measure up to that ideal (1-10)?
- What is a good parent?
 - What kinds of things should a parent do?
 - How do parents show their love for their children?
 - How should parents communicate with their children?
 - What kinds of things should a parent **not** do?
 - How should parents treat their children?
 - What kinds of goals should parents have?
 - What kinds of rules should parents have for their children?
 - Is it important for children to have consistency in their lives?
 - (If yes) How would you provide that?
 - What is your job as a parent?
 - What kinds of things should a parent teach her child(ren)?
 - Is it important for both parents to be in a child's life?
 - (If yes) Do children need to have two parents in the home?

- Can other people substitute for a parent?
 - Is it important for children to have a male role-model?
 - (If yes) Who can or should do that?
 - What is your opinion about:
 - Your parents?
 - Family?
 - School?
 - How far should children go in school?
 - Relatives?
 - World?
 - Spirituality or religion?
 - The future?
 - Where you live, like the type of neighborhood
 - Getting ahead in the world
 - (If endorses) What sort of things would show that you are getting ahead?
 - People who tell you what to do?
 - Have you always felt that way?
 - (If not) How has this changed for you?
 - Do you feel the same about all people who tell you what to do?
 - When is it different?
 - People who are not of the same race/ethnicity as you?
- What is a 'good' child?
 - What kinds of things should a child do?
 - Should a child show respect for their parents?
 - What kinds of things should a child **not** do?
 - How should children treat their parents?
 - How do children show respect for their parents?
 - How should children treat other people?
 - What kinds of goals should children have?
 - How should children think and feel about their:
 - Parents
 - Family
 - School
 - Relatives
 - World
 - Spirituality or religion
 - The future
 - People outside your family?
 - People that tell them what to do?
 - Is it ever ok for a child to not do what they are told by these people?
 - When is it ok?
 - When is it not ok?
 - People who are not of the same race/ethnicity as them?

- What is a 'bad' child?
 - What happens when your child doesn't think the same way you do or has different opinions than you?
 - What do you do when your child(ren) misbehave?
 - How do you discipline your children?
 - Are there things your children could do that you would spank them for doing?
 - What are those things?
 - Are there different kinds of things that you do when your children act up or don't listen to you?
 - What are those things?
 - How should children act after they have been disciplined?
 - Is it important that children listen to you?
 - How would a child show you that he/she had listened to you?
 - Do you raise your children differently than your parents did you?
 - In what way?
- What are your strengths as a parent?
 - What do you wish you could do better as a parent?
 - What kinds of problems or difficulties do you face as a parent?
 - What kinds of problems or challenges does your family face?
 - Are these always there or occasional problems?
- Who do you count on or expect to help you and/or your family when you need it?
 - How do they help you?
 - Money?
 - Babysitting?
 - Instilling values in the child(ren)?
 - Being a role model for your child(ren)?
 - Providing moral support? How does someone do that?
- What do you think about the idea of going to a class to teach you parenting skills?
- Have you ever thought about going to a class like that?
 - (If participated) What did you think about those types of classes before you went to one?
- Has anyone ever asked you to go to a parenting class?
 - Would you go to a parenting class?
 - Why? If not: What are your objections to going to one?
 - What would keep you from going to a parenting class?
 - Transportation?
 - Childcare?
 - Time of day class is held?
 - Other?
 - What do you think you could learn or gain from going to a parenting class?
 - Do you think they are useful?
 - Do you think there should be different classes designed for parents with children in different age groups?
 - What ages should be in each group?
 - How?

- Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes know what they are talking about? Why?
 - Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes understand you?
 - Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes have your interests in mind?
 - Do you think that the people who teach parenting classes understand the problems you face?
 - Does it matter if the people who teach parenting classes are:
 - The same race as you?
 - Same ethnicity as you?
 - Older or younger than you?
 - Have children?
- Is there anything else about your parenting beliefs or experiences you would like me to know?

APPENDIX V
BRACKETING

The following is a summary of the primary researcher's beliefs and assumptions about parenting, parenting classes, and minority parents.

There is a wide variety in parenting styles, attitudes, and beliefs that are primarily inculcated by the experiences of childhood. That is, parents learn to parent from their parents and social environment. Thus parenting is a very culture-specific activity because it consists of beliefs and practices that are shared by communities and maintained through both observational learning and intentional instruction. Most parenting, however, is learned through observation.

The main goals of parenting vary greatly. Most parents love their children and want what is best for them. Therefore, for many people the goals are to teach their children the values and skills that children will need to become productive members of society. For some parents, the main goal is just to take care of the children until they can take care of themselves. Many parents learn how to attain these goals and do so. Yet for a number of parents even these objectives seem unattainable.

Some parents do not learn adequate parenting skills that will help them in reaching their goals. They may have come from dysfunctional families or the environment that they are raising their children in may vary radically from that in which they grew up such that the skills they currently have are inadequate to the task. These parents could benefit from learning new techniques to assist them in raising their children. Parenting classes should be available to assist these parents.

As parenting is a culture-specific activity, it makes sense that there would be differences between cultures in parenting beliefs, styles, and attitudes. Skills that are adaptive for members of one culture may not be useful, or even acceptable, in another.

This uniqueness is not necessarily negative; indeed, it is highly desirable within a context of honoring and celebrating diversity. It can, however, become problematic if any one culture attempts to supplant the beliefs or practices of another. Such efforts to ‘pasteurize’ cultural beliefs and practices are not always intentional or obvious. Individuals with altruistic intentions often commit such vulgarities through ignorance of their own biases. These biases are not always invisible to the individuals whose diversity is being eradicated. Therefore, parents from low SES, racial, and ethnic minority groups may perceive well-intentioned efforts to offer them parenting classes as yet another infringement on, or attempt to stamp out, their cultural beliefs or to further marginalize them. This perception may prevent these parents from participating in parenting classes. Thus, it would be highly beneficial to individuals wishing to provide parenting classes to circumvent their own biases and take into consideration the attitudes, beliefs, and desires of those they wish to serve.

The following is a summary of the undergraduate research assistant's beliefs (RA1-second coder) and assumptions about parenting, parenting classes, and minority parents.

I believe parents should be there for their kids no matter what. They should love their kids and try and have an open communication with them about things that are going on in the child's life. There are things that happen in a parent's life that I think should be kept age appropriate, like no parents should be talking to their kids about their sex lives (Mom/Dad) unless it is fully warranted. Reasons warranted would be for health concerns and if the child has questions about certain things that pertain to sex.

I also believe parents should not put their kids in the middle of any disputes between the parents, at the same time I think parents should talk with their kids about what is going on and let them know that they are not the ones to blame. A parent should be genuinely interested in their child's life and try and support their dreams and do what they can to make them happen.

I don't think anyone should regularly beat their kid, I do support somewhat spanking, soap in the mouth, and threats of getting a lashing but when it becomes routine or unwarranted than you have crossed the line. Cases which I think it is appropriate would be if a child put others in harm, cussed out a parent, or broke a really big rule/law.

I can be old fashioned in my beliefs about certain ways to raise a child. I think parents should teach their kids to respect authority, and to instill in them a high work ethic. Parents should also do what they can to help build a child's self-esteem and knowledge of life.

I think different cultures do raise their kids different and even different parts of the "same" culture raise their kids different. Everyone is raised different with different

beliefs that are put into them. I do sometimes think that there should be an IQ test done before people try and procreate. That may seem harsh but sometimes some people are not fit to have kids, whether they be addicted to drugs or they treat their kids like they are a pet. But I do fully think once someone has a kid it also falls to those around that person that they help watch out for that child because in the end we are all responsible for what happens to them.

APPENDIX VI

TABLES

Table 1.

Main Bracket Points with Associated Biases and Assumptions

Main idea expressed in bracket	Biases, beliefs, and assumptions to be monitored
Primary Researcher	
There are a wide variety in parenting factors (i.e. styles, beliefs, attitudes)	Assumption that there is variety among parenting factors
Parenting factors are learned in a cultural context	Assumption that culture influences parenting beliefs
Most parents love their children	Assumption that a parent loves her/his children
Parents have a variety of goals for their children; Some parents have problems realizing goals for children	Assumption that all parents have goals and aspirations for their children and that they have the ability to realize them
Some parents learn maladaptive parenting techniques	Assumption that some parenting techniques are maladaptive
Parenting classes can help parents with maladaptive parenting techniques	Assumption that parents need to change a parenting technique and a class can help them do it in a

Main idea expressed in bracket	Biases, beliefs, and assumptions to be monitored
There are differences in parenting factors among cultures	productive way Assumption that cultures differ in their parenting factors
Skills that are good for one culture may not be good for another Cultural differences should not be homogenized	Assumption that skills are not universally beneficial Assumption that participation in current parenting classes will affect the cultural variety among parents
Some program designers/researchers are unaware of their biases	Assumption that some individuals have biases that are not acknowledged
Parents from ethnic, racial, or SES minorities may not participate because they perceive parenting classes as marginalizing them	Assumption that perceived marginalization is a factor in participation in parenting classes
Program designers/researchers have to consider the cultures of the populations they wish to serve in their work	Assumption that culturally sensitive interventions will be more effective than traditional interventions

Main idea expressed in bracket	Biases, beliefs, and assumptions to be monitored
RA1	
Parents should always fully support their children.	Assumption that it is best for a child to support every decision that the child makes.
Parents should communicate with the child openly about child's life.	Assumption that child will feel like being open with the parent.
Parents should keep problems between themselves.	Assumption that parent's problems do not affect child's welfare
Parents should love their children.	Assumption that parents love their children.
Support of corporal punishment within reason.	Bias that harsh punishment is sometimes warranted as a child grows older.
Parents should teach children to respect authority.	Assumption that it is important to parent to respect authority.
Parents should teach children to have a high work ethic.	Assumption that it is important to have a high work

Main idea expressed in bracket	Biases, beliefs, and assumptions to be monitored
Some people are not fit to have children.	ethic. Bias that people who are in tough situations will not adapt to the responsibility needed to take care of the child.
Communal raising is important.	Assumption that society will help when needed with raising a child.

Table 2.

Overarching Themes and Corresponding Axial Codes

Theme	Axial Codes
World View	Perspectives on the World Future
Family Relationships	Racial Beliefs Family of Origin Defining Family Importance of Contact with Family Ideal Parent and Child Relationships
Parents' Job and Role	Parent as Teacher Goals Be the Boss Discipline Involvement in Child's Life Importance of Education Show Love Protect Children
Understanding Children's Nature, Abilities, and Characteristics	Children's Nature Essential Qualities Obedience Self-Esteem Skills and Activities Children's Goals
Parenting Challenges	Parenting Strengths Sources of Help
Issues That Inhibit Recruitment or Retention	Mother at Fault Mother needs help script Problems with Authority Figures
Issues that Promote Recruitment or Retention	Deactivation of Mother Needs Help Practical Issues

Benefits of Parenting Classes

Facilitator Efficacy

Likelihood to Attend Again

Suggested Improvements

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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Rachel Elizabeth Davis

Home Address:

3783 Bossa Nova Dr
Las Vegas, NV 89129

Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, 2004
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Special Honors and Awards:

2007 University of Nevada Las Vegas Alumni Scholarship
2004 Graduated Magna Cum Laude
2004 Undergraduate Research Award. University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2003-2004 Deans Honor List. University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2003-2004 National Deans Honor List. University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2003 Certificate of Achievement, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2002-2003 National Dean's Honor List. Community College of Southern Nevada

Publications:

Ramsey-Rennels, J.L. & **Davis, R.E.** (2008). Infant experience with faces during the first year. *Infant Behaviour and Development*, 31(4), 665-678.
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Thesis Title:

Diversity Issues in Recruitment and Retention of Clients for Parenting Classes

Thesis Examination Committee:

Chairperson, Dr. Cortney Warren, Ph. D.
Committee Member, Dr. Marta Meana, Ph. D.
Committee Member, Dr. Jennifer Rennels, Ph. D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. Lori Olafson, Ph. D.