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THE EFFECTS OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM ON THE
SELF-ESTEEM OF CHILDREN FROM DIVORCED AND INTACT FAMILIES

University of San Francisco

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THE EFFECTS OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM
ON THE SELF-ESTEEM OF CHILDREN FROM
DIVORCED AND INTACT FAMILIES

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
Counseling/Educational Psychology

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Angela Fong-Toy
San Francisco, California
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Current Perspective

Current social trends and cultural changes have led to the continuous breakdown of the traditional American family. Family turmoil continues to affect the emotional health of all members of the family. Tessman (1978) has stated that a high degree of discord characterizes family relations in the period surrounding divorce. He continues to state that the conflict between parents often enmeshes children in controversy. Children from divorced families are invariably faced with a variety of changes that affect their personal, social, and emotional status.

Over a million children are affected annually by the breakup of their families through divorce. According to the September, 1984 issue of the Monthly Vital Statistics Report, an estimated 1,179,000 children under 18 years of age were involved in divorces in 1983. The United States divorce rate has far exceeded any other country. Each year over a million children under 18 years can be expected to be involved in marital breakups. According to

the U.S. Senate Committee on Family and Human Services (1983), a child born in 1983 has a 43 percent chance of experiencing divorce before reaching 18 years.

The needs of these children following divorce is a relatively new area of study. One of the specific questions about children from divorced families is whether self-concept is affected and whether these children can develop an adequate self-concept. Children's self-concept, social-emotional adjustments, and basic mental health are major factors in the development of successful and self-motivated individuals.

Statement of the Problem

Are the self-concepts, social-emotional adjustments, and basic mental health of children affected by divorce? Specifically, what is the effect of divorce on the self-esteem of children? Does divorce delay or impair the development of the self-concept? Can a guidance program with emphasis on self-esteem be a form of intervention for meeting some of the needs of children from divorced families?

Background and Context of the Problem

The effect of divorce on children has become a prominent issue for researchers, practitioners, and the

general public. Despite the concern about the consequences of marital instability for children, limited research has been conducted that adequately addresses the needs and stresses of these children.

Studies have shown that adults fare better following a divorce when they have access to support networks (Chiriboga, Coho, Stein, & Roberts, 1979; Colletta, 1979; Kressel & Deutsch, 1977; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). Adults most often have friends, relatives, and even attorneys who operate as support systems. Many attend organized support groups such as "Parents Without Partners" or single-parent groups for adults. These groups most often provide guidance and encouragement.

In a landmark study of 131 children from divorced families, Wallerstein and Kelly (1974, 1975, 1976, 1980b) made startling finds. Their research revealed natural developmental groupings in children's reactions to divorce. They found that children's reactions were primarily emotional and behavioral. They included such symptoms as fearfulness, intense anger, depression, preoccupation, sleep disturbances, tearfulness, increased aggressiveness, disruptions in learning, and deterioration in their peer relationships. These children would turn to their parents for support only to find them unavailable. Support for these children is rarely found in and outside

the home. Seldom do relatives rush in to give children emotional support. Most often their own parents are unavailable to meet the increased needs and stresses. Teachers may acknowledge their students' changing family status, but are often unwilling or unable to provide appropriate support and understanding to these children. These children are generally given little opportunity for further understanding and clarity of the ongoing changes in their lives. The children themselves often refrain from telling their friends because of their own feelings of shame or embarrassment (Allers,1982; Wallerstein & Kelly,1980b). These children then are on their own to learn appropriate and inappropriate ways of coping with the changes in their lives. They are left with their own interpretations, perceptions, and limited opportunities for sharing and clarification (Allers,1982; Cantor & Drake,1983; Wallerstein & Kelly,1980b).

Many mental health professionals have developed approaches for working with children from divorced families (Cantor,1977; Cook & McBride,1982; Gardner,1976; Kelly & Wallerstein,1977a; Sonneshein-Schneider & Baird,1980). Titles such as "Group Therapy", "Beyond Divorce: Coping Skills for Children", and "Developmental Approach to Coping with Divorce" are indicative of current. developing ideas to meet the needs of children from

divorced families. Yet none have empirically investigated the effectiveness of their approaches. Research on strategies for working with children from divorced families must be conducted. They must be conducted empirically so that parents, teachers, and mental health professionals can objectively see their importance and effectiveness.

Specifically, self-concept has been found to be an important factor for school-achievement and personal-social adjustments (Burns,1979; Coopersmith,1967; Purkey,1970; Hamachek,1978). The emotional and environmental upheaval accompanying divorce can have a direct negative influence on children's self-concept. The disruption of the family unit often disrupts children's sense of belonging (Kurdek & Siesky,1980; McDermott,1970). When parents divorce, children's sense of security is threatened (Wallerstein & Kelly,1980b). Even if parents' feelings toward the children may not have changed, there may be less opportunity and energy to convey acceptance and positive evaluations. And lastly, the upheaval surrounding divorce may inhibit the ability of children to see themselves as in control of themselves and their environment (McDermott,1970; Tessman,1978).

Parents, teachers, and other significant adults can provide opportunities for children to better understand

the changes, work through the divorce experience, and enhance their self-esteem.

Summary

The continuously high divorce rate has raised many questions regarding the effects of divorce on all individuals involved. Children, particularly, experience a multitude of direct and indirect changes as a consequence of divorce. Few support networks exist for children experiencing divorce. Recent research has revealed some of the effects of divorce on children but few studies have addressed meeting the needs of children who have difficulty adjusting. Some researchers acknowledge the need for approaches for working with children from divorced families but they have not empirically studied the effectiveness of their work. Much research is needed in this area. Self-concept and self-esteem may be affected by divorce due to the new changes and added stresses. Some children of divorced families may need increased opportunities to further understand and work through the divorce experience so that they may continue to develop at their most normal rate. Can teachers and mental health professionals provide children in need with the assistance to work through their divorce experience?

Purpose of the Study

Researchers have shown the importance of self-concept on school achievement, personal and social adjustments, and interpersonal relationships (Burns,1979; Clemes & Bean,1981; Purkey,1970). Interventions with children from divorced families have rarely been empirically investigated.

This research study investigates the differences in self-esteem levels of children from divorced families as compared to children from intact families. Secondly, the study empirically evaluates the effectiveness of an educational guidance program designed to enhance the self-esteem of children from divorced and intact families. The effects have been assessed by means of utilizing treatment and control groups.

In brief, the educational guidance program attempts to meet the needs of children of divorced families by providing opportunities for support, understanding, and improved self-esteem.

This research study was originally designed to evaluate the effectiveness and interactional effects of an educational program and a parent program on the self-esteem levels of children from divorced and intact families. The parent program would have provided information, support, understanding, and strategies for

improving self-esteem for parents and their children. Limited response and participation by parents resulted in it's deletion. Therefore, this study was limited to evaluating the effectiveness of one type of intervention program, the educational guidance program.

Definition of Terms

1. CHILDREN FROM DIVORCED FAMILIES - Children of divorced families in the experimental and control groups are composed of children aged 10 to 14 years, who live with their custodial mothers and whose postdivorce time is less than five years.
2. CHILDREN FROM INTACT FAMILIES - These children range in age from 10 to 14 years and are in the experimental and control groups. They are from families who have not experienced divorce and who live with their natural mothers and fathers.
3. SELF-ESTEEM - Self-esteem is operationally defined as the levels of self-esteem as determined by scores on two self-esteem instruments. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory provides a self-evaluative score and the Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem scale provides an observed rating of self-esteem.

4. EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM - Curriculum developed to enhance self-esteem and the understanding of family transitions. Building Self-Esteem authored by Robert Reasoner and published by Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. has been utilized as a major segment of the treatment program. In addition, two films, "Parenting: Growing Up with Children" and "Feeling Left Out" were used to discuss the current dynamics of families.

Rationale

The divorce rate, with over a million children affected annually, requires that these children's needs be addressed. Allers (1982), Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1979a), Tessman (1978), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1975,1976,1980b) have cited many of the consequences of divorce on children. They have noted many emotional and behavioral difficulties of children from divorced families. In addition, they have acknowledged the lack of support services for children which are often available to adults.

Slowly, strategies for working with children who have difficulty adjusting to parental divorce are being developed (Cantor,1977; Cook & McBride,1982; Kelly & Wallerstein,1977a). Unfortunately, most of these mental

health professionals have not evaluated the effectiveness of their strategies.

Conditions surrounding children's self-concept and self-esteem can be threatened before, during, and after parental divorce. Kurdek and Siesky (1980), McDermott (1970) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b) have cited children's disrupted sense of belonging and limited sense of security and control as common results of parental divorce. A review of studies in the area of self-concept and self-esteem of children from divorced families are inconclusive. Data collected from children of divorced families have generally been from children who have experienced parental divorce for more than five years. Therefore, the studies may not have assessed children's self-concept or self-esteem during times of divorce but more probably during an adjustment phase in a new family environment.

Specifically, the research study focuses on children from divorced families. The study has been designed for the following reasons: (1) to provide a supportive environment within a school for children from divorced families, (2) to study the effects of divorce on children's self-esteem with control over time since divorce (less than five years), (3) to enhance the self-esteem of all children, (4) to develop a strategy for

working with children from divorced families, and (5) to empirically evaluate an intervention program designed to raise self-esteem and promote understanding of current family types for use with all children.

Significance of the Study

Results of this study add to the existing research on the effects of divorce on children. Specifically, the study adds to current conflicting and inconclusive data on the effects of divorce on children's levels of self-esteem. It compares the self-esteem of children from divorced families with children from intact families. Length of time since divorce will be controlled and limited to less than five years. In this way, the results are more indicative of stress related changes during the divorce period rather than information about children's self-esteem following a lengthy adjustment period.

The study also empirically evaluates the effectiveness of a social-emotional intervention program for children from divorced and intact families. It is hoped that the program provides parents, teachers, and mental health professionals with a specific strategy for working with children during times of family transitions.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the obvious effects of environment on self-esteem and self-concept development. Such factors as family interactions, cultural and ethnic background, and the immediate community can have significant effects on the developing self-concept. The conditions of the sampled population showed a high percentage of ethnic minorities with strong cultural influences. In addition, many students were from large families, often with extended family members. This may have had an influence on the overall self-esteem of some of the children in the study. As defined by Sullivan (1953), Maslow (1962), and Coopersmith (1967), self-esteem often develops through feedback provided by parents or significant others. In the large extended families, it is difficult to determine which individuals are regarded as the significant other. The affect of divorce on these children's self-esteem may be different due to the possible availability of supportive persons. These factors cannot be totally controlled and are addressed by randomization and the use of control groups.

The emphasis of the study is directed towards individual self-esteem which is a judgment of worthiness expressed by attitudes held towards the self. This study will not take into account the possible behavioral changes

seen in the home. This study is concerned with self-esteem as perceived by individual children and as witnessed by their teachers.

The initial purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program and a parent program on children's level of self-esteem. The deletion of the parent program may have limited the possible findings of the study.

Conclusions from this study are primarily restricted to children, 10 to 14 years old, living in the low to low-middle income bracket. These findings may not be generalized to children who are unlike these subjects.

And lastly, it is important to note that the limited eight week time frame may not be sufficiently long enough to effectively influence self-esteem. Wylie (1979) and Darrigrand and Gum (1973) stated that affective education programs over longer periods of time showed more significant gains in self-concept and self-esteem scores.

Summary

This chapter presented the background and rationale for empirically evaluating the effect of divorce on children's self-esteem and for evaluating an educational guidance program for children from divorced and intact families. In Chapter Two, the review of literature will

focus on self-concept and self-esteem, the effects of divorce on children, modifications of self-concept and self-esteem, and intervention techniques for children of divorced families.

The methodology of the study is defined and elaborated upon in Chapter Three. This will include the research design, subject selection, procedures, and instrumentation.

The statistical analyses and results of the study are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five contains a discussion of the results and the implications of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The idea of self has been of social and personal concern since the early days of basic philosophy. More recently research on the effects of self-concept and self-esteem on achievement, behavior, and emotional adjustment has been abundant. The following review of the literature will be organized into three general sections. First, a historical and definitional account of self-concept and self-esteem with a summary of common forms of self-expression and some self-concept correlates will be provided. Second, research on the effects of divorce on children and studies pertaining to the self-concept and self-esteem of children from divorced families will be summarized. Third, common techniques to enhance self-concept and self-esteem and adjustment strategies for children experiencing parental divorce will be described and discussed.

Historical Overview of Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Any consideration of the conceptual and methodological issues of self-concept and self-esteem requires an understanding of its development and use in research. This section briefly reviews relevant historical background. The review will be limited to the last century, as psychologists and sociologists have used the terms. However, it should be noted that the idea of the self is as old as philosophy itself.

William James

The concept of "self" has been included in personality theories as early as 1890 by William James. His classic chapter on "The Consciousness of Self" in his book Principles of Psychology (1890) described the nature of the self. James' theory divided the self into three categories: the "Material Me," the "Social Me," and the "Spiritual Me." The "Material Me" encompasses not only a person's body but their home, family, and all physical objects with which the individual surrounds him or herself. The second category, the "Social Me" includes the individual's awareness of his or her reputation or identity in the eyes of others. This social self plays a crucial role in the development of self-esteem. The third category, the "Spiritual Me" refers to the individual's

awareness of their own mental processes of thinking and feeling.

To James, understanding a person's perception of themselves is essential to understanding their behavior. He believed that the self is an entirely conscious phenomenon, such that the evaluations a person places on themselves are dependent upon his or her aspirations. A person has high self-esteem to the degree that his or her aspirations ("pretensions") and achievements tend to converge (Wells & Marwell, 1976). More generally, he stated that feelings of self-worth and self-esteem grow from perceptions of where the individual sees him or herself in relation to persons whose skills, abilities, talents, and aptitudes are similar to their own.

Charles H. Cooley

After James, the notion of self continued to grow in importance and interest. Cooley was a sociologist who made a notable contribution with his book Human Nature and the Social Order (1902). He emphasized the relationship between self and the social environment as recognized by James (1890). He developed a theory of the self that was concerned with how the self grows as a consequence of interpersonal interactions. He posited the concept of "the looking-glass self" expressed in these words:

"Each to each a looking glass
Reflects the other that doth pass."

"The self that is most important is a reflection, largely, from the minds of others. . . . We live on, cheerful, self-confident . . . until in some rude hour we learn that we do not stand as well as we thought we did, that the image of us is tarnished. Perhaps we do something, quite naturally, that we find the social order is set against, or perhaps it is the ordinary course of our life that is not so well regarded as we supposed. At any rate, we find with a chill of terror that . . . our self-esteem, self-confidence, and hope, being chiefly founded upon the opinions of others, go down in a crash. . . (Cooley, 1902, p.20-21)"

Cooley included self-feeling as an aspect of his looking-glass self and postulated the need for protecting the self against negative influences. He saw the self as a kind of instinct whose motive was innate and functional for the individual's survival as a human being.

George H. Mead

The social perspective was again expanded, in the writings of Mead (1934), who felt it necessary to root the self in the social conditions relevant to the individual. His theory states that the self is a socially formed self which grows in a social setting where there is social communication. He believed that the content of the self is derived from the interactions between the individual and their social world. A person, then, can have as many selves as there are numbers of social groups.

Mead utilized "I" statements to reflect internalized ideas and attitudes derived from interactions with others.

Harry S. Sullivan

Closely related to the social interaction ideas of Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) is the position of Sullivan. Sullivan (1953) posited what has been called an interpersonal theory of personality development. He described a continual stream of interpersonal situations in which a person is the recipient of a never-ending flow of "reflected appraisals." He looked closely at the development of self during infancy, showing how feelings about self might rely on bodily pleasure or pain and how these bodily states depend on the treatment given the infant by its mother (or "significant other"). He believed in the natural guarding of self-esteem via coping styles but posited no inherent self-drives or potential selves.

Karen Horney

Horney (1950), like Sullivan followed Freud's psychoanalytic theory which contributed to the widespread concern with self. For Horney, the process was one of fulfilling the potentialities of the self ("self-realization"). A basic assumption in Horney's (1950) theory is the wish of the individual to value

himself or herself and to be valued by others. She originated the terms: (1) "idealized self" to refer to a fantasy self created by neurotic adjustment, (2) "real self" to refer to the potential qualities inherent in a person, and (3) "actual self" to refer to the person's actual qualities. She developed a list of ten needs which she called "neurotic" because they are seen as irrational solutions to a basic problem (security). Her concept of anxiety resulted not from superiority strivings but for security needs, an important concept in self-esteem theory.

Alfred Adler

Adler (1927) referred to the self-concept as a person's life-style which is determined by the person's specific inferiorities, either fancied or real. He believed that an individual's community and family formulated attitudes and techniques for a lifestyle within a developed set of purposes and goals. He emphasized the biological or physical characteristics (defects) as a cause for striving. However, it was not the defect that caused the striving, but rather the person's perception of that defect. This was very much akin to the idea of self-esteem since perception is seen as a reflective process (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

Gordon Allport

Allport (1943, 1955) developed a synthesis of the ego and self constructs which he termed "proprium." His work has been most closely related to "ego psychology." He defined the proprium as "all the regions of our life that we regard as peculiarly ours," including "all aspects of personality that make for inward unity (1955,p.40)." He listed seven aspects of "selfhood" which are part of the construct of proprium: (1) the first to develop is the bodily self which refers to a sense of one's body and bodily sensations as peculiarly "mine," (2) self-identity refers to the sense of continuity through time, (3) self-esteem refers to the sense of wanting to do things for oneself and take all of the credit, (4) self-extension refers to the sense that although other people and things are not within my body, they are still a part of me - they are mine, (5) self-image refers to how others view me, (6) self-as-rational-coper refers to a recognition of a rational capacity for solving problems, and (7) propiately striving refers to long range goals based on other aspects of the self.

The proprium was not only tied to the need for survival and reality-mediating, but also to a process of continual growth, of "becoming" rather than of "being"

(1955). Thus, Allport (1955) presumed a built-in self-enhancement motive called "superior striving."

Percival M. Symonds

Most closely related to Allport's work in ego psychology is the work of Symonds (1951). Symonds attempted to develop the distinction between the self and the ego. The self generally represented the reflexive aspect of behavior including those aspects of personality not explicitly included in the ego. Symonds (1951) made a distinction between the core and the periphery of the self with the body being located at the core of self-value. He explicitly dealt with self-esteem as a kind of self-feeling and described the development of self-esteem in terms of both need satisfaction and the experience of success. He posited two forms of self-esteem expression: self-love and self-respect. These forms of self-esteem result from the positive experiences of affiliation and task success.

Carl Rogers

From a humanistic point of view, Rogers (1951) sees individuals as having a basic tendency to strive, to actualize, to maintain, and to promote themselves. Rogers' theory of the self has numerous features, the most

important of which are these: (a) the self strives for consistency, (b) a person behaves in ways which are consistent with the self, (c) experiences that are not consistent with the self are perceived as threats and are either distorted or denied, and (d) the self may change as a result of maturation and learning. The major areas of focus were "self-regarding attitudes" that included a person's perceptions and cognitions of his or her abilities, actions, and relations within their social surroundings. An important self-esteem concept was that of "self-acceptance." Rogers (1961) described self-acceptance as a self-regarding attitude that has three major components: a cognitive dimension, an evaluative dimension, and an affective dimension. His concepts are best described in his book Client-Centered Therapy (1951).

William Glasser

Glasser (1965, 1969, 1984) is best known for his therapeutic approach to counseling called Reality Therapy. His approach is based upon an individual's inability to fulfill some basic needs. Glasser's book Reality Therapy (1965), described two basic psychological needs: the need to love and be loved and the need to feel worthwhile to ourselves and to others. Glasser (1969)

described how love and self-worth were related to the formation of a person's identity.

Although Glasser made no formal definition of self-concept or self-esteem, his work over the years seem to center around esteem needs. In 1965, Glasser stated that the need to feel worthwhile is accomplished by maintaining a satisfactory standard of behavior. An individual must learn to self correct when doing wrong and to credit themselves when doing right. Worthwhile feelings are, therefore, derived from satisfactory and repeated accomplishments. These successes help to form a person's identity.

Glasser (1984) continued his work in the area of basic needs and more recently identified five basic needs. The five needs include: (1) the need to survive and reproduce, (2) the need to belong - to love, share, and cooperate, (3) the need for power, (4) the need for freedom, and (5) the need for fun. Glasser (1984) wrote about a "control theory" where individuals have personal picture albums that contain very specific pictures of what will satisfy their needs. Individuals can better control their emotions and actions by matching pictures of the external world with pictures from their internal world. He felt that by changing important pictures (of needs satisfaction), individuals can change their lives.

Needs vary from person to person with different levels of motivation or drive accompanied by "pictures in your head (1984, p.21)." Once aware of a need, an individual has no choice but to attempt to satisfy that need. The drive to satisfy one or more needs over other needs will vary through the course of a lifetime. Glasser (1984) further stated that there is constant conflict between meeting separate needs which ultimately reflect on an individual's self-identity. The formulation of self-esteem is, therefore, dependent upon needs satisfaction as reflected through individual drives and successes.

Abraham H. Maslow

Maslow's (1937,1954,1962) work in the area of self-concept and self-esteem centered around the notion of "self-actualization." His term "self-actualization" refers to the process of individual development based on potential. He suggested a multitude of needs which are arranged hierarchically into five groups from the most basic to the highest: (1) physiological needs, (2) safety or security needs, (3) needs for love and belonging, (4) esteem needs, and (5) need for self-actualization or growth needs. The basic physiological needs take priority and need to be filled before higher needs become

possible.

Maslow's (1937,1954) notion of self-esteem was identified with "dominance-feeling," which is a kind of sureness, pride, sense of mastery, or feeling of superiority when dealing with other people and objects. In meeting the esteem needs, a person is not trying to actualize their inborn potential, but is trying to establish superiority over others (1954). Maslow (1962) later delineated three major factors that influence self-esteem: (1) respect and approval from other people, (2) actual capacity, achievement, and success, and (3) acceptance of and acting upon our own inner nature. He believed that learning to accept oneself was the most important of the three.

Morris M. Rosenberg

Based on empirical studies of self-esteem, Rosenberg (1964,1965) and Coopersmith (1959,1967) developed self-esteem theories which have substantial definitional overlap.

Rosenberg's (1964,1965) work centered upon the development of a positive self-image during adolescence. His approach has been essentially an attitudinal viewing of the self, where self-esteem is a kind of evaluative attitude. Rosenberg (1979) has identified six distinctive

qualities of self-attitudes. The first, is in the area of importance. The self is an important object to everyone, usually the most important object in the world. While attention to other objects may shift and change, the self is always there, it enters into each situation with a frequency shared by no other object, it is inescapable.

The second distinctive quality of self-attitudes is that the self is reflexive. This was previously brought to attention by Mead (1934).

Third, the self-concept is the product of certain incommunicable information. For instance, an individual does not and cannot see himself or herself as others see them. The concept of self cannot correspond perfectly to another's view since it is viewed from each individual's unique point of view.

Fourth, the human ability to assess and evaluate objects and others is directly related to the self. In order to see ourselves in whole or in part is to assess, evaluate, and pass judgement on what we see. Humans are scarcely capable of even looking at any of our physical characteristics, dispositions, or social identity elements without immediately deploring or applauding what is observed.

A fifth important characteristic of self-attitudes is that they give rise to a unique set of emotions, namely,

pride and shame. In Cooley's (1902) terms, the "looking-glass self" is "some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification (p.152)." Certain emotional responses of pride or shame are exclusive to self-evaluations.

Finally, the sixth dimension of accuracy and verifiability have special importance in understanding the distinctive nature of the self-concept. For instance, having false ideas of American history and false ideas about our own characteristics may represent similar cognitive processes, but the differences in personal consequences are profound. The dimensions of accuracy and verifiability demand special attention (Rosenberg, 1979).

According to Rosenberg, all attitudes have an evaluative dimension in which there are probable quantitative differences between self-attitudes and attitudes about other things. His discussions deal with attitudes and ability specific evaluations, but major concern is with the self-image as a global property of the personality (1979).

Stanley L. Coopersmith

The work of Coopersmith(1959, 1967) is concerned with the development of self-esteem. Coopersmith takes on an eclectic approach for explaining different aspects of

self-esteem. He sees self-esteem as more complex than Rosenberg, involving self-evaluation, defensive reactions, and various manifestations of these processes (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Self-esteem involves evaluative attitudes about the self with overtones of affection. For Coopersmith (1967) self-esteem is a "personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself."

Coopersmith (1959) separated the observation of self-esteem into two parts: the subjective expression and the behavioral expression. The subjective expression describes the individual's self perception and self description; the behavioral expression describes behavioral manifestations of the individual's self-esteem which are available to outside observers. His description of a person's self-esteem involves a composite index, reflecting both aspects of self-evaluative behavior. He described four possible types of self-esteem: (a) the self-esteem the individual purports to have, (b) the self-esteem the individual subjectively holds, (c) the self-esteem the individual displays (or attempts to display), and (d) the self-esteem behavior that is observed and reported by others (1967).

Coopersmith (1967) did not differentiate high and low self-esteem children, but listed three conditions which he

found conducive to the development of higher self-esteem levels. The three conditions were: (1) acceptance of the children by parents, (2) enforcement of clearly defined limits for the children by the parents, and (3) respect for individual initiative and latitude within these limits by the parents. For both Rosenberg and Coopersmith, the evaluative aspects of self perception holds the greatest determinant for self-esteem.

Definitions of Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Our general sense of self can be defined as our self-concept (Wells & Marwell, 1976). It is our view of ourselves, our ability, our appearance, our background, our attitudes, our feelings, and our goals. Although self-concept and self-esteem are often used interchangeably in the literature, there are some important distinctions to consider. Researchers in the area of self-concept and self-esteem rarely utilize a consistent definition (Calhoun & Morse, 1977; Wells & Marwell, 1976; Wylie, 1974,1979).

Shavelson and his colleagues (1976,1980,1982) have conducted numerous studies attempting to advance and formulate a conclusive theory of self-concept. Shavelson and Bolus (1982) define self-concept as a person's perception of self. They stated that perception is formed

through experiences with and interpretations of the environment. That self-perception is influenced especially by reinforcements, evaluations from significant others, and attributions for an individuals own behavior (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton,1976). The self-concept is further defined by Shavelson and Bolus (1980) as organized or structured, in that people can categorize the vast amount of information they have about themselves and relate these categories one to another. The self-concept is hierarchical with perceptions of behavior at the base, inferences about the self in subareas with academic and non-academic areas in the middle, and general self-concept at the top. General self-concept is stable, but as one descends the hierarchy, self-concept becomes increasingly situation-specific and thus less stable. Self-concept becomes increasingly multifaceted as the individual develops from infancy to adulthood. It has both a descriptive and an evaluative dimension, so that individuals can both describe and evaluate themselves. Self-esteem is categorized as an evaluative subarea of the general self-concept (Shavelson & Bolus,1980).

Similar to Shavelson, Rosenberg (1965) and Coopersmith (1967) view self-esteem as the evaluative part of self-concept. Coopersmith (1967) stated it this way:

By self-esteem we refer to the evaluation which an individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an

attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy (p.4-5).

Calhoun and Morse (1977) agreed along the same lines, they regard satisfaction with one's self as the dominant element when reference is made to one's level of self-esteem. They elaborated on the idea and stated that self-esteem grew out of notions of "self" and "self-concept."

Described differently, Clemes and Bean (1981) view self-esteem as a feeling, where as self-concept is defined as an overall theory or ideas about the self. Children can describe what they believe about themselves and the way they see themselves but these perceptions may not match their feelings or behavior. In brief, self-esteem can be defined as one of many subsystems of self-concept.

This study, like Coopersmith (1959) will observe the subjective and behavioral expressions of self-esteem. It explores how children think and feel about themselves as judged by their self evaluations and takes into account behavioral manifestations of self-esteem available to outside observers (teachers). It will utilize the term "self-esteem" to mean positive and negative evaluations about one's self as Coopersmith (1967) used the term. However, due to inconsistent and random use of the terms

"self-concept" and "self-esteem" by researchers, the literature review will cite studies in both areas.

Expressions of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem influences the way children express their self-concept. When their self-esteem is low, they act confused and often withdraw from action that could support their self-concept. Self-esteem rises and falls frequently during our daily lives. Maslow (1954) delineated three major factors that influence self-esteem: (1) respect and approval from other people, (2) actual capacity, achievement and success, and (3) acceptance of and acting upon our own inner nature. High self-esteem is not dependent upon constant success, but requires a willingness to see self limitations and still maintain a healthy sense of pride in self abilities and achievements. The process of building self-esteem evolves and changes as a child grows and has new experiences. Most often feelings of self-esteem come from the quality of relationships that exist between children and those who play a significant role in their lives (Coopersmith, 1967).

Two landmark research projects in self-esteem were completed by Morris Rosenberg (1965) and Stanley Coopersmith (1967). While Rosenberg studied 5,024 high

school students in a large survey study; Coopersmith studied 85 preadolescent males in an indepth clinical study. Rosenberg and Coopersmith found treatment by parents to be directly related to children's self-esteem. Both men found that parental knowledge of and approval of the child's friends, parent rules, and consistent enforcement of fair punishment were conducive to high self-esteem. They also found that parents who exhibited disinterest by setting few or no rules, and whose punishments were infrequent but punitive, had children with lowered self-esteem.

In short, both men agree that "total or nearly total acceptance of children by their parents, clearly defined and enforced limits, and the respect and latitude for individual action that exists within defined limits" led to higher levels of self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1979).

In addition to the distinction between levels and sources of self-esteem, researchers have speculated about the stability or instability of such self-evaluations. Gergen (1971) challenged the concept of self-consistency. He emphasized that the self is altered by specific others and through the expressed views of others. This alteration occurs in each new situation. The level of expressed self-esteem changes, depending on the

characteristics of other people in each new situation. It has been assumed by many researchers that self-esteem might vary according to social situations and that self-esteem might change with life conditions. The outward expressions of self-esteem can be found in motivation, behavior, and attitude. Some researchers believe that underneath such instability is a fairly stable and slow-changing attitude about one's overall goodness or badness (Coopersmith, 1967; Wylie, 1974). This study will refer to self-esteem as situation-specific attitudes (states) rather than to the stabilized relatively absolute self-identities (traits) as described by Wylie (1974,1979).

Correlates of Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Identifying and defining the actual correlates of self-esteem has been an area of research for many years. If the direct and specific causes of self-concept and self-esteem, good and bad, could be identified, the task of improving self-esteem would also be simplified. Unfortunately, no research has been successful at isolating such causes. Numerous studies of correlation, comparison, and predictability have provided some consistent and informative data. Major correlates of self-concept and self-esteem include achievement, behavior

and general social-emotional well being.

Coopersmith (1967) supported the idea that self-esteem is more important to a child's success in school as compared to intelligence, by stating that children continue learning when they feel that what they are learning gives them an increased sense of power. Part of that power is a feeling of increased confidence in their ability to deal with the world. The power to have control over one's life and the capacity to deal effectively with the issues that one confronts make up the individual's self-concept (Coopersmith, 1967).

The person with low self-esteem who is convinced of his or her lowly status runs a vicious circle of seeking outcomes that are consistent with their negative self appraisal, as in the "self-fulfilling prophecy." The uncertain low self-esteem person, on the other hand, is freer to seek out and accept esteem enhancing events such as success. Fortunately, many low self-esteem children are yet uncertain of their self-concept (Coopersmith, 1967).

Marecek and Mettee (1972) stated that low self-esteem persons rejected or minimized success only if they were certain of their low self-assessment even when the success was self-determined. In their study of 70 college females, the researchers found that when low self-esteem

certain subjects succeeded under skill conditions, success did not provide motivation for better performance that was evident in other groups. Their performance did not deteriorate following success, but they failed to improve, and in so doing, avoided further success. Since the low self-esteem certain group was the only group failing to improve, their performance provided evidence that low self-esteem certain subjects attempted to minimize success of their own making.

More recent studies by Gilmore (1974), Popka (1980) and Scheirer and Kraut (1979) continue to show a positive association between self-concept and academic achievement. Earlier studies by Brookover, Thomas and Patterson (1964), Purkey (1970), and Wattenberg and Clifford (1964) have cited the causal relationship between self-concept and achievement. In his noted study, Purkey (1970) stated a positive correlation between self-concept and educational achievement. The causal direction was not ascertained. Purkey's theory suggests that it is "a two-way street" where there is continuous interaction between the self and achievement and that each directly influences the other (1970).

In order to study the self-concept and classroom behavior of pre-adolescent students, Yeger and Mieztis (1980) contrasted fourteen high self-concept (SC) fifth

and sixth graders with fourteen low self-concept (SC) fifth and sixth graders. They utilized the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and the Classroom Observation Instrument to measure self-concept and behavior. The high SC students were observed to have a larger circle of friends, to participate in more group interactions, to move around the classroom more readily, and to behave in a self-confident manner, readily approaching academic and social situations. The low SC students appeared more shy and socially hesitant. They had fewer friends and their contacts were less frequent and less lengthy. They exhibited more dysfunctional classroom behavior with higher proportions of their time unfocused and off-task. They also tended to be unsure of themselves and were more self-conscious. In brief, the researchers concluded that the needs of students who express negative self-concepts be addressed in the schools by an awareness of student self-attitudes and attention to student social interactions. They recommended classroom teachers to work towards enhancing their students feelings of self-worth and to foster an accepting and supportive classroom environment, believing this to be a vital approach in teaching (Yeger & Mieztis, 1980).

Other researchers have found a relationship between self-esteem and behavior (Burdett & Jensen, 1983;

H.B.Kaplan, 1980; Reynolds, 1980). Based on findings of 229 third and sixth grade students, Burdett and Jenson (1983) found a larger mean aggressiveness score for children with low self-concept scores. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and the Children Action Tendency Scale were utilized with results suggesting that children who have very low self-concept scores tend to be more aggressive than children with moderate and high self-concept scores. A more indepth look at self-concept and behavior can be found in H.B. Kaplan's (1980) three year longitudinal study. From his study, H.B. Kaplan developed a reference group theory which holds that self-esteem is primarily responsible for delinquency. That children with damaged self-esteem seek to restore their self-respect by aligning themselves with deviant groups that accord them the approval denied by the rest of society (H.B. Kaplan, 1980). In his three year study of 7,500 seventh grade boys and girls, he found that low self-esteem preceded delinquent behavior but that once a child had become associated with delinquent types, their self-esteem increased (1980).

In an attempt to try to find evidence for the causal direction of self-esteem and delinquency, Rosenberg and Rosenberg (1978) studied 2,000 tenth grade boys over a three year period. Much like H.B. Kaplan (1980), they

concluded that low self-esteem influenced the development of delinquent behavior and that self-esteem has a stronger effect on delinquency than delinquency has on self-esteem.

Summary

This section has introduced many contributors to the development of self-concept and self-esteem theory. These contributors express points of view that give individuals credit for personal meaning to their perceptions and experiences, both accurate and inaccurate.

The need for knowing one's self is basic and universal. This need which has been variously labeled "self-acceptance," "self-love," "self-understanding," "self-perception," and the like, is basically a need for an image of one's self that is accurate enough to be workable and acceptable so a person can enjoy experiencing and expressing it (Hamachek, 1978).

Therefore, if individuals are to reach their potential as Horney (1950) and Maslow (1962) have postulated, then each person must constantly explore, redefine, and reevaluate him or herself in light of new experiences and changing perceptions.

Definitions and expressions of self-esteem with a brief review of studies correlating self-concept and self-esteem with achievement and behavior has been

provided. Although most studies cite relationships between self-esteem, achievement, and behavior, it has been empirically difficult to isolate and identify specific causes. The works of Burdett and Jenson (1983), Purkey (1970), and Yeger and Miezeitis (1980) are but a few that relate directly with school aged children. Other reviews and references for other correlates of self-concept and self-esteem are available by Burns (1979), Gecas (1982), Hamachek (1978), and Wylie (1979).

Initial Effects of Divorce on Children

Divorce with children in the family is a multifaceted process among family members. For many children, the process of divorce is characterized by initial loss and turmoil, followed by several years of relative instability. The attention of parents to their children fluctuates and the availability of the supportive social structure of the extended family weakens. Relocation that often follows divorce also contributes to the stress experienced by children. Wallerstein and Kelly's (1976) study of divorced families and their children found that the average time required to regain a sense of order and stability was three to four years postseparation. They further stated that the time elements can vary markedly if the instability and disequilibrium of the failing marriage

prior to the divorce decision were added. Ahrons (1983) stated that most children require from two to five years to recover their equilibrium. The time frames will vary but they seem to occupy a period of up to five years from separation and divorce.

Due to the high frequency of divorce in the 1970's, many researchers began to study the effects of divorce on children. To date, few researchers have systematically studied the possible positive effects of divorce on children. Kurdek and Siesky (1980), Tessman (1978), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b) have cited the growth opportunities of children from divorced families. They've reported that children's development was often enhanced by their parents' divorce. Through increased responsibility and more interpersonal sensitivity demands, Kurdek and Siesky (1980) found some children to mature more rapidly. A study by Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1979a) on the development of children following divorce, concluded that a conflict-ridden intact family was far more damaging to family members than a stable home situation in which parents are divorced.

The negative impact of divorce on children and the readjustment of family structure has been the topic of most research studies. Researchers (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976, 1978, 1979a, 1979b; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976;

Kurdek & Siesky, 1980; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1980a, 1980b) have discussed and studied the multiple variables involved in children's postdivorce adjustment. In general, their findings are similar and overlapping. Viewed as the cause for many new behavioral and psychological responses, divorce in childhood is a traumatic event.

Two of the most influential research projects on the impact of divorce on children began in the mid 1970's. One, by Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1976, 1978) employed a comprehensive comparative design with matched samples of children from divorced and intact families. The other, by Wallerstein and Kelly (1974, 1975, 1976) utilized methods of clinical research to the study of a non-clinical sample of children. Both employed longitudinal designs so that changes in the effects of divorce, over time, could be measured. Both used direct observation of children and their families near the time of parental separation or divorce. And both researchers used multiple measures and procedures in order to understand more fully continuity and change of children and their families following divorce.

Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1976, 1978) carried out a comprehensive, multimeasure, multimethod, two year study of divorcing parents and their preschool children in

Virginia. Their sample of 48 white, middle class children (24 boys, 24 girls) from divorced families was matched with a sample of 48 children from intact families. Data were obtained through interviews, observations, checklists, behavior ratings, and developmental measures given to parents and teachers. Data were gathered at two months, one year, and two years following the divorce. The goals of the study were to examine responses to the crisis of divorce and to see what new patterns of family organization emerged.

Wallerstein and Kelly's (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976, 1977a; Wallerstein, 1984; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1979) studies were more clinically oriented with no control or comparison groups. Their funded project combined research on divorce with research on the effectiveness of an experimental intervention program. Located in a predominantly white, affluent Northern California community, families were referred to the project by attorneys, school psychologists, teachers, and others. Their initial sample consisted of 60 families with 131 children ranging in age from three to eighteen years. The project documented the experience of divorce on parent-child relationships and on children's psychological and social development. The researchers also attempted to develop procedures to diminish possible

psychological difficulties associated with divorce. Kelly & Wallerstein (1977a) subjectively concluded that their experimental intervention program ameliorated the short-term effects of divorce and further stated that it prevented the consolidation of the long-term effects of stress and conflict related to divorce.

Clinical interviews of the children were conducted at the time of parental separation. Clinical observations and interviews with teachers and parents were conducted soon thereafter. The researchers intended to end their inquiry of these families at the end of the first year expecting the transition period to have ended. But even after eighteen months postseparation, many issues remained unresolved for both parents and children. As a result of this early finding, the study became a longitudinal study with data collected at one year, one and a half years, five years, and for one group at ten years following the rupture of these families.

One of the major contributions of Wallerstein and Kelly's research has been the delineation of children's responses governed by their age and place on the developmental ladder. The researchers had no specific age groups in mind, but the commonalities in the children's responses dictated the groupings. Descriptions of children from divorced families have since been divided

into the four general age groups: preschool children (2.5 to 5 yrs.), early school age children (6 to 8 yrs.), later school age children (9 to 12 yrs.), and adolescents (12 yrs. and older).

The early works by Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1976, 1978) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1974, 1975, 1976) have provided other researchers with a basic foundation for work with children from divorced families. Understanding the effects of divorce on children can enhance the development of intervention strategies for children who have difficulty adjusting to divorce.

The next section will be combined summaries of research findings on the initial impact of divorce on children. Divided by age groups, it will also include children's perception of their parent's divorce. Finally, this will be concluded with findings on follow-up studies.

Preschool Children - 2.6 to 5 yrs. (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1976, 1978, 1979b; McDermott, 1968, 1970; Neal, 1983; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1975, 1980b)

These young children were unable to conceptualize the departure of one parent as being directed at the other parent. Often their conclusion was that the departed parent rejected them and left to replace them with another family. Neal (1983) described these young children as egocentric. These children measured love by the physical

distance between people. They often believed that something they did was bad, causing the parent to go away. They worried about being abandoned by both parents and generally blamed themselves for the divorce.

Following the marital break, these children regressed behaviorally. They became frightful, tearful, irritable, and more aggressive than usual. They exhibited temper tantrums and seemed confused about what was happening to them and their parents. They were emotionally and psychologically needy for physical contact and nurturance, and frequently reached out to new adults. These children were more likely to develop moderate sleep disturbances and exhibited disruption in the pleasure of play.

Immediately following divorce, children in this age group showed less freedom in imaginative play. Play did not provide relief for their suffering; they were unable to master anxiety and depression. Boys and girls utilized fantasy as a form of play. The most common and committed hopeful fantasy was that of a restored family. Girls more so than boys used fantasy to deny their feelings of rejection and loss. The statements, "When he (Dad) grows up, he'll come back," and "He loves me the best and sleeps with me at night," are examples of denials from girls with wish-fulfilling fantasies (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1975).

The most frightened and regressed children were those

who had not received any explanation of the events in the family. They were left to their own conclusions, mostly fearing that they would be left all alone. Their fear of abandonment was expressed in the reoccurring theme of being left hungry. In brief, all preschool children needed a clear sense of order. They needed more external controls with constant reassurance that they would be cared for by the remaining parent.

Early School Age Children - 5.6 to 8 yrs.

(Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976; Magrab, 1978;
McDermott, 1968; Wallerstein & Kelly,
1976,1979,1980b)

Intellectually and emotionally these children seemed to understand the meaning of divorce. In spite of their understanding, these children often became disorganized and immobilized by their worry and grief. They grieved more openly and showed severe sadness. They exhibited heightened anxiety and aggression with increased irritability and problems in controlling impulses. These children were often depressed and yearned for the departed father, regardless of the type of predivorce relationship (hostile, abusive, or communicative). Crying and sobbing was common, especially with boys.

Few children expressed anger towards their fathers

as compared to the expressed anger towards their mothers. Considerable anger at their mothers was exhibited by boys, who blamed their mothers for causing the divorce or for driving the father away.

These children were ashamed of the divorce and often lied loyally to outsiders to coverup the disruptions in the family. Wishes for parental reconciliation were widespread, these children felt the situation was reversible. They felt that they could do something to keep the noncustodial parent more involved and often blamed themselves if that parent didn't come to see them. They believed that if they could make their absent parents happy, they would be rewarded with more frequent and longer contacts. If they failed, they believed that the missing parent would probably find some other child to love. Again, feelings of abandonment continued to be a major theme. Some of these children regressed behaviorally and dependent behavior of an earlier age often emerged. They developed fears and phobias with a shaken sense of identity.

Fantasies of being deprived of food, of toys, or of some other important aspect of their life pervaded in these children's thoughts. Concentration on topics outside the family was hampered. School progress and attendance was often disrupted.

Being intellectually less confused, these children were often enlisted to take sides with one parent, leaving divided loyalties and confused feelings. Some parents began to rely on children in this age group for emotional support and practical problem solving. Some of these children would often be pushed towards early independence while others regressed significantly. These children needed reassurance of parental love and caring with strong guidance about home and school expectations.

Later School Age Children - 9 to 12 yrs. (Magrab, 1978;
Neal, 1983; Wallerstein & Kelly,
1976,1979,1980b)

Significantly less confused than the younger children, children in this age group showed soberness with some clarity of the reality of divorce. These children seemed to understand their parents inner as well as surface feelings. Recognizing that adults can change and no longer be in love, these children made the assumption that something had gone wrong which could be corrected if their parents would only try harder (and not be so selfish). Their belief was that a recent family event had caused the break, therefore changes could be made to restore the relationship.

These children displayed courage during their interviews and seemed much more poised in appearance. In spite of their outward appearance, these children revealed that they were ashamed about the divorce. They experienced a shaken sense of identity and a sense of loneliness. Headaches and stomachaches were the most common somatic symptoms reported.

Intense anger was a distinguishing response for children in this age range. Their intense anger were usually directed at the parent perceived as having caused the divorce. Aligning themselves with the "victim" parent, these children expressed their anger directly at the "blamed" parent. Utilizing their cognitive and emotional skills, their anger were often expressed in ways that could be distressing to that parent.

In general, these children had more age-available ways for coping with the profound feelings of loss, rejection, helplessness, and loneliness. Their various efforts included refusing to believe in the marital rupture, reaching out to others for help, keeping in constant motion, consciously trying not to think about the divorce, and engaging in intense activity and play. These children needed a strong stable protective structure which seem to be sought out by their alignment with one parent.

Adolescents - 12 yrs. and older (Magrab, 1978;
Sorosky, 1977; Springer & Wallerstein, 1983;
Wallerstein, 1983b; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974)

Adolescents were constant and keen observers of parental interaction. They were capable of linking psychological causes and effects. They evaluated their parents' behavior along dimensions of selfishness, fairness, self-control, and restraint. These adolescents were rarely surprised by their parents' decisions to separate and divorce. Like the later school age children, these teenagers still considered their parents selfish and insensitive to their needs, regardless of the predivorce conditions. Their depression and fear of loneliness showed a definite need for a stable family structure. These young people experienced a complex and multilayered loss. They exhibited profound grief, depression, intense anger, and worry about their present and future. Their feelings of shame and betrayal often prevented them from sharing their feelings and experiences with their peers. Parental demands following divorce often resulted with confusing and conflicting issues of loyalty and allegiance.

Divorce created anxious feelings about sexual maturation and heterosexual relationships. These young

teenagers showed concern about divorce in their own future lives and some had initially decided never to marry. Some of these teenagers moved into a coping pattern of highly accelerated social and academic activity at school. Others began to perceive school as an intolerable burden and as a place where academic and social pressures overtaxed their limited resources. Many displayed unaccustomed failing grades, fantasies of dropping out and intense anger and depression. The impact of divorce on adolescent development waivered between mature independence and retreat. These young people needed adults who could provide a steady, reliable, and supportive presence during the many crisis of growing up.

Summary

Family instabilities set into motion by divorce are likely to occupy a significant portion of children's growing-up years. Two initial events become the core memory for many children (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). First, learning about the divorce decision, and second, the departure of one parent from the home are considered the most stressful events.

The impact of divorce on children has been discussed from findings of numerous research studies. In brief, the younger children responded with pervasive sadness, fear,

feelings of deprivation and some anger. For early school aged children, divorce influenced their concentration from attention outside the family, thus effecting school related tasks. These children displayed conscious, intense anger, fears and phobias, a shaken sense of identity, and loneliness. The older children were more likely to blame one parent and form alliances with the parent not wanting the divorce. They showed intense anger and often developed somatic symptoms. Adolescents exhibited profound grief, intense anger, and worry. Their developmental growth was often accelerated or halted. In general, all children displayed strong initial emotional and psychological reactions.

Follow-Up Studies on the
Effects of Divorce on Children

Divorce does not immediately end disturbed and unwanted marital relationships. Disorganization and disrupted functioning for all family members seem to peak during the first year of divorce (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976). New and stressful family patterns during the first year included hostile interaction between ex-spouses over parenting roles, special alliances between one parent and children against the other parent, perpetuation by the children of interaction between the divorced parents, and

continued interaction of divorced partners perpetuated by the extended family (Magrab, 1978). Divorce placed special demands on children and their parents for handling the crisis events and the ensuing years. In brief, parenting became disorganized and inconsistent because adults were busy filling their own immediate needs as well as their children's.

Follow-up studies by Hetherington (1979), Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1976,1978,1979a,1979b), Kelly and Wallerstein (1976, 1977b), Wallerstein (1984), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1974, 1975, 1976, 1979, 1980a, 1980b) have provided informative findings about children from divorced families. Again, the changes encountered by children can generally be separated by developmental age groupings.

One and Two Year Follow-Ups

At the end of the first year, Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) found preschoolers returning to their normal behaviors except that some were too quick in seeking physical contact with strange adults. Aggression, regression, and fearfulness had disappeared for most preschoolers. Nursery school teachers in Hetherington, Cox, and Cox's (1976) study reported preschoolers first year as marked by a driven need for physical contacts, an

inability to function in a group, and diminished self-esteem. Some dependency behaviors and oppositional behaviors increased during the first year but decreased for both girls and boys by the second year (Hetherington, 1979).

More recent research by Kurdek (1981) seemed to negate some of the first year adjustment findings of Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) and Hetherington, Cox, and Cox's (1976) preschoolers. Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) reported that preschoolers' feelings of sadness, grief, and deprivation had abated and were replaced with resignation within the following year. In contrast, Kurdek (1981) indicated that young children continued to have nightmares, sleep disturbances, depressed appetites, inhibited playfulness, and feelings of guilt even after the first year of divorce. Many children in Kurdek's (1981) study reported being lonely.

Divorced parents were found to make fewer maturity demands of their children during the first year following divorce. They communicated less well, showed marked inconsistency in discipline and lacked control over their children (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976). By the second year divorced mothers demanded more autonomous mature behavior of their preschool children (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979a). In addition, mothers communicated better and

used more explanation and reasoning with their children. They were more nurturant and consistent and were better able to control their children than the year before. However, boys were less well adjusted by the second year as compared to girls (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979b). Boys from divorced families were unpopular with their male peers, had difficulty gaining access to play groups, and spent more time playing with girls and younger peers.

For early school aged children (6-8 yrs.) intense feelings of loss, anger, rejection, and fear had abated by the end of the first year. Instead the children seemed to show a resigned attitude toward the divorce (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). These children suffered disruptions in their ability to learn. Problems with concentration lead them to need repeated explanations in the classroom (Kurdek, 1981). Relationships with peers had deteriorated. At the one year mark, parents still seemed unable to provide support for their school aged children. Parents were still overburdened by the divorce experience and had not reestablished regular routines (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976).

Later school aged children (9-12 yrs.) continued with feelings of wishfulness and bitterness at the one year mark. Their initial feelings of shame, intense anger, and

the shaken sense of identity had become muted (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Over a third of the 31 children in Wallerstein and Kelly's (1976) study retained their committed anger toward the absent parent. For children who were doing well, they seemed to accept the divorce with a sad finality. The other children showed both continued depression and low self-esteem, combined with frequent school and peer difficulties. About half of the children in this group suffered a noticeable decline in school performance. A new behavior that emerged during the post-divorce year was a precocious thrust into adolescent preoccupation with sexuality and assertiveness (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976).

For many adolescent youths, divorce accelerated the adolescent maturation process during the first year. Yet for others, there was a prolongation in the ability to master the normative developmental tasks of adolescence. Loyalty conflicts and the need to choose resulted in feelings of anger, depression, guilt, and despair, but after a year's time most of the adolescents were able to disengage themselves from those conflicts (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974). Withdrawal and distancing was a common defense. Within the first year, most of the youths were able to proceed with the adolescent development both in terms of competencies and psychosocial adjustment at a

level at least equal to their earlier adjustment. Those youths who did better were able to maintain some distance from the parental crisis. Those who had difficulty adjusting exhibited school problems, displayed overt depression, ran away, and increased their acting out behavior.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b) cited four common maladjustment themes for adolescents. The first, "temporary interference with entry into adolescence" resulted with temporary regressions and highly dependent behavior. The second, "prolonged interference with entry into adolescence" frequently resulted with intense emotional dependence of the adult on the child, often with evidence of serious developmental disturbances. The third, "regression following loss of external values and controls" usually resulted with the sudden discovery of a parent's infidelity. Adolescents often felt betrayal by their parents' "immoral" behavior. Needing the external controls and values often provided by the father, these adolescents were overwhelmed with anxiety and displayed dramatic behavioral changes. The changed behaviors ranged from dependency to delinquent acting out and acute depression. The last theme, "pseudo-adolescent behavior" was often displayed by accelerated sexual and aggressive acting out due to anger, shame and resentment. Divorce

severely burdened many adolescent at this stage in their lives. Yet, some of these children grew in maturity and independence through their need to take greater responsibility for themselves and their troubled parents.

In summary, the one and two year follow-up studies of children from divorced families revealed continued stress and depression. Slightly lessened emotional and psychological responses from children and their parents were reported. However, persistent energy for coping with the divorce and for the reorganization of family life still existed. New behaviors of dependency, withdrawal, and poor school performance were indicative of children's prolonged readjustment time. Deterioration and limited progress among children correlated most highly with continued disorganization in the family. Other correlates included undiminished anger or psychological illness in the parent retaining custody and insufficient contact with the noncustodial parent (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979). Except for the adolescent group, boys seemed to fare significantly worse than girls at the two year mark.

Five-Year Follow-up

Five years after the beginning of their research, Wallerstein (1983b) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1976, 1977,

1979, 1980b) studied fifty-eight of the original sixty families (101 children). The outcomes of the follow-up study were less related to age and sex but were linked to other important factors (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). Briefly stated, the central components affecting the outcome of children at the five year mark included: (1) parental conflict resolution, (2) course and type of custodial parenting, (3) relationship between children and noncustodial parent and children's feelings of rejection, (4) range of children's personality assets and deficits, (5) amount of available human support networks for the children, (6) the absence of continuing anger and depression in children, and (7) the sex and age of the children.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1979) found 34 percent of the children doing well, having regained or acquired a sense of well-being and self-confidence. Another 37 percent were suffering from moderate to severe depression. Their depression were manifested in a variety of feelings and behaviors. They included chronic unhappiness, delinquency, sexual promiscuity, poor learning, anger, apathy, restlessness, and a sense of intense unremitting neediness. The remaining 29 percent of the children had resumed appropriate developmental progress but continued to experience intermittently, a sense of deprivation and

feelings of sadness and resentment toward one or both parents.

At the five year mark, most of the children had accepted the reality of their changed family status. Most were making steady progress in school and were building networks of friends. Their parents were much more settled and reasonably calm, so households were predictable and the children were receiving good physical and emotional care. (Wallerstein, 1983b).

For the 37 percent of the children who were suffering from moderate to severe depression, Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b) found them to be consciously unhappy and dissatisfied with their lives in the postdivorce environment. Seventeen percent of this group felt rejected and unloved by their fathers. Almost a quarter of these children continued to be very disappointed with the visiting relationship, either because of it's infrequency or because of it's increasingly shallow emotional quality, which emerged over the years despite regular contact. The yearning for the absent father continued high and was still very intense in 20 percent of this group.

Moderate depression did not interfere with children's developmental progress. Even the severely depressed children were able to move ahead age-appropriately at the

five-year mark (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). The unburdened development may have been characteristic of those who had functioned well or reasonably well prior to the marital rupture.

There was considerable change in children after five years. Children with the greatest stability were among the oldest group, especially among the older girls, and the less stable were among the younger children. In general, those children who experienced parental divorce with solid developmental achievements were better able to weather the crisis. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b) noted that "families that had good outcome at five years were able to restabilize and restore parenting after the initial, or sometimes extended, disorganization of the transition period" (p.215).

Ten-Year Follow-up

Wallerstein (1984) has presented a preliminary report on a ten-year follow-up study of adolescent children. From an initial group of 34 children who were between two and a half years and six years at the time of parental divorce, 30 adolescents were located and interviewed.

The adolescents were preschoolers at the time of the marital rupture and were reported to be more troubled, depressed, and needy during the following five years.

Having spent two-thirds of their lives within the divorced or remarried family, there were few conscious memories of the intact family or of the marital rupture. A significant number of these adolescents spoke sorrowfully of their emotional and economic deprivation. Reconciliation fantasies continued to exist in about half of the young teenagers.

For some teenagers relationships with their custodial mothers often reflected closeness, appreciation, and concern for her struggles. Another group of teenagers expressed anger at their mother's unavailable emotional and physical presence over the years. In addition, there was worry over the impact of their possible departure from the home in the coming years.

Relationships with the noncustodial father had retained the emotional centralization, whether they were visited frequently or infrequently. Some of these adolescents showed intense yearning and compassionate caring for the troubled, needy fathers, who often showed up erratically over the years. Intense anger was expressed at fathers who had failed to provide economic support when they had had the capacity to do so. A heightened need to reestablish relationships with their absent fathers appeared to occur, especially in girls, as they reached adolescence. Lastly, most of these young

people looked forward optimistically to marriage and a family. They allowed for the possibility of marital failure and divorce, but the majority asserted their expectation of avoiding the unhappiness associated with the divorce in their parents' lives.

The preliminary clinical findings reflect an interesting possibility that children, who were very young during their parent's divorce, are considerably less burdened in their later years. They carried with them fewer memories of unhappiness and parental conflict, and almost no memories of the intact family. In spite of their distress at the time of the marital rupture and the troubled five years following, these children emerged less consciously troubled and more optimistically oriented about the future at the ten year mark. Wallerstein (1984) has stated that these youngsters are much less burdened by the divorce experience as compared to older youngsters who may be more likely to carry fears of abandonment and betrayal into their adult relationships.

Long-Term Effects of Divorce on Children

Wallerstein and Kelly (1979,1980b) and Wallerstein's (1984) five and ten-year follow-up studies of children from divorced families have provided the most comprehensive information regarding changes and responses

of postdivorce adjustment in children. The possible long term effects of divorce on adulthood has received limited attention. Kulka and Weingarten (1979) conducted a survey study of 4,700 adults (21 yrs. and older) to analyze the effects of divorce in childhood on their perceived adult adjustment. Two random national samples of approximately 2,400 Americans were conducted in 1957 and 1976. The researchers had stated that although society and the divorce rate had changed between 1957 and 1976, reactions to parental divorce had not. For the adults who had experienced their parents divorce prior to their sixteenth birthday, parental divorce was identified as "the most unhappy time of their lives."

Men from the divorced group as compared to woman were more likely to say they had been "on the verge of a nervous breakdown" and had experienced prolonged feelings of anxiety. In brief, these researchers identified parental divorce as a stressful event endured throughout a person's lifetime and that for most, divorce had a modest effect on adult adjustment. They concluded that the long term effects of divorce on early life experiences may have been ameliorated as time passed and as the adults engaged and mastered the challenges of their current life tasks.

In a comparative study of male and female college students, from divorced and intact families, Fine,

Moreland, and Schwebel (1983) found poor relationships with both parents. The researchers studied 100 college students of divorced families of more than seven years and compared them to 141 college students from intact families. Those from divorced families perceived their relationship with their parents and particularly with their fathers, less positively than those from intact families. Daughters generally reported more positive relationships with their mothers than did sons. Problems with mothers were attributed to tension at home caused by economic, social, and emotional stress and, in the case of boys, to a feeling of resentment toward the mothers because of fathers absences. The researchers attributed poor perceptions of fathers to limited and infrequent contacts.

Father involvement with children of divorced families has been repeatedly reported as an important factor in the postdivorce adjustment of children (Fine, Moreland, & Schwebel, 1983; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1977b; Longfellow, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980a). The continued contact between children and their noncustodial parent was crucial to the psychological adjustment of children within the postdivorce family (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980a,1980b). Fathers were more likely to visit younger children more frequently and more regularly than they were to visit

older children (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1977b). Yet, high self-esteem in all children especially in older boys, was tied to a good father-child relationship that had been sustained through visitations (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980a). These postdivorce relationships between father and child may have a direct effect on the long term adjustments of children in adulthood. Hetherington (1972) found that girls, inspite of their good social and emotional childhood adjustment, later reacted with poor heterosexual relations during adolescence. The difficulty of poor later adjustment in the girls may have been directly related to the amount and kind of postdivorce father-daughter contact and involvement.

Longfellow's (1979) review of research studies, concluded that the absence of the father may not have the most impact on the children directly but on the social and economic position of the family. He stated that the economic status and behaviors of the single-parent mother has direct influence on the mental health of the postdivorce family. He especially stressed the importance of economics on the postdivorce family which included children.

The economic difficulties of divorced families have more recently been addressed by the passing of Public Law 98-378, the Child Support Enforcement Amendment (1984).

Effective, October 1985, the amendment will require noncustodial parents to provide child support for their children until their eighteenth birthday. For those who do not comply as mandated by court decisions, garnishment of pay checks and nonrefund of taxes will be utilized. Slowly, the government and the general public are becoming aware of the possible negative effects of divorce on the adults of tomorrow.

Summary

The follow-up studies have provided additional information about the later consequences of divorce on children. The one and two year follow-up studies revealed continued disorganization and limited social and emotional adjustment for most children and their parents. Children's intense emotional feelings of anger and fear were replaced by sadness, loneliness, and neediness. Their school performance was often disrupted. Boys were less well adjusted than girls.

Considerable change was exhibited by children in the five year follow-ups. Although many children suffered from moderate to severe depression, most had regained their developmental progress. Yearning for the departed father continued for many of the children. Younger children were less stable than older children at the five

year mark.

In the ten year and long term follow-up studies, children's inner feelings of sorrow and prolonged anxiety were noted. Children's intense yearning for the father-child relationship continued to be an important factor at all stages of postdivorce adjustment. Divorce has a modest effect on children's adult adjustment and has been decribed as being a stressful life event.

Self-Esteem and Children of Divorced Families

Parental changes following divorce affect children in many ways. There may be changes in the quantity and nature of the parent-child relationships. Parental preoccupation with emotional, social, and economic stresses often leaves limited energy to spend with the children or little quality time to address their needs (Allers,1982). The children, then, have less positive interaction with their parents and receive less feedback that they are valued and accepted. It is common for divorcing parents to be highly emotional and hostile at times. These emotions may or may not be directed towards their children, but children can be sensitive to adult emotional behavior. Children may bear the brunt of much parental hostility, be encouraged to take sides in

parental disputes, or be ignored as parents become preoccupied with remedying their own problems. These children may have difficulty understanding the true meaning of their parents behavior and attribute them to something they have done and blame themselves. Strong emotional responses are usually compounded by the departure of one parent. The children lose a significant person in their lives and may fear that he or she is so unlovable that their own parent had to leave them (Hammond, 1979). In addition, other environmental changes occur. There are changes in routines and living patterns. Along with the disorganization, there may be inconsistency, thus leading to less predictability. Childrens' sense of competency may be shaken when there is little predictability and consistency (Allers, 1982; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979a).

The emotions of loss, anger, fear, and confusion can create feelings of conflict and anxiety. Childrens' sense of belonging can be disrupted by divorce. This can have a direct effect on children's developing self-concepts and existing self-esteem.

Coopersmith (1967) and Rosenberg (1965), both noted similar findings from families of divorce and separation. Coopersmith (1967) stated that conflict and tension between parents is associated with low self-esteem and

poor adjustment in children. Rosenberg (1965) described divorce as having a stronger effect on the child's exhibited anxiety. Both researchers concluded that the significance of divorce for children's self-esteem depended on the interpretation and perception of the divorce.

Studies on the self-concept and self-esteem of children from divorced families are inconclusive. A comparative study of 738 children, 11 to 14 years, by Parish and Dostal (1980) found that children from divorced families tended to perceive themselves and their parents less favorably than did children from intact families. The impact of divorce on single-parenting tended to be lessened when the single custodial parent remarried. In addition, they found that children, whose mothers had not remarried exhibited the lowest self-concepts. This was again supported by Parish and Taylor's (1979) study of 406 grade school children utilizing the same descriptive instrument, the Personal Attribute Inventory for Children. They compared children from divorced families with children from intact families and found slightly lower self-concepts for children whose mothers had remarried and significantly lowered self-concepts for children of divorce families whose mothers had not remarried.

In contrast, Hammond (1979) interviewed 165

elementary school children, 82 children from divorced homes and 83 from intact homes. There were no significant differences in their self-concept scores as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. In the study, boys from divorced homes rated themselves less happy than boys from intact homes. And all children from divorced families reported that they had less money and less contact with both parents. The study researched the self-concepts of children whose parents had been divorced for 5 to 10 years and may not have represented the situation-specific state of divorce. Berg and Kelly (1979) studied fifty-seven children (9 to 15 yrs.) who were randomly selected from those participating in a related research project. The Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and the Family Acceptance Scale were used to determine levels of self-concept and to differentiate the types of families. The children were classified into three groups: children from divorced homes; children from intact but rejected families; and children from intact and accepted families. The study, like Hammond (1979) found that the measured self-esteem of children from divorced families was not different from that of children from intact-accepted families. Again there was no control for time since the divorce. These findings may have measured the self-esteem of children

from divorced families in the "restructured family environment."

Some researchers have studied family structure and family conflict as they relate to children's self-esteem. In general, they have compared intact families with single-parent families. Raschke and Raschke (1979) collected data about self-concept, family structure, and family conflict from 289 third, sixth, and eighth grade children. Utilizing the Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and self reports for family structure and family conflict, no significant differences in self-concept scores were found among intact, reconstituted, or single-parent families. However, the study revealed significantly lower self-concept scores for children who perceived greater conflict in their families. This was again supported by findings in Cooper, Holman, and Braithwaite's (1983) study of 467 fifth and sixth grade students. Utilizing two self-concept scales, the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, the researchers found that the perceived closeness of family members was more significant than the type of family structure. In their study, children who reported little family support scored lower levels of self-esteem. It was concluded that when children perceived conflict between parents or between

themselves and their parents, lower self-concept and self-esteem can be expected (Cooper, Holman, & Braithwaite, 1983). Again, length of time of family conflict or of marital rupture was not considered in the study.

These researchers (Raschke & Raschke, 1979; Cooper, Holman, & Braithwaite, 1983) have introduced an important variable in self-concept and self-esteem research of children. Perceived family cohesiveness or family conflict may have a direct influence on children's self-perceptions. For divorcing families, it can be assumed that conflict among family members increase before and during the marital rupture, especially as family members struggle with divorce issues. Hetherington (1979) found that family conflict escalated the year following divorce. Therefore, a critical review of literature about children from divorced families need to consider the length of time since divorce or family conflict.

Summary

Divorce can be described as a situation-specific state which can have an effect on all individuals involved. Specifically, the effects of divorce on children has emerged as an important topic in the area of child development. Family instabilities prior to divorce

combined with the actual divorce can create strong emotional turmoil among parents and their children. Some studies suggest that the emotional, psychological, and environmental changes during and after the divorce can contribute to a host of negative reactions for children at different developmental stages. Self-concept and self-esteem among children from divorced families have not been fully studied. Some studies (Parish & Dostal, 1980; Parish & Taylor, 1979) have shown a negative affect on children's self-concept and self-esteem while others (Hammond, 1979; Berg & Kelly, 1979; Raschke & Raschke, 1979) have shown no differences in children from divorced and intact families. The research in this area is limited and conflicting. Further research will need to control for as many factors as possible, including length of time from divorce and social economic status.

Self-Concept and Self-Esteem Interventions

Major methods of enhancing or increasing the self-concept and self-esteem in the student-age population have been educational programming and counseling. Purkey (1970), in his noted theory of self-concept and achievement, cited the strong relationship between self-concept and achievement. He suggested that there is continuous interaction between self-concept and

achievement. He stated that each directly influences the other. He recommended social approval or praise following mild degrees of success. In this way, small successes with immediate reinforcement paved the road for larger successes resulting in an improved self-concept. Based on Purkey's (1970) theory, many researchers (Eshel & Klein, 1981; Martin, 1983; Scheirer & Kraut, 1979) have implemented study skill approaches for improving self-concept.

Another strategy used as a means to increase self-concept is that of self-expression. The theory is that various forms of self-expression give students opportunities to reevaluate themselves and to gain greater self-confidence in their perceptions and abilities. Garner (1974) modified behavior and improved student self-concept based on the postulate that if students had an opportunity to view and examine their own behaviors and that of others, they would change their behavior in a positive direction. He (1974) utilized six classes of fourth through sixth graders. The students were encouraged to analyze videotapes of classroom behavior and patterns of interaction. It was found that the analyses led to positive changes in self-concept, with the greatest gains in students who analyzed but who were not personally videotaped.

Several commercially packaged affective education programs have been marketed for use in the classroom, among which are the Human Development Program (HDP) and Developing Understanding of Self and Others (DUSO). These programs have received considerable use in the classroom. Medway and Smith's (1978) review showed mixed results regarding enhancement of student self-concept.

The Human Development Program (HDP), known by many as "Magic Circle" was developed by Bessell and Palomares (1970). The program of materials and exercises has been designed to improve student interpersonal communication skills. Three of its objectives have been identified as follows, to help children to: (a) understand the similarities and differences between themselves and others, (b) identify and properly use their own abilities, and (c) recognize their role in social relationships. The emphasis in the exercises is to encourage participants to share experiences and feelings and to listen carefully and reflect to each other what they have heard.

Utilizing the HDP program, Day (1978) reported no significant improvements in self-concept for second, fourth, and sixth grade students who participated for an entire school year. All subjects were pre and posttested with the Self-Observation Scale, the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Scale, and the California

Achievement Test.

An investigation into the effects of the HDP program on self-esteem utilizing the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) was conducted by Mosser and Evans (1973). They studied 142 fifth graders and randomly divided the students into three groups; Group I experienced 20 minute circles, four days per week for 25 weeks, Group II experienced 20 minute circles, two days per week for 25 weeks, and Group III served as the control group. The researchers found that Group II made the most self-esteem level gains with Group I following, and Group III making the least improvement. They generalized that the key to growth in self-esteem via HDP circle sessions was the duration of circles over a period of time, rather than the number of circle sessions.

Dinkmeyer's (1970) program, Developing Understanding of Self and Others (DUSO) has been designed for young children to develop self-understanding and acceptance and to foster social relationships among peers. The program consists of materials such as storybooks, records, puppetry materials, and role-playing cards to be used by students in problem situation cases. The purpose of the activities, according to Dinkmeyer, is "to help the child become more aware of the relationship between himself, other people, and his needs and goals."

In terms of empirical evidence, for every study demonstrating the effectiveness of DUSO in producing affective gains, there is a study showing little effect due to the program (Medway & Smith,1978). Eldridge, Barcikowski, and Witmer (1973) studied the effects of the DUSO program on the self-concept of 96 children (48 treatment and 48 control) in the second grade. The researchers utilized a pre and posttest procedure with two assessment tools. Following a five week experimental period, four sections of the California Test of Personality and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale were given to all students. No significant differences were found between the experimental and control groups as tested by the two scales. The lack of change may have been attributed to the short time period.

In 1972,Koval and Hale studied 312 first, second, and third graders. About half of the students received ten weekly sessions of the DUSO program. Twelve classes were randomly assigned to the treatment or control group. Following the ten week program, four subtests of the California Test of Personality were administered to the students. It was concluded that those subjects in the DUSO program felt more self-reliant and had greater feelings of belonging than those subjects in the control group. In addition, the DUSO participants felt more

capable of setting their own rules of conduct and had a greater sense of personal worth. Koval and Hale (1972) continued to state that children in the third grade showed a greater sense of personal worth and had stronger feelings of belonging following the ten weeks. The grade level differences may have influenced the findings of the study. It is hard to determine whether the differences existed before the experimental program. A pretest-posttest design would have contributed to the findings.

Group counseling as a means for self-concept improvement has been widely used. Generally, this type of counseling is viewed as effective in helping students explore their thoughts and emotions, thereby developing more realistic self-images.

Darrigrand and Gum (1973) described a program in "developmental guidance" that produced significant improvement in the self-concept levels of children in the experimental group. The researchers pre and posttested second and third grade students using the Sears Self-Concept Scale. They randomly assigned four classes into experimental and control groups. The experimental groups were exposed to fifteen weekly sessions. The program included counselor led discussion sessions emphasizing sharing feelings with others through pantomime

and picture drawing, and being aware of and demonstrating one's own special talents. Unfortunately, it is hard to determine whether the counselors were given prior specific training or whether the counselors led the groups according to their own ideas.

In a study of 60 third grade students, Fletcher (1974) found significant increases in the self-concept of students following a program of teacher led "Glasser Discussions." Fletcher (1974) randomly divided the children into three groups: a counselor led group, a teacher led group, and a control group. Utilizing the SCAMIN Self-Concept and Motivation Inventory, Fletcher found increases in motivation for children in the counselor led group.

Fletcher explained that the reason for using the Glasser Discussions was the belief that self-understanding ultimately results in a more favorable self-concept and improved school achievement.

Glasser (1969) explained that the core of these discussions (which he called "class meetings") is the nonjudgemental attitude of the leader. Topics of discussion included such things as the social behavior of those in the class, friendship, loneliness, vocational choice, and student suggested topics. Glasser stressed that the discussions were to be open ended with no

suggestion of right or wrong answers. To make real gains in self-concept, students must believe that the discussion is worthwhile, that others are listening to them, and that everyone gets an opportunity to participate. Glasser (1969) contended that the efficacy of these meetings is based on the idea that "when a child can speak satisfactorily for himself, he gains a confidence that is hard to shake."

Over the years, numerous books and programs designed to create understanding and promote self-concept and self-esteem have been published for parents, teachers and other interested adults. These authors (Bean, 1980; Briggs, 1970; Clemes & Bean, 1980; Elkins, 1978; Wells & Canfield, 1976; Yamamoto, 1972) have purposely written in clear simple language. Their books generally provide suggestions for structured discussions, exercises, recommended reading, and sharing activities with emphasis on praise and recognition. Titles such as: "100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom," "How to Raise Your Child's Self-Esteem," "Your Child's Self-Esteem," and "The Child and His Image," are indicative of the interest and importance of self-concept and self-esteem in our society.

Intervention Strategies for
Children of Divorced Families

Spurred by the rise of divorce rates and the documented difficulties of divorce for many children, an effort has begun to develop strategies for enhancing the adaptiveness of children's responses to divorce (Hetherington, 1979; Kurdek, 1981, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979). Professionals in the mid 1970's depended on their own expertise and subjective ideas for helping children of divorce. Due to the limited amount of research regarding the effects of divorce on children at the time, their ideas were also limited. One of the first books dealing with counseling of children from divorced families is Gardner's (1976) Psychotherapy with Children of Divorce. Then in 1977, many articles were written about treatment techniques for children of divorced families. Kessler and Bostwick (1977) described an intensive one-day workshop developed specifically to assist children ages 10-17 whose families were going through divorce. The goals of the workshop were to : (a) explore values and assumptions about marriage and divorce, (b) be able to express and cope with their own and their parents' feelings, and (c) develop communication skills for handling difficult situations. Strategies to implement the goals included a sentence completion task, assertiveness training, and

viewing of a film dealing with divorce. Achieving the three proposed goals in a one-day workshop with children must have been a difficult task. Unfortunately, effectiveness of the workshop was not established.

Longer programs for children of divorce were developed by Magid (1977), Cantor (1977), and Wilkinson and Bleck (1977). Their programs ranged from six to ten weekly sessions for children, and in one case (Magid, 1977) parents. The intervention strategies utilized small group discussions, role playing tasks, critical evaluations of taped vignettes, and drawing activities. Magid (1977) developed two six week programs, one for children and another to be conducted concurrently for the parents of the children. The treatment programs focused on group discussions of feelings stimulated by the seven vignettes depicting recurring family scenes during times of divorce.

Cantor (1977) was less specific about her ten group sessions for children. The groups were conducted at a school site and involved ten children. Teachers, parents, and the children contributed to the nonstatistical evaluation of the program after the ten sessions. No behavioral changes were noted by parents or teachers at home or at school. Although Cantor (1977) summarized that over the course of the group meetings, children moved

from shamefulness at being children of divorce to one of openness with a desire to share their experiences with their peers.

Wilkinson and Bleck (1977) described an eight week program for 32 children in the upper elementary grades. Their program had been designed to teach children how to deal successfully with crisis situations through the use of group discussions, role playing, and drawing activities. At the end of the program, the researchers surveyed the students. Eighty percent of the students said that they had learned about other people's feelings and ninety-four percent said that they liked the group and wanted a similar group the following year.

Empirical data were not collected for the three interventions discussed. Recognition of children's needs and stresses during and following parental divorce has caused educators and mental health professionals to look more carefully at possible intervention techniques. A review of more current literature continues to reveal the persistent limitations of most intervention techniques. Again, empirical research on interventions with children of divorce is almost nonexistent.

Cook and McBride (1982), L.S. Kaplan (1980), Martin, Martin, and Porter (1983), and Sonneshein-Schneider and Baird (1980) have acknowledged and have stressed the need

for assisting children from divorced families with special emphasis on coping strategies. These authors have not developed specific goals and strategies but make suggestions for using bibliotherapy and group counseling. They briefly described what parents, teachers, and counselors could do to help.

Others like Green (1978), King and Moreland (1983), and Stolberg and Cullen (1983) have developed more comprehensive and specific strategies for children of divorce. Green (1978) developed a series of eight sessions based on an educational framework geared toward helping children cope with stress during their parents' divorce. Green adopted a multimethod approach toward group counseling and designed the program to involve seven elements. The seven elements were labeled after each letter in the word HELPING: (H) health, (E) emotions, (L) learning/school, (P) people/personal relationships, (I) image, interests, (N) need-to-know, and (G) guidance of actions, behaviors, and consequences. Each session has been outlined with specific suggestions and ideas.

King and Moreland (1983) from Irvine Unified School District have developed a project called STAGES, specifically designed to deal with the problems of stressful changes in children's lives. The STAGES program attempts to develop classroom teacher techniques to

improve achievement and behavior during childrens' periods of stressful life changes. This is done with an educationally and developmentally-based curriculum of 87 lessons to teach children how to cope with stress-related life changes and to improve self-esteem. The Irvine Unified School District has used the program since 1981. School officials and the developers have cited many positive trends both in student achievement and behavior. Again no empirical data has been collected.

More recently, Stolberg and Cullen (1983) developed The Divorce Adjustment Project (DAP). The project is currently in it's third year and will be undergoing a three year evaluation. The project was designed with a three-part preventive intervention program to decrease the duration and the intensity of the stressful postdivorce period for parents and children. The three components of the DAP include a school-based children's support group and two groups for parents. A total of 120 children, eight to twelve years old, and their custodial mothers have participated in the study. The families had not been divorced for more than two years. The researchers will be evaluating the effectiveness of their prevention programs by measuring children's behavior and self-concepts using the Children's Behavior Checklist and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. In addition, the

Self-Control Rating Scale, the Parental Response Inventory, and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale will be used to assess the degree to which participants have learned the targeted skills. Findings from this comprehensive study will aid future researchers with informative data. It may provide a possible framework for future empirical studies.

Only one completed empirical study could be found which focused on children from divorced families or changing families. Sheridan (1981) developed and compared two types of in-school programs for children of "changing families." Students in the study were either recommended by school staff or volunteered after reading school bulletins or hearing school announcements. Sheridan (1981) pre and posttested 48 students (23 boys, 25 girls) from the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. The students were then randomly assigned to one of three twelve-session treatment groups: (a) structured group counseling, (b) bibliotherapy, and (c) placebo treatment. Sheridan determined effectiveness by comparing feelings about treatment, knowledge of problems of the changing family, behavior referrals, school attendance, grade point average, self-concept (Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale), and behavior at home (Survey of Behavior at Home). The only finding was that students in

structured group counseling and bibliotherapy felt significantly better about their treatment than the placebo group. No other significant outcomes were established. Limited findings may have been attributed to the small sample size and the program difficulties as noted by the researcher. Students may have been from changing families caused by death, divorce, or adoption but no breakdown of the different types of families were available. Children's responses to parental death could have been much different than their responses to parental divorce. As noted by Sheridan (1981) the study possessed many design problems which could have been improved by increasing the number of subjects, selecting a specific type of child, and developing a more specific program.

Based upon her comprehensive studies on the effects of divorce on children, Wallerstein (1983a, 1983b) has recently developed a conceptualized theory of coping tasks for children of divorced families. The coping tasks follow a particular time sequence beginning with the critical events of parental divorce and culminating in late adolescence and young adulthood. Adhering to a developmental framework, Wallerstein's tasks have been formulated by children's coping efforts as they have responded to divorce. The six tasks are hierarchical with some optimal time constraints. The first two tasks are to

be mastered within the first year and optimally within the first few months. They include Task I, Acknowledging the Reality of the Marital Rupture and Task II, Regaining a Sense of Direction and Freedom to Pursue Customary Activities. Wallerstein (1983a, 1983b) has stated that children's successful mastery of the two immediate tasks are tied in directly to the maintenance of their developmental pace and to the resumption of progress in school. The next three tasks pose their challenge more subtly and have a longer delay period. These tasks may only become salient in mid-adolescence (Wallerstein, 1983b). They include: Task III, Dealing with Loss and Feeling of Rejection; Task IV, Resolving Anger and Self-Blame; and Task V, Accepting the Permanence of the Divorce. The last task which Wallerstein (1983a,1983b) considers most central to adolescence depend on children's resolution of earlier tasks and may be the most important task for children, their parents, and for society. Task VI, Achieving Realistic Hope Regarding Relationships, is achieving and resolving all the conflicts and struggles of their parents' divorce. It is the ability to look carefully and establish an understanding of their parents's divorce with psychological and emotional independence.

Wallerstein's framework of coping tasks are

interrelated, overlapping, and temporally sequential (1983a, 1983b). They represent an additional series of growing up tasks for children due to parental divorce. Successful resolution would enable children to achieve closure with the divorce experience and it would build a sense of independence and pride. In the end, it would ultimately give children the capacity to trust and to love (Wallerstein, 1983a).

Formulating a preventive intervention strategy based on Wallerstein's (1983a, 1983b) psychological tasks could positively contribute to the adjustment of society's children of divorced families.

Summary

The rising divorce rates of the late 1970's resulted with numerous studies on the effects of divorce on children. In addition, strategies for working with children from divorced families have slowly developed. Mental health professionals (Cantor, 1977; Green, 1978; King & Moreland, 1983; Magid, 1977; Wilkinson & Bleck, 1977) utilized individual and group sessions. Other professionals (Cook & McBride, 1982; Martin, Martin, & Porter, 1983) wrote about the need of assisting children of divorce families and made general suggestions for parents, teachers, and counselors. The review of works on

intervention techniques for children of divorced families revealed only one published study that empirically evaluated the effectiveness of their program. Sheridan (1981) developed two types of programs for children of changing families. Unfortunately, his intervention programs were poorly designed and his sample size was small (n=48). The only findings reported were that subjects in the group counseling and bibliotherapy sessions felt significantly better about their treatment than those in the placebo group.

Recently, Wallerstein (1983a, 1983b) has conceptualized a series of coping tasks for children of divorced families. For children to successfully resolve their parents' divorce, Wallerstein (1983a) stressed the mastery of six developmental hierarchical tasks. To date, no specific strategy has been developed that incorporates Wallerstein's six tasks. Certainly, her extensive work and professional knowledge of children of divorced families will lead to specific strategies for assisting children, especially for those having difficulty adjusting to divorce.

As the divorce rate continues, new and more reliable intervention techniques will be developed. The next decade shall witness the development of effective strategies for working with children from divorced families.

CHAPTER III

THE METHODOLOGY

Overview

The review of literature has indicated that children of divorced families are more prone to psychopathology and stress than children from intact, relatively secure families. Available research on the effects of divorce on children's self-esteem are inconclusive. Yet research alludes to the fact that self-esteem may be affected during the period of disequilibrium resulting from parental divorce. Lastly, a review of the literature has shown the rising interest and concern for assisting children who have difficulty adapting to parental divorce.

This research was designed to evaluate a program for enhancing the self-esteem levels of children from divorced and intact families. In addition, the study compared the self-esteem levels of children from divorced families with the self-esteem levels of children from intact families. The final interest in the study was to

determine whether the intervention program created greater changes in levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families than to the self-esteem levels of children from intact families.

Population and Sample

The population from which the sample of students was drawn was from one public school. More specifically, the entire sample was taken from one school in Daly City, San Mateo County, California.

Daly City is located just south of San Francisco. It's population is almost 80,000 with a wide cross-section of cultural and ethnic groups being represented. Approximately 68% of the population are ethnic minority with 22% Filipino, 18% Asian, 16% Hispanic, 8% Black, and 4% other. Daly City has been increasing in the total minority population for the last several years. The median income of residents in Daly City is \$21,570.

Students attending the sampled school were from homes with much less income, ranging from low to low-middle socioeconomic status. The ethnic composition of the school showed a higher concentration of South Pacific Islanders. The ethnic makeup consisted of 26% Filipino, 21% Hispanic, 20% Black, 16% Samoan, 7% White, 6% Asian.

A descriptive feature about the sample population was that the majority of children came from large extended families. Only 15% of the children were from families of three or less. Fifty-three percent were from families of 5 to 6, 16% with 7 to 8, 9% with 9 to 10, and 6% with over 11 people in the household.

Parental permission was granted for all children in the study. Children who were not from divorced or intact families as defined were not subjects in the study. In addition, children who scored high (5 or more) on the Lie Scale of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory were deleted from the study.

The sample of children in the study consisted of 120 students aged 10-14 years. Of the 120 subjects, 107 remained at the conclusion of the study. Ten students scored 5 or more on the Lie Scale of the CSEI, either on the pretest or the posttest. There were no particular patterns for those who were deleted from the study. Of the 10 subjects deleted, six were from intact families and four were from divorced families. The remaining three subjects had transferred from the school. Table 1 provides the numbers and type of subjects in each group.

Table 1
Number of Subjects in Each Group

Groups	Treatment n	Control n	Total n
Divorce	18	16	34
Intact	29	44	73
Total	47	60	107

Research Design

This was a pretest-posttest control-group experimental research study (Borg & Call, 1979) in the area of self-esteem. This design investigated the effects of an intervention program on two types of children (divorce and intact). The experiences of the experimental and control groups were kept as identical as possible with the exception that the experimental group had been exposed to a treatment period. As recommended by Campbell and Stanley (1966), this type of experimental design controls for eight threats to internal validity identified as: history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, regression, selection, mortality, and interactional effects.

Specifically, the study evaluated an intervention technique for enhancing self-esteem in children from divorced and intact families. Self-esteem was measured using two types of instruments: a self-evaluative scale (CSEI) and an observed-behavior rating scale (BASE). In addition, this study compared the self-esteem scores of children from divorced and intact families prior to any treatment period.

Instrumentation

Since the framework for this study is that of Stanley Coopersmith, this was a major factor in determining which instruments and program materials were to be used. His theory focused on the self-evaluative and behavioral aspects of the self-concept. He believed that most feelings of self-esteem came from relationships between individual children and their significant others.

Two instruments currently exist that assesses the self-esteem based on Coopersmith's construct. They are the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) developed by Coopersmith (1967, revised 1982) and the Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) scale redeveloped by Coopersmith and Gilberts (1981). Convergent validity was reported for the BASE and the CSEI ($r=.47$, $p<.01$) by Johnson, Redfield, Miller, and Simpson, 1983. These

instruments were used in this study to assess the self-esteem levels of each subject.

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI)

The CSEI is a self-rating instrument that assesses the following sources of self-esteem: general, social-peers, home-parents, and school-academic. An eight item Lie Scale indicating defensiveness or social desirability is also included and was utilized. Data of subjects who scored 5 or more on the Lie Scale were deleted from the study. The total inventory (school form) consists of 58 statements requiring a "like me" or "unlike me" response. It was developed for children 8 to 15 years. The inventory can be completed in approximately fifteen minutes and can be administered individually or in groups (See Appendix A).

Coopersmith's (1967) original norm group for the CSEI consisted of 1,748 ten to twelve year olds in Connecticut. Mean scores were 70.1 for boys and 72.2 for girls with standard deviations of 13.8 and 12.8 respectively. Sex differences were not significant. When Coopersmith readministered the CSEI to a single class of fifth graders after a five week period, test-retest reliability was .88. For a different sample of fifth grade students, Coopersmith reported test-retest

reliability after 3 years to be .70. Internal consistency using the Kuder Richardson Formula 20 was reported at .81 with a sample of 601 fifth, ninth, and twelfth grade students (Spatz & Johnson, 1973).

In a more recent construct validation study, (Johnson, Redfield, Miller, & Simpson, 1983), internal consistency for the total test was reported at .86. The study of 105 fifth grade students resulted in other findings. The researchers found a positive relationship between academic achievement and the CSEI ($p < .01$). They found internal consistency higher for the total test than for the subscales. They reported the subscale coefficients as follows: general/self - .71, home/parent - .61, school/academic - .61, social self/peers - .61, and the lie scale - .63. Their findings of CSEI's convergent validity with the BASE ($r = .47$, $p < .01$) supports the construct validity of the CSEI.

Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) scale

The BASE is an observational device for rating behaviors of children in school settings that infer children's sense of academic self-esteem. The BASE scale was developed to measure academic self-esteem displayed and observed in children's classroom behavior.

The theory on which BASE was constructed was derived

from Coopersmith (1967). The theory and the research on which the instrument was formulated indicated that children who were functioning at high levels of self-esteem were active, exploratory, and persistent participants in daily activities. They displayed traits of self-confidence and social attractiveness, usually succeeded in their efforts yet coped well with failure, and demonstrated verbal behavior appropriate to social settings.

The BASE is a revision of Coopersmith's (1967) Behavior Rating Form constructed to tap these traits. The sources of self-esteem assessed by the BASE are: student initiative, social attention (focus), success/failure, social attraction (peers), and self-confidence. The scale consists of 16 items and can be completed by an observer in approximately 3 minutes (See Appendix B). In this study, the observers were the social studies teachers who were unaware of the intended purposes of the study.

Norms for the BASE scale were established using 4,000 children from the San Francisco Bay Area. BASE scale totals and subscales were normed for Kindergarten through grade 8 with reference to high, moderate, and low levels of academic self-esteem. Mean scores were 51.6 for boys and 55.2 for girls with standard deviations of 13.5 and 13.6 respectively.

The reliability data reported consist of internal consistency and interrater reliability. One internal consistency coefficient showed a composite correlation of .83 for boys and .84 for girls when the intercorrelations of subscales were averaged. Another internal consistency estimate using item to total score correlations showed a reliability coefficient of .61. Different teachers rating the same student resulted with a .71 interrater stability for the whole scale. In a different study (Johnson, Redfield, Miller, & Simpson, 1983), interrater stability coefficients for six teacher raters ranged .85 to .97 over a two-week period. BASE can be reliably used by several raters over a short period of time.

The Intervention Program

The program, Building Self-Esteem authored by Robert Reasoner (1982) was selected as the major component of the guidance program. The reasons are as follows: first, Coopersmith was one of the consultants during the developmental stages of this program. Coopersmith's interest provided the basic framework for its development. Second, the program is intended for use in the schools and can be used by teachers as well as other mental health professionals. Last, it includes program materials for administrators, teachers, and parents.

The program is divided into three similar components. They include a program guide for teachers, a training program for administrators, and a program for parents. The program was designed to facilitate increased self-awareness using guided group discussions, role playing activities, and structured activity worksheets to supplement five theme areas. Worksheets are provided as self-assessment tools for students and adults. The programs provide a complete description of five prescribed sequential theme areas for building self-esteem and motivation in children. The five characteristics to be developed are: a sense of security, a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and a sense of personal competence.

The intervention program ("educational guidance program") was designed to enhance self-esteem via Building Self-Esteem and to provide an overview of families and families in transition. Two films, "Parenting: Growing Up With Children" and "Feeling Left Out" were used to discuss the current dynamics of families. Changes and diversities of current family living were described and discussed.

The film, "Parenting: Growing Up with Children" showed four types of families. The first family was that of a young couple with a newborn child. It identified the

changes in the lives of the adults and focussed on the new demands of parenting. The second family was that of a large intact family with six children. It showed family life in terms of family needs, roles, and responsibilities. The third family was an intact family with two girls. The mother held a stable full-time job as a computer programmer and the father maintained the home and worked part-time. Family cooperation and quality time between parents and children were emphasized. The last family was that of a single parent with a boy and a girl. The mother presented the viewers with the advantages and disadvantages of not having an adult male in the home. She discussed the need for cooperation and responsibility by all family members. She further discussed her basic priorities as reflected by her hopes for her children's future.

The second film "Feeling Left Out" presented an eleven year old boy experiencing parental divorce. It described and showed the affective and environmental changes encountered by the boy. The film included scenes of supportive friends and teachers. It showed the relative restabilization of the boy with focus back to school and social activities.

The films included a good racial mix of characters and allowed for discussions of current family types.

Procedures and Data Collection

Eight classes of fifth through eighth grade students participated in the study. Four randomly selected classes formed the experimental group and the remaining four classes formed the control group. All students in the eight social studies classes completed a demographic data sheet requesting information about their age, ethnicity, family size and configuration, and the number of years since parental divorce (if from a divorced family). All subjects then completed the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) in classroom groups. Children were informed of confidentiality and that there were no right and wrong answers. Each student was provided with a copy of the scale and items were presented orally to avoid bias due to reading ability. During the following week, social studies teachers rated each subject's classroom behavior using the Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) scale. These initial assessments constituted the pretest data of the study. Although data were collected of all students, only data of students from divorced or intact families were used in the study.

All subjects were initially informed that the researcher was studying the speed of change in children. The number of tests involved and the need for two

assessment periods were explained before subjects agreed to participate.

The fundamental human rights of all subjects were protected and preserved in consonance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (1981). Information and test scores obtained have remained confidential and only group scores and means are reported in the data analysis.

The four classes which formed the experimental treatment group were exposed to an educational guidance program for eight weekly sessions. Each session was approximately forty-five minutes and was conducted by the researcher. Classes in the control group proceeded with their regular class lessons during the eight weeks.

During the fourth week of the educational guidance program, a three session parent program was offered. As mentioned earlier, limited participation and interest, in spite of public relations work by the researcher and school staff, resulted in its deletion from the study.

At the end of the eight week intervention program, all students in the eight classes were posttested with the CSEI and the BASE scale using the same pretest procedures. Again only data collected from children of divorce and intact families were used in the study. It is hard to determine whether students in the experimental

groups showed increases in their levels of self-esteem due to their awareness of being in a special program (Hawthorne Effect). However, few students were even aware that they were receiving extra attention since all classes were frequently visited and all were pre and posttested.

Research Questions

1. Are there any differences in self-esteem levels of children from divorced families as compared to children from intact families before the intervention program?

This research question compares the self-esteem levels of children from divorced families with children from intact families prior to any form of intervention. It surveys the self-esteem levels of two types of children (divorced and intact) and adds to existing research on children from divorced families.

2. Will there be differences in levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families after the educational guidance program as compared to their levels before the educational guidance program?

It is hypothesized that the educational guidance program will enhance the self-esteem levels of children

from divorced families. This research question specifically compares the self-esteem levels of children from divorced families before and after the educational guidance program, to assess the impact of the program on its participants.

3. Will there be differences in levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families who participate in the educational guidance program as compared to the control group of children from divorced families?

It is hypothesized that children from divorced families who participate in the educational guidance program will show increased levels of self-esteem as compared to the control group. This research question evaluates the potential of enhancing self-esteem via an educational guidance program with children from divorced families.

4. Will there be differences in levels of self-esteem for children from intact families after the educational guidance program as compared to their levels before the educational guidance program?

It is hypothesized that the educational guidance

program will enhance the self-esteem levels of all children who participate. This research question will specifically compare self-esteem levels of children from intact families before and after the educational guidance program to assess the potential impact of the program on its participants.

5. Will children from intact families who participate in the educational guidance program show a difference in their levels of self-esteem as compared to the control group of children from intact families?

It is hypothesized that children from intact families who participate in the education guidance program will show increased levels of self-esteem as compared to the control group. This research question evaluates the potential of enhancing self-esteem via an educational guidance program with children from intact families.

6. Will there be differences in the levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families as compared to children from intact families after the educational guidance program?

This research question compares the self-esteem

levels of children from divorced families with children from intact families after the educational guidance program. It is hypothesized that children from divorced families may respond more positively to the educational guidance program than children from intact families.

Statistical Procedures

A 2 x 2 factorial design was used to evaluate the effects of a treatment program on CSEI scores and BASE scores of two types of children (divorced and intact). Two-way analyses of variances and paired t-tests were used to test the research questions. Statistical differences were considered significant if a .05 level was achieved.

More specifically, the statistical analyses evaluated the effectiveness of an eight week intervention program on the self-esteem levels of children from divorced and intact families. In addition, two-way analyses of variance were used to evaluate the relationships and interactional effects between family types and group types on the pre and post self-esteem levels of children.

In general, the independent variables were the family types and the group types. The dependent variables were the pre- and posttest scores of the CSEI and BASE scale. The statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programs.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Overview

The present study was designed to investigate the effect of an intervention program on the self-esteem of two types of children (divorced and intact). In addition, the study investigated possible differences in self-esteem levels of children from divorced families as compared to children from intact families. To examine such effects, self-evaluations (CSEI) were completed and teacher ratings of subject's behavior (BASE) were provided. Six research questions were developed and defined. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSx, 1983) computer programs were used for the statistical comparisons in the analyses of the data.

An overview of Table 2 show some gains in the self-esteem levels for all children following an eight week period. Greater gains are shown for the self-esteem levels of students in the treatment groups as assessed by

the self-evaluative CSEI scores. Only students from the intact treatment group showed gains in their behavioral self-esteem levels (BASE). Mann-Whitney U Tests and analyses of variance were performed to determine any statistically significant differences for the groups. No significant differences were found at the .05 level.

The six research questions and the results of the statistical analyses are presented in the next section.

Table 2
Pre-and Posttest Mean Scores
with Gain Scores for All Groups

Groups	CSEI			BASE		
	Pre	Post	d	Pre	Post	d
Divorce Treatment	58.00	66.23	8.23	51.29	51.52	.23
Divorce Control	60.13	64.13	4.00	56.13	56.86	.73
Intact Treatment	62.20	65.44	3.24	54.17	57.44	3.27
Intact Control	57.90	59.90	2.00	56.59	57.77	1.18

Results of the Analyses

Research Question 1

Are there any differences in self-esteem levels of children from divorced families as compared to children from intact families before the intervention program?

Research Question 1 was tested using a two-way analysis of variance procedure. The independent variables were family types and group types; the dependent variables were children's total pretest CSEI scores and total pretest BASE scores.

Table 3 lists the means of the pretest scores for family types and group types. The higher means indicate greater levels of self-esteem; lower means indicate lower levels of self-esteem.

Table 3

Pretest Means for Family Types and Group Types

Tests	Divorce n=34	Intact n=73	Treatment n=47	Control n=60
CSEI	59.05	59.62	60.34	58.73
BASE	53.50	55.63	52.87	56.58

Summaries of two-way analyses of variance for the total pretest scores of the CSEI and the BASE are reported in Tables 4 and 5. Statistical significance was set at the .05 level.

No statistically significant differences in the self-esteem levels of children from divorced families were found as compared to the self-esteem levels of children from intact families before the intervention program.

In addition, the analyses indicated no statistical differences between the treatment and control groups before the intervention program.

Research Question 2

Will there be differences in levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families after the educational guidance program as compared to their levels before the educational guidance program?

Research Question 2 was tested using paired t-tests to make comparisons of the pre- and posttest self-esteem scores for children in the divorce treatment group. The investigation evaluated the impact of the intervention program on the self-esteem levels of children in the divorce treatment group. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

Table 4
Two-Way Analysis of Variance
of Total CSEI Pretest Scores

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	82.03	2	41.01	.179	.836
FAMILY TYPES	13.96	1	13.96	.061	.805
GROUP TYPES	74.82	1	74.82	.327	.568
2-way Interactions	361.92	1	361.92	1.583	.211
FAMILY GROUP	361.92	1	361.92	1.583	.211
Explained	443.96	3	147.98	.647	.586
Residual	23546.39	103	228.60		
Total	23990.35	106	226.32		

Table 5
Two-Way Analysis of Variance
of Total BASE Pretest Scores

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	426.29	2	213.14	2.272	.108
FAMILY TYPES	63.34	1	63.34	.675	.413
GROUP TYPES	321.03	1	321.03	3.422	.067
2-way Interactions	64.65	1	64.65	.689	.408
FAMILY GROUP	64.65	1	64.65	.689	.408
Explained	490.94	3	163.64	1.744	.163
Residual	9663.82	103	93.82		
Total	10154.76	106	95.80		

The results in Table 6 show statistically significant differences on total CSEI scores. The findings indicate increased levels of self-esteem for children in the divorce treatment group as measured by the CSEI. Table 7 show no significant differences on total CSEI scores for students in the divorce control group. The findings indicate no change in the self-evaluative self-esteem score of students in the divorce control group.

To examine further the significant changes found on the total CSEI scale for the divorce treatment group, paired t-tests were performed on the four CSEI subscales: general, social-peers, home-parents, and school-academic. Statistical significance was set at the .05 level. Results as listed in Table 8 indicate statistical differences for two of the four subscales, general and social-peers. The findings indicate that the intervention program influenced the self-esteem levels of children in the divorce treatment group in the areas of social self-esteem and general self-esteem.

Table 9 and 10 lists the results of the total BASE scale. No statistical significance was found. The findings, indicate no changes in the observed-behavioral self-esteem levels for children in the divorce treatment group and the divorce control group.

Table 6

Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
CSEI Scores for the Divorce Treatment Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-CSEI: Total	58.00	17.08	-3.09	16	.007
Post-CSEI: Total	66.23	14.57			

Table 7

Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
CSEI Scores for the Divorce Control Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-CSEI: Total	60.13	20.19	-1.09	14	.293
Post-CSEI: Total	64.13	12.38			

Table 8
 Paired T-Tests of CSEI Subscales
 for the Divorce Treatment Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-CSEI: General	15.27	4.12	-2.16	17	.045*
Post-CSEI: General	16.94	4.23			
Pre-CSEI: Social	3.94	1.66	-4.37	17	.000*
Post-CSEI: Social	5.66	1.53			
Pre-CSEI: Home	5.00	2.19	-1.43	17	.170
Post-CSEI: Home	5.88	1.67			
Pre-CSEI: School	4.44	1.75	-.44	17	.668
Post-CSEI: School	4.61	1.68			

*Significance was set at the .05 level.

Table 9
 Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
 BASE Scores for the Divorce Treatment Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-BASE: Total	51.29	10.14	-.14	16	.890
Post-BASE: Total	51.52	11.27			

Table 10
 Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
 BASE Scores for the Divorce Control Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-BASE: Total	56.13	8.71	-.59	14	.563
Post-BASE: Total	56.86	10.41			

Research Question 3

Will there be differences in levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families who participate in the educational guidance program as compared to the control group of children from divorced families?

Research Question 3 evaluated the effects of the educational guidance program with children from divorced families by comparing the posttest scores of children in the divorce groups. Table 11 lists the posttest means for each group. The higher means indicate greater levels of self-esteem and the lower means indicate lower levels of self-esteem.

Table 11
Posttest Mean Scores of CSEI
and BASE for the Divorce Groups

Tests	Divorce Treatment	Divorce Control
CSEI	66.23	64.13
BASE	51.52	56.86

Two-way analyses of variance were used to test effects of family types and group types using posttest scores of the CSEI and the BASE scale. The analyses are presented in Tables 12 and 13. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

Table 12

Two-Way Analysis of Variance
of Total CSEI Posttest Scores

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	732.12	2	365.06	1.499	.228
FAMILY TYPES	195.73	1	195.73	.802	.373
GROUP TYPES	451.42	1	451.42	1.849	.177
2-way Interactions	100.26	1	100.26	.411	.523
FAMILY GROUP	100.26	1	100.26	.411	.523
Explained	832.38	3	277.46	1.135	.338
Residual	25149.67	103	244.17		
Total	25962.05	106	245.11		

Table 13

Two-Way Analysis of Variance
of Total BASE Posttest Scores

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	503.13	2	251.56	2.287	.107
FAMILY TYPES	306.38	1	306.38	2.785	.098
GROUP TYPES	138.02	1	138.02	1.255	.265
2-way Interactions	210.31	1	210.31	1.912	.170
FAMILY GROUP	210.31	1	210.31	1.912	.170
Explained	713.45	3	237.81	2.162	.097
Residual	11331.83	103	110.01		
Total	12045.29	106	113.63		

The results show that children in the divorce treatment group and the divorce control group did not significantly differ in their self-esteem scores following an eight week intervention program.

Research Question 4

Will there be differences in levels of self-esteem for children from intact families after the educational guidance program as compared to their levels before the educational guidance program?

Research Question 4 was tested using paired t-tests to make comparisons of the pre- and posttest self-esteem scores for children in the intact treatment group. The investigation evaluated the impact of the intervention program on the self-esteem levels of children in the intact treatment group. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

The results in Table 14 and 15 indicate no change in the self-esteem levels for children in the intact treatment group or intact control group, as measured by the CSEI.

Table 16 and 17 lists the results of the total BASE scale. A statistically significant difference was found for children in the intact treatment group following an eight week intervention program. No significant difference was found for children in the intact control group.

Table 14

Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
CSEI Scores for the Intact Treatment Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-CSEI: Total	62.20	13.21	-1.52	28	.140
Post-CSEI: Total	65.44	16.40			

Table 15

Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
CSEI Scores for the Intact Control Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-CSEI: Total	57.90	13.60	-1.20	43	.238
Post-CSEI: Total	59.90	16.66			

Table 16

Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
BASE Scores for the Intact Treatment Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-BASE: Total	54.17	11.32	-3.40	28	.002
Post-BASE: Total	57.44	12.96			

Table 17

Paired T-Test of Total Pre and Post
BASE Scores for the Intact Control Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-BASE: Total	56.59	8.67	-1.71	43	.095
Post-BASE: Total	57.77	8.12			

To further examine the significant changes found on the total BASE scale, paired t-tests were performed on the five BASE subscales: student initiative, social attention, success/failure, social attraction, and self-confidence. Statistical significance was set at the .05 level. Results as listed on Table 18 show statistical differences for three of the five subscales. The findings indicate that the intervention program influenced behavioral self-esteem levels of children in the intact treatment group in the three areas of student initiative, social attention, and social attraction.

Research Question 5

Will children from intact families who participate in the educational guidance program show a difference in their levels of self-esteem as compared to the control group of children from intact families?

Research Question 5 evaluated the effects of the educational guidance program with children from intact families by comparing the posttest scores of children in the intact groups. Table 19 lists the posttest means for each group. The higher means indicate greater levels of self-esteem and the lower means indicate lower levels of self-esteem.

Table 18
 Paired T-Tests of Pre and Post BASE Subscale
 Scores for the Intact Treatment Group

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Sign.
Pre-BASE: Student Initiative	19.72	4.97	-2.31	28	.028 *
Post-BASE: Student Initiative	20.82	5.21			
Pre-BASE: Social Attention	10.79	2.19	-2.90	28	.007 *
Post-BASE: Social Attention	11.58	2.41			
Pre-BASE: Success/Failure	6.89	1.44	-.49	28	.630
Post-BASE: Success/Failure	7.00	1.75			
Pre-BASE: Social Attraction	9.89	2.28	-2.60	28	.015 *
Post-BASE: Social Attraction	10.75	2.98			
Pre-BASE: Self-Confidence	6.86	1.64	-1.80	28	.083
Post-BASE: Self-Confidence	7.27	1.85			

*Significance was set at the .05 level.

Table 19

Posttest Mean Scores of the CSEI
and the BASE for the Intact Groups

Groups	Intact Treatment	Intact Control
CSEI	65.44	59.90
BASE	57.44	57.77

A two-way analysis of variance of posttest scores was used to test the effects of family types and group types. The summaries of analyses are presented in Tables 12 and 13. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

Results indicate no significant differences between the groups. The findings show that after an eight week period, children from intact families did not differ in their levels of self-esteem whether they were in the treatment group or control group.

Research Question 6

Will there be differences in the levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families as compared to children from intact families after the educational guidance program?

Research Question 6 was tested using a two-way analyses of variance procedure. The independent variables were family types and group types; the dependent variables were children's total posttest CSEI scores and total posttest BASE scores.

Table 20 lists the means of the posttest scores for family types and group types. The higher means indicate greater levels of self-esteem; lower means indicate lower levels of self-esteem.

Table 20

Posttest Means for Family Types and Group Types

Tests	Divorce	Intact	Treatment	Control
CSEI	65.59	62.11	65.74	61.23
BASE	53.67	57.64	54.85	57.58

Although the posttest mean scores for the CSEI (Table 20) suggest more positive levels for the divorce and treatment groups, the two-way analysis of variance for CSEI scores (Table 12) indicate no significant differences at the .05 level.

Results of the two-way analysis of variance for the BASE scale (Table 13) indicate no statistical differences for any of the groups following an eight week period.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to study the self-esteem levels of children from divorced families with children from intact families. The study evaluated the effects of an educational guidance program on the self-esteem levels of 10-14 year old children from divorced and intact families using treatment groups and control groups. The effects were evaluated using pre- and posttest methods for the CSEI, a self-rating scale and the BASE, a observed-behavior rating scale. The treatment lasted for eight weeks.

Six research questions were tested and the results were reported. No statistical differences were found between the initial self-esteem levels of children from

divorced families and the self-esteem levels of children from intact families (Research Question 1).

Statistically significant differences were found to support the effectiveness of the intervention program on the self-esteem levels of children in the divorce and intact treatment groups when comparing their pre- and posttest scores. For the divorce treatment group, significant change was reported for scores on the CSEI, the self-rating scale. Whereas, the significant changes of the intact treatment group were reported for scores on the BASE scale, the observed behavior rating scale (Research Questions 2 and 4). It is unlikely that the changes were due to observer expectations since none of the teachers were aware of those student in the experimental or control groups.

No statistical significances were found to support the effectiveness of the intervention program for enhancing the self-esteem levels of children of divorce and intact families when comparing treatment groups to control groups (Research Questions 3 and 5).

The statistical results indicate no significant differences between family types and group types after the eight week period (Research Question 6). In addition, no interactional effects were shown between family types and group types.

However, the mean and gain scores shown in Table 2 are in the expected direction. Following the eight week intervention period, the treatment groups are shown as scoring higher than the control groups on the posttest scores. That is, children in the treatment groups showed higher levels of self-esteem following the intervention program than children in the control groups.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of an intervention program on the self-esteem levels of children from divorced and intact families. The self-esteem theories and definitions of Stanley Coopersmith provided the theoretical base for this study. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) by Stanley Coopersmith and the Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) scale by Stanley Coopersmith and Raynar Gilberts were used as the criteria for measuring changes in children's levels of self-esteem.

A random selection of classes divided children, aged 10-14 years, into two groups, treatment and control. All students were pretested using the CSEI and the BASE. Only data of students from divorced and intact families (N=107) were utilized. The treatment groups were then exposed to an intervention program designed to enhance levels of

self-esteem in children. Treatment lasted for eight weeks at which time posttests were administered.

Specifically, this chapter discusses the results of six research questions (RQ 1-6). The chapter is organized into three sections: a) a discussion of the present findings, b) the conclusions of the study, and c) recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Present Findings

At the beginning of this study, pretest data revealed no statistical differences between the self-esteem levels of children from divorced and intact families (RQ 1). Much like Berg and Kelly (1979), Hammond (1979), and Raschke and Raschke (1979), children from divorced families did not show lower levels of self-esteem as compared to children from intact families. Therefore, children's levels of self-esteem may not be negatively affected by parental divorce as suggested by Parish and Dostal (1980), Parish and Taylor (1979), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b).

Results of the pretest analyses also showed that the treatment and control groups were statistically similar. That is, the groups (treatment and control) were considered equivalent in their levels of self-esteem prior

to the intervention program. This provided for equal and fair self-esteem level comparisons after the treatment period.

This research study investigated the effectiveness of an intervention program on children's levels of self-esteem. The intervention program was designed to enhance self-esteem levels through the development of five characteristics and through the understanding of families in transition. The five characteristics of Reasoner's (1982) program are hierarchical and overlapping. They include: a sense of security, a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and a sense of personal competence.

Statistical comparisons of the pre- and posttest scores of the treatment groups revealed interesting results. Following the intervention program, children in the divorce treatment group showed significant changes in their self-evaluative self-esteem levels (CSEI), but no changes were found in their observed-behavior self-esteem (BASE) score (RQ 2). In contrast, children in the intact treatment group showed significant changes in their observed-behavior self-esteem (BASE) score but no change in their self-evaluative self-esteem score (CSEI), following the intervention program (RQ 4).

The findings showed that the eight week intervention program was effective in enhancing the self-esteem levels of children only when comparing their levels before and after the program. However, children from divorced families reacted differently from children from intact families.

More specifically, children in the divorce treatment group showed positive self-worth gains on the subscales of the CSEI representing general self-esteem and social-peer self-esteem. Children in the intact treatment group showed positive behavioral gains on the subscales of the BASE representing student initiative, social attention, and social attraction.

Several possible explanations exist for this outcome. Research has indicated that children often respond to parental divorce with disrupted sense of identity, sense of security, and sense of belonging (Kurdek & Siesky, 1980; McDermott, 1970; Wallerstein & Kelly 1980b). These researchers have also cited regressions in behavior and lessened school performance for children of divorce. The results of this study suggest and imply that children from divorced families responded to the intervention program in their areas of personal need. Children from divorced families responded to the intervention program in the areas of sense of

security, sense of identity, and sense of belonging as represented by their increased levels of general self-esteem and social-peer self-esteem. These children evaluated their feelings of self-worth as greater following the intervention program when compared to their feelings before the intervention program.

For children in the intact treatment group, levels of increased self-esteem were noted in their observed-behavior (BASE) ratings following the intervention program. These children did not show changes in their self-evaluative self-esteem levels as measured by the CSEI.

These children who have developed their feelings of self-worth without experiencing parental divorce, showed increased levels of behavioral self-esteem as represented by their subscale scores on student initiative, social attention, and social attraction. These children from intact families with relatively secure environments, responded to the intervention program at the higher levels of self-esteem attainment as described by Reasoner (1982). These children did not lack the basic characteristics of sense of self or sense of belonging, therefore, they responded to the program in the areas of sense of purpose and sense of personal competence. Their self-esteem scores in the behavioral areas of student

initiative, social attention, and social attraction were greater following the intervention program when compared to their scores before the intervention program.

Posttest analyses of self-esteem levels indicated that the intervention program was not significantly effective in raising the self-esteem levels of children when comparisons were made between groups (RQ 3, RQ 5).

Several reasons may contribute to the lack of change. First, intervention studies by Darrigrand and Gum (1973) and Wylie (1979) have emphasized the importance of length of intervention in facilitating gains in self-concept and self-esteem. In addition, Reasoner (1982) has recommended using the Building Self-Esteem program over a significant portion of a school year.

The results of this study indicate that self-esteem levels were affected for children in the treatment groups but that the intervention was not powerful enough to show statistically significant gains when comparing treatment groups to control groups. Therefore, the eight week intervention period of this study may simply not have been long enough.

Second, although validity and reliability have been established for the use of the CSEI, for measuring levels of self-esteem, the CSEI can be described as dependent upon language comprehension skills. Even though

statements were read aloud to reduce reading ability difficulties, the comprehension of statements may have created problems. Many of the statement which children were to respond "like me" or "unlike me" were written as negative statements. A sample of negative statements include:

- a) Things usually don't bother me.
- b) I'm not as nice looking as most people.
- c) I'm never shy.
- d) I really don't like being a boy (girl).

The language comprehension difficulty can be supported by the review of school records which indicate that more than half of the children in the study, speak another language. A comparison of normed scores for the CSEI revealed average mean scores of about 70-72 for children from Connecticut, whereas, children in this study attained mean scores of 57-66. In brief, the lower mean scores can be attributed to the language comprehension difficulty.

The final research question (RQ 6) compared family types and group types to investigate any changes or differences in children's self-esteem levels between and within the groups, following the treatment program. No differences were found. The intervention program did not

create statistically significant differences with children from divorced and intact families. However, pre- and posttest mean scores for the treatment groups showed increases following the intervention period.

As stated earlier, the eight week intervention period may have been too short. In addition, the use of the CSEI with children in the present study may have contributed to the lack of significant changes due to language comprehension difficulties.

Summary

The results of the present study show no significant differences in levels of self-esteem for children from divorced families (of less than five years) as compared to the levels of self-esteem for children from intact families.

The intervention program was found to enhance the self-evaluative self-esteem levels of children from divorced families when comparing their pre- and posttest scores. The program also enhanced the observed-behavior self-esteem levels for children from intact families when comparing their pre- and posttest scores.

No significant changes occurred as a result of the intervention when comparisons were made between the

treatment and control groups. Children in all groups continued to be statistically similar after the eight week intervention period.

Conclusions of the Study

The findings of the present study led to the following conclusions:

- 1) Children from divorced families do not significantly differ in their levels of self-esteem as compared to children from intact families.
- 2) Children from divorced families showed significant gains in their self-evaluative self-esteem levels following the intervention program when compared to their levels before the intervention program.
- 3) Children from intact families showed significant gains in their observed-behavior self-esteem levels following the intervention program when compared to their levels before the intervention program.
- 4) The eight week intervention program was not statistically effective in raising the self-esteem levels of children when comparisons were made between treatment and control groups.

Recommendations for Future Research

- 1) It is recommended that additional research be conducted using the basic design of this study (including the parent program), but substantially increasing the duration of the treatment and the number of subjects.
- 2) It is further suggested that more studies be conducted using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to validate it's usefulness with bilingual/bicultural children. Quite possibly, this could mean the restructuring of self-esteem statements for measuring levels of self-esteem.
- 3) It is strongly urged that more empirical studies of counseling interventions be conducted with children of divorced families. Wherever possible, it is suggested that the length of time since divorce be kept to less than five years and, optimally, less than three years.
- 4) Research by Raschke and Raschke (1979) and Cooper, Holman, and Braithwaite (1983) have stated the importance of children's perceived family conflict as having a direct influence on children's self-perceptions. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies of self-esteem and children of divorced families include perceived family conflict as a research variable.
- 5) Lastly, it is recommended that a follow-up assessment of self-esteem levels of children in this study be

conducted to determine possible long-term or delayed effects of the intervention program.

In brief, this study has provided an empirical evaluation of a program for self-esteem enhancement with children of divorced families. The investigation of the relationship between divorce and the development of self-esteem in children is in its early stages. Future research will need to continue to ask questions about the importance of the relationship. Future research must also continue to establish ways of assisting children of divorced families, especially for those children having difficulty with adjustment. There is a need for further inquiries into this area and for researchers who can continue such studies with vigor and sophistication.

APPENDIX A

PLEASE NOTE:

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These consist of pages:

P. 144 Coopersmith Inventory.

P. 146 Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem.

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APPENDIX B

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
Dissertation Abstract

The Effects of a Psychological Guidance Program
on the Self-Esteem of Children from
Divorced and Intact Families

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of a guidance program (group counseling) on children's levels of self-esteem. Specifically, the study was conducted to determine what effect an eight week program would have on the self-esteem levels of 10-14 year old students from divorced and intact families. The program focused on the enhancement of self-esteem and on the understanding of family types and family transitions.

The subject population consisted of 107 students identified as from divorced (less than five years) and intact families. Under pre- and posttest conditions, subjects were administered the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory-CSEI (Coopersmith, 1967) and the Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem scale-BASE (Coopersmith & Gilberts, 1982).

Random classroom assignment was used to place the subjects in one of two groups (experimental/control). Forty-seven subjects were in the experimental group and received group counseling for eight 45 minute sessions. The remaining 60 subjects (control group) continued with their normally scheduled classes.

To determine the effects of the intervention program, a two group pretest - posttest design was used. The results were analyzed using paired t-tests, two-way analyses of variance, and Mann-Whitney U Tests of gain scores. The two groups were not found to be significantly different at pretest. Following the treatment period, no significant differences between the treatment and control groups regarding self-esteem was found. However, the divorce treatment group showed a significant difference when comparisons were made of the group's pre-and posttest CSEI scores. The positive changes were found on the CSEI Total score, CSEI General scale score, and the CSEI Social-Peer scale score. Subjects in the intact treatment group showed a significant difference when comparisons were made of the group's pre- and posttest BASE scores. The positive changes were found on the BASE Total score, BASE Student Initiative score, BASE Social Attention score, and BASE Social Attraction score. It was concluded that the intervention

program enhanced the self-evaluative (CSEI) self-esteem levels of children in the divorce treatment groups and the intervention program improved the observed-behavioral (BASE) self-esteem levels of children in the intact treatment group. No significant changes were found for subjects in the control groups. The eight week time limit may have been a direct limitation to the study.



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