

A STUDY OF PARENT'S PERCEPTIONS REGARDING SERVICES
PROVIDED IN HEAD START\TRANSITION PROGRAMS
IN FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

by

Rita Graves Giles

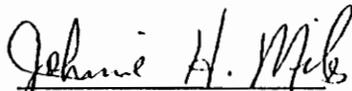
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(ABSTRACT)

Parental involvement in the education of their children is acknowledged to be a major factor in children's successful growth. However, the changing nature of families, particularly low income, minority families has had a significant effect on the nature and extent of such involvement. The national Head Start\Public School Transition project is designed to maintain, among other purposes, the high level of parent participation found among parents of Head Start children as these children enter public schools. The shifting character of these families has made this a difficult task. Little is known of the perceptions of schools and the barriers to participation in public school functions which are present in these families.

The purpose of this study is to discover these perceptions in a group of African American and Hispanic

families who are part of the Virginia component of the Transition Project.

Five families with children currently attending first and second grade classrooms where Transition services and opportunities for participation are offered were selected for in-depth study. The family, the program, the teacher, and the school were studied in detail using observation, interviewing and document analysis in a standard case study format. Field notes and interview material were transcribed and coded using the software package, Ethnograph. Themes, story lines, and concepts were allowed to emerge and were then summarized.

Several themes relating to constraints to participation were identified including: motivational characteristics, expectations of the school, goals for children, teacher receptivity and the culture of the school. It was discovered that these specific parents were interested in participating in their child's education, yet in the Transition program, guidelines and expectations were unclear to them and intimidating to others. A recommendation for working with the parents of children enrolled in Head Start\Transition Programs include providing a variety of opportunities, based on the interest of the parents are available. Additional suggestions for programs such as the Transition Project are provided in this study.

DEDICATION

To my family and special friends. Thanks for your prayers and encouragement to persevere and endure until the end.

O God, I Need Thee (1951)

Howard Thurman

I Need Thy Sense of Time

Always I have an underlying anxiety about things.
Sometimes I am in a hurry to achieve my ends
And am completely without patience. It is hard for me
To realize that some growth is slow,
That all processes are not swift. I cannot always discriminate
Between what takes time to develop and what can be rushed,
Because my sense of time is dulled.
I measure things in terms of happenings.
O to understand the meaning of perspective
That I may do all things with a profound sense of leisure—of
time.

I Need Thy Sense of Order

The confusion of the details of living
Is sometimes overwhelming. The little things
Keep getting in my way providing ready-made
Excuses for failure to do and be
What I know I ought to do and be.
Much time is spent on things that are not very important
While significant things are put into an insignificant place
In my scheme of order. I must unscramble my affairs
So that my life will become order. O God, I need
Thy sense of order.

I Need Thy Sense of the Future

Teach me to know that life is ever
On the side of the future.
Keep alive in me the forward look, the high hope,
The onward surge. Let me not be frozen
Either by the past or the present.
Grant me, O patient Father, Thy sense of the future
Without which all life would sicken and die.

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To the parents who took the time and willingly shared very personal information and perceptions about themselves and the Head Start\Transition Program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Over the past 28 years, Head Start has maintained a high standard of achievement with an impressive record of accomplishments and a continuous commitment to new challenges. It has proven to be a significant and sound investment in our nation's future. Because of widespread support from parents, educators, policymakers and the business community, Head Start has provided comprehensive services to more than 11 million children and extensive opportunities for parental and family involvement (Lombardi, 1990).

Since 1965 the nation has changed dramatically. The percentage of children living in poverty has escalated at an alarming rate. Most American children today are likely to have families in which both parents are working outside the home, or which are headed by single parents. Child care needs and educational reform have resulted in an increased demand and supply for early childhood programs. At the same time, problems such as substance abuse, teen-age pregnancy, homelessness, and juvenile delinquency pose serious threats to child development and family life (Lombardi, 1990, p.22).

Many of these changes have created a new social context to which the Head Start of the 21st century must respond.

To help meet these new challenges, as part of its 25th anniversary, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) convened a panel of experts to develop policy recommendations for the program. The panel recommended the expansion of direct services to children and work with parents to develop new ways to increase parental participation and to enhance parents' growth and development. However, what this increased involvement means for parents and also the extent to which it has made any favorable impact has been unclear (Washington, 1985).

The parental involvement component of Head Start has ranged from assisting in the classroom and with special activities for children, to workshops and the use of community services to include recreation, family planning, and health clinics (Grimmett, 1989). Families confront any number of problems ranging from daily tasks to crisis intervention. Among the problems faced by economically disadvantaged families are employment, health insurance, and family budgeting.

This study documented reported views of parents participation and involvement in Head Start\Transition Programs. Head Start has a remarkable track record with parent involvement and parent participation (Mallory &

documents the continued participation that parents make toward the success of their children in Head Start\Transition Programs. It is not unusual to hear educators say that they have difficulty getting parents into the schools. The question becomes, "why". Thus, it was the problem of this study to discover whether parents perceptions of Head Start\Transition services were related and connected to their involvement and participation.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it represents an area where research has been relatively limited. Although parents have been questioned and surveyed as to the degree of their participation in early childhood programs, there has been little investigation into their expressed views regarding the provision and continued utilization of services. The case approach used in this study addresses those issues. Additionally, this study is significant because an analysis of parents' views provides information that help identify factors related to utilization of services in Head Start\Transition Programs.

Data from this study offers supportive evidence for adjusting and refining the delivery system of services which are provided in current Head Start\Transition Programs. This study of parents determines how their perceptions of

services impacts their involvement and participation. The data from this study should offer program goals and objectives, and provide a basis for modification and operational flexibility in the administration of Head Start\ Transition Programs.

Despite numerous success stories, studies are just beginning to quantify the impact of Head Start parent involvement on families (Murphy & Waxler, 1989). A study of a Head Start Family Impact Project (Leik & Chalkley, 1989), found that parent involvement in a special program to increase involvement in a Minnesota Head Start program increased the sense of family cohesion and adaptability. The project was planned specifically to study the family system and to test the notion that joint parent-child interaction in the context of Head Start would be the most beneficial form of parent involvement.

A total of 81 single female Head Start mothers of White, African American and American Indian descent participated in two separate of assessments. The study concluded that Head Start had positive effects on children's self-evaluation, on parent's evaluation of their children, and on family variables of competence and acceptance, and family functioning.

Leik & Chalkley (1989), discovered from the assessments distinct variations between racial groups in how the parent,

child, and family variables related to each other. It was recommended from this study further efforts to develop methods that are sensitive to the cultural context in which these families live.

Cline (1980 & 1993), examined parental involvement in Head Start programs. These two studies examined the academic, social/emotional development of young children, attitudes and practices of teachers, parents utilization of services and the impact of structural stability and functioning of Head Start families.

Literature related to parent's participation and involvement with Head Start programs showed studies focused on parents needs rather than their perceptions. Although it is generally assumed that perceptions about any service determines whether or not that service is utilized, no systematic studies have been done with parents to determine their perceptions concerning Head Start\Transition services. Therefore, the purpose of this investigation was to explore the gap and in so doing provide educators with a "new" focus and approach concerning services in Head Start\Transition Programs.

Conceptual Framework

Getting parents involved in their child's education is not a "once and done" operation but rather a process that

requires time, effort and persistence (Fredericks, 1987). Several models have outlined the importance of parent participation and involvement in elementary education.

Tangri and Moles (1987) outlined three dimensions of parental participation. First, it can refer to service in schools such as participating in school governance activities and working in classrooms as paid aides or as volunteers. Second, it can refer to home-school relationships which include written and phone communication, home visits by teachers, parent-teacher conferences at school, and parent education and training sponsored by the school. Finally, parent participation can refer to support of learning activities at home. This includes assisting with homework, tutoring, and providing educational enrichment activities.

Rich (1987) outlined a basic parent involvement model, initiated by the federal government in an effort to address the needs of schools and families. The components of the model include: Parents as Volunteers, Parents as Receivers of Information About the School, Parents as Policymakers at the School, and Parents Working with their Children at Home. This model supported not only parent involvement as having a positive impact upon achievement and social performance but also provided insight as to the feasibility of implementing parent involvement programs in the schools. The model

identified the aforementioned categories of participation which directly involves parents in the education of their child. Of the various categories of this model, parents working with their own children at home offered the most substantive research and was the most appropriate for widespread involvement of families.

Sandfort (1987) designed a model proposing the goal of parent participation to produce a climate of shared responsibility for student learning. This model emphasizes a need for parents not to be volunteers; but partners. The significance of this model is it that incorporates parent participation in the following areas: parents as volunteers, parents as potential partners, and communication with parents.

A survey conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (1984) as part of the Parent Involvement Education Project revealed from using the components of this model that parents wanted teachers to send more work home related to classroom activities. Parents were also interested in learning more about their role as a co-learner.

Galen (1991) proposed a model to increase parent involvement in elementary schools. Although Galen's model is one not used in Head Start\Transition Programs, it was chosen as a means to explore parents and school staff needs

and expectations for this study. This model outlined an eight step procedure for the expansion of parental involvement. The steps include:

- * The principal and other district administrators analyze school needs.
- * A committee of teachers, concerned PTA parents, and the principal identify needs to be addressed by parent\staff collaboration.
- * Gradual increasing the parental involvement to outline goals where parents would benefit personally from their involvement and to maximize parents inclusion in teaching\ learning activities.
- * A committee to determine what training is needed for both parents and teachers to make the partnership successful.
- * Efforts to spread the word about the benefits of parental involvement to parents, children and staff.
- * Ideas to increase involvement of parents unable to come to the school generated through brainstorming by a committee.
- * Ways to consistently reinforce appreciation by the principal to the staff and parents.
- * A final decision by both parents and faculty on the evaluation of the program on activities and programs (Galen, 1991).

This was the most comprehensive model of the four. The original objectives of Head Start were: 1) to encourage the child's self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity and self-discipline; 2) to increase the ability of the child and family to relate positively to each other and outsiders; 3) to increase the sense of self-worth of the child and family members; 4) to help establish patterns and expectations of success; 5) to improve the child's physical health and abilities and 6) to improve the child's mental

process and skills (Washington, D.C. DHHS, ACYF, 1984). The philosophy and goal of Head Start is that its programs must be comprehensive and interdisciplinary in nature. Each program must have an educational component; a health component, including nutritional, dental, and mental health services; and a social services component. Services for handicapped children must also be provided (Murphy & Waxler, 1989). Galen's model was used to blend the ideas and philosophy of Head Start to investigate parental participation with Head Start\Transition parents.

There is considerable evidence to support the contention that open communication with parents provides high dividends for administrators, counselors, parents, and pupils. With many different cultures and ethnic groups represented, parental involvement and participation is one of the most unique and distinctive features of Head Start (Murphy, 1989). Using a case study approach, the aim of this study was to determine what participation in Head Start\Transition means to a specific group of minority parents and whether participation influenced their utilization of services.

Research Questions

In order to define fully parents' perceptions of services, the following questions were pursued.

1. What does "participation" mean to parents in the Transition program?

This question addressed the following issues: parents thoughts concerning participation, parents perceptions of ways in which they considered participating, criteria parents used to participate, and how parents viewed their participation over a period of time.

2. What is the extent of utilization of services made available through the Transition program?

This question addressed the following issues: process by which these parents participate in activities, events, programs, specific services, and educational resources, parents' perceptions of these services, and how parents view their participation in these programs over a period of time.

3. What is the familial and social context of parental involvement in the Transition program?

This question addressed the following specific issues: parents interaction with Transition staff, and other community/school staff and how they influenced parental involvement; parents' perceptions of the program, school, academics, resources, activities, and services made available and used, barriers encountered and how parents viewed their involvement in this context over a period of time.

4. What was the historical factors that contribute to parents' perception of services?

This question addressed the following specific issues: parents' historical/demographic profile, parents' experiences with Head Start, how parents utilized Head Start services, and how parents view themselves in relation to involvement in services and participation in programs with other Head Start parents.

With the application of a parent involvement model, this study, therefore, sought to understand parents perceptions that influenced their participation to utilize or not utilize services made available in Head Start\Transition Programs. In pursuing this objective, these research questions were designed to guide the process of this inquiry.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Minority refers to persons who are African American and Hispanic.

Parent refers to specified adult caregiver in the home.

Parent Involvement means having a necessary part, condition or result which refers to being included in learning activities at home and school, assisting with homework, tutoring and providing educational enrichment activities. It also includes written and phone

communication, home visits by teachers, parent teacher conferences at school and parent education seminars.

Parental Participation pertains to "joining and/or sharing" oneself with others, i.e. ideas, time, skills, in programs, resources, and activities which include school programs, committee meetings, conferences, and volunteering.

Perception is the act or process of affectively understanding situations, events, persons, or operations with which there is an association.

Transition Services involves public assistance received through Social Services, with a range of medical, dental and nutritional services for children and parents in addition to early childhood education and parent seminars.

ASSUMPTIONS

One of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered and measured (Merriam, 1988). This study assumed that parents with children in Head Start\ Transition Programs had various perceptions regarding services. This study further assumed in order to properly understand the opinions and views of Head Start\Transition parents, an intensive interview process involving the study sample that probes the way they perceive these services must

be used. Finally, this study assumed that there was a direct relationship between parents' participation and involvement and their perceptions regarding services.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This field study cannot be generalized to all parents with children in Head Start\Transition Programs in Fairfax County Public Schools. The results only represent the responses of those who participated in the case studies. Also this study does not consider all the possible variables that might account for the differences among the types of Head Start\Transition parents. Further investigation is needed to isolate specific variables and to more accurately define various types of parents with children in Head Start\Transition Programs. Some of the additional variables which need to be considered are: gender and family size.

This study represents one of several important steps toward identifying patterns of parental participation among different types of families. The challenge ahead is to develop both participation and involvement strategies that will allow educators to work effectively with each type of family.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

One of the frequent claims of researchers, counselors, administrators, and practitioners involved in intervention is that programs which actively involve parents are more effective than those that do not (White, Taylor, & Moss, 1992). The claim that parent involvement is essential for educational success is not new. Frederick Froebel, one of the primary contributors to the establishment of America's kindergarten programs, argued that:

"All are looking for reform in education...If building is to be solid, we must look to the foundations -- the home. The home education of rich and poor alike must be supplemented...It therefore behooves the state to establish institutions for the education of children, of parents and of those who are to be parents (Hauschmann, 1897, p.183)."

The emphasis on involving parents in the education of their children has continued unabated to the present. In every decade since the turn of the century, many have advocated vigorously that parents should be involved in all educational efforts (Fein, 1980; Floring & Doeckki, 1983). Terms like parental involvement, parental participation, and parental education are so broad they can refer to different types of activities. For example, some of the parental involvement literature focuses on the partnership between

families and school (Epstein, 1990; Kroth, 1989). Other literature focuses on programs designed to teach effective parenting and child-rearing skills (Gamson, Hornstein, & Borden, 1989; Nye, 1989). Yet others focus on the appropriate role of parents in the normal developmental process (Vartuli & Winter, 1989; White, 1975). Although all of these are important aspects of the broad area of parental involvement and participation, this study examined the parents perceptions regarding their participation and involvement in programs and services in Head Start\Transition Programs.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section gives a brief description of Head Start and Head Start\Transition Programs, the second section reviews parental involvement in school programs, the third section provides research studies concerning parental participation in school activities and programs, the fourth section provides evaluation studies of Head Start parents, and the fifth examines the future with Head Start\Transition Programs.

Head Start and Head Start\Transition Programs

Head Start began during the summer of 1965 as a part of the "President's War on Poverty", administered through the Office of Equal Opportunity. The first publications

appearing in 1965 and 1966 were largely descriptive. In 1967 articles began to question the effects of Head Start and the importance of Follow Through Transition Programs.

The Head Start\Transition Project, based on legislation sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy, is designed to accomplish what Follow Through hoped to do, namely, ease the transition for children from Head Start to kindergarten through grade three. As each Head Start child enters kindergarten, the child's parent, Head Start teacher, and kindergarten teacher meet to discuss the child's transition. Both Head Start and the school combine their work with the community agencies to ensure that comprehensive health and social services are available to the children and their families throughout the primary grades. Provisions are also built-in to ensure parental involvement and program evaluation (Ziegler, 1992).

The transition from Head Start to kindergarten can be particularly difficult for children moving from one culture to another. While Head Start has proven effective in preparing lower income children for public school, there are often major differences between Head Start and the local kindergarten that make entry into school extremely difficult for some children.

In the spring of 1986, the Head Start Bureau launched a special initiative to make this transition from preschool to

kindergarten less stressful for Head Start children and their families. Under this effort, 15 Head Start grantees were awarded funds in 1986 to conduct 2-year demonstration projects. An additional 15 projects were funded in 1987. Each received a grant of \$12,000 per year to try out a variety of approaches to transition.

The Head Start\Transition Project provided the following activities for children: visits to the kindergarten classroom; an opportunity to meet with a kindergarten teacher; information on how elementary school would differ from Head Start; and opportunities to participate in classroom activities designed to help them practice skills needed for school.

For parents, the project provided information on how to deal with the school their children would be attending. Parents were given suggestions for summer activities that would help their children practice the skills they would need for kindergarten. After one year of existence, the Administration for Children, Youth and Families conducted a formative evaluation study of the Transition projects. The study found that almost all of the grantees had engaged in joint planning with the school system and its staff. Parents rated Head Start\Transition Programs high on preparing them for the transition, but some parents indicated a desire for more information, more academic

preparation for their children, and more visits to the elementary schools.

The question of parental involvement in Head Start\ Transition Programs is of major consideration. To what extent and for what purpose should parents be involved? Federally funded programs, such as Head Start, restrict the choice variable because parental participation is a requirement in their operation. Participation as a member of an Advisory Board is the most prevalent option. This body meets regularly with the staff, to help evaluate the program, and to make day to day decisions about program policy. Regardless of the degree to which parents are involved in the planning, evaluation, or decision-making procedures, the process of being involved has been rewarding for parents, teachers, and students.

Few studies have been documented regarding parent perceptions of Transition programs. McDonnell (1987) found that parents were satisfied with the quality of educational instruction and the overall program offered by local schools. Myers and Blancher (1987) reported that parents were satisfied with their child's teacher, school personnel, and the school program in general.

Epps and Myers (1989) found that parents were satisfied with the teaching their child received across four educational categories (domestic, community, vocational, and

leisure). Parents in this study were surveyed to determine what their involvement had been in the transition process, what kind of involvement they would desire, and what responsibilities they would be willing to assume in order to be involved. The survey found parents desired involvement of some kind, however, no mention was made of whether or how parents were involved in the Transition program or about the basis of their perceptions of the program.

In summary, parental participation in Head Start\ Transition Programs is important and necessary. By assessing the profile of parental involvement to include the socio-economic mobility of the parents being served, the type and level of involvement, and roles that the parents are assuming are essential factors for Head Start\ Transition Programs to achieve their desired outcome.

Parent Involvement in School Programs

Efforts to involve low income parents in their children's education over the past 20 years suggest that improvement of parental involvement occurs as a result of some element of pressure from the school. Teachers and administrators must also be motivated to try new strategies (McLaughlin & Shields, 1987). The rationale for parent involvement in a child's education is based on the assumption that because a child, particularly a young child,

spends the majority of the time with his or her parents or family, services to that child's family should provide the greatest impact on that child's development (LaCrosse, 1982; Robinson, Rosenberg, & Beckman, 1988). Early childhood education programs stress parent involvement because they recognize the "importance of the family, rather than the school, as the ultimate source of children's values and behavior" (Cole, 1986 p. 91), and because "sound early education is an extension of the home, not of the school" (Elkind, 1986, p.636).

Previous studies that have examined parent involvement in a child's education include Weber and Stoneman (1986) and Chavkin and Williams (1989). Weber and Stoneman found that single, minority-race mothers of lower income and education were less likely to attend meetings for their children. The same mothers were more likely to put responsibility for educational decisions affecting their children on the educational service providers, and more likely to believe their input was not of importance in the final outcome of meetings. Chavkin and Williams (1989) found that parents of lower income were just as interested as parents of middle and higher income in participating in their child's education, but that parents of lower income required additional support and training to participate effectively. The study further analyzed parental demographic variables

such as race, education level, and income to determine whether differences in parent involvement and demographics existed within early childhood programs.

A large percentage of parents in this study were unaware of the importance of their child's initial evaluation to determine eligibility for the program. Findings of Chavkin & Williams (1989) determined a need for more training and support to parents of lower socioeconomic status so these parents would believe that their input was important and their opportunities for involvement in the decision-making process were greater.

Helping low socioeconomic minority parents become involved in their children's education is important. Although many Head Start program efforts have focused on the child, the parental involvement component is viewed as the key to the upward mobility of Head Start parents and other family members (Oyemade & Washington, 1989). The goal of this effort is to provide parents with knowledge and services that would enable them to improve their knowledge and skills, economic status, and provide a more favorable developmental environment for their children (Ziegler, 1992).

A federally funded elementary education program focusing on parental involvement and participation, is the Follow Through Program. Follow Through is a community

service program established in 1967 for children in kindergarten and the primary grades from low-income families. This program was designed to sustain and expand upon the gains made by children in Head Start or similar preschool programs. This program has provided both qualitative and quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of parental involvement (Olmsted, 1991). Parents were used in the program as decision makers, as advocates, and as teachers. Ira Gordon (1978) researching the Follow Through Program, concluded that all forms of parent involvement help, but that the more comprehensive the involvement, and the more roles there are in a school for parents to play, the more effective it will be.

Programs that involve parents in the schools can play a major role in creating a desirable atmosphere for teaching and learning. However, there are obstacles in the way of parental participation in the schools. Many schools are not interested in parents being involved, and many parents are reluctant to become involved as well. Some schools pay "lip service" to the importance of parental participation but do not give parents the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the life of the school. Moreover, racial, economic, educational, and other differences between home and school make parents apprehensive about becoming involved.

In schools serving a wide socioeconomic spectrum of

students, a special problem exists. Less-well-educated parents and parents with fewer "mainstream" social skills are often reluctant to become involved in the schools even when they are invited to do so (Comer, 1986). Thus, in many schools, parents are called on to participate in areas where they are most likely to feel comfortable or uncomfortable.

Researchers, practitioners, and policy makers consistently rank parental involvement high among the components of effective schools. Two decades of research on family environment show that children have an advantage in school when their parents continuously support and encourage their school activities. Not all families, however, know how to become involved in school-related activities, and not all schools actively encourage and direct parental involvement (Epstein, 1987). Parents' commitment to the school, involvement with activities at school and home, and involvement in governance and advocacy meetings have been identified as basic ways by which parental involvement can be increased. A comprehensive program of resources and services should include all of them. However, to make parental involvement and participation successful, an awareness of the range of parents' ideas, energies, needs, cultures, languages, and lifestyles should be established before programs are developed and designed.

Although most of the research on parental involvement

tends to be general, the importance and benefits of parental involvement are verified by a variety of studies and lead to the same positive conclusions. Dealing with the barriers that hinder parental involvement is an area which educators must be prepared to face. For example, because of work schedules, some parents may not be able to attend parent-teacher conferences at regularly schedule times. Language and communication is also a powerful barrier to involvement especially with non-English speaking families. In a time of increasing cultural diversity, schools and communities must make available a broad range of opportunities for parental involvement by presenting and explaining those opportunities to parents.

Parent Participation in School Activities and Programs

A growing body of professional literature has affirmed that parental participation is an indispensable ingredient of academic excellence (Epstein, 1987; Turnbull, 1983). Findings from different ethnic groups over the past two decades have revealed that an active parent-school partnership can contribute not only to the enhancement of the educational performance of the students, but also to the improvement of parenting skills and family life (Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe, 1985; Lillie, 1975; Schaefer, 1972).

Lynch (1987), conducted a survey on parent

participation by ethnicity: a comparison of Hispanic and African American families. The results of the survey indicated Hispanic parents responded strongly to issues related to culture. They spoke of the school and its programs respectfully and indicated that they felt that the teacher was the best resource. In general, the parents felt that the educational decision making was the school's job, and they entrusted that role to the school system and its personnel. For the African American families, general communication problems with the school were listed as the major barrier. They recommended that the school provide more communication and child care. Families in other ethnic groups felt more convenient times for meetings and activities to increase participation were the most important consideration.

The multicultural research on parent involvement is clear concerning the strong connection between parent participation and academic success; there are, however, some major barriers that stand in the way of effective programming efforts. Although some barriers are more often associated with minority families, obstacles to effective parent involvement occur regardless of cultural or minority status (Chavkin, 1989). Understanding these barriers needs to be a prerequisite to working effectively with all families.

The family of the 80's and 90's is different from the families in the preceding decades. A brief look at the current socioeconomic picture indicates that there are a number of barriers hindering or preventing effective communication, collaboration, and partnership between Head Start\Transition Program parents and schools. Among the important changes in the American family which have contributed to these barriers are the following: a decline in the marriage rate; an increase in the divorce rate; a rise in the number of single-parent homes; an increase in the number of dual-earner families; and increase in the number of families below the poverty level (Family Service America, 1987).

Other barriers include such "practical matters" as: lack of transportation; lack of time for both parents and teachers; inadequate child care; inflexible employer-leave policies; skeptical or negative attitudes of teachers and administrators toward parents; lack of materials; lack of knowledge and information about the best practices; and lack of funding (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986).

Even the definition of parent involvement is sometimes a barrier. While agreeing on the general concept of parent involvement, people mean different things when they use the terms involvement and participation. It is important that the definition of both parent involvement and participation

be clarified and a consensus reached on exactly what the term means so that the needs of the parents can be satisfied (Chavkin, 1985). For example, do minority parents understand the school calendar, school schedule, staff roles, attendance rules, course requirements, participation in clubs, benefits and responsibilities of extra curriculum activities and programs, educational services, homework policies, or school closing?

For the purposes of this study, parent involvement means "task oriented" behaviors which refers to providing support to the child in learning activities at home and school, assisting with homework, tutoring, and providing educational enrichment activities. Parent involvement also includes written and phone communication, home visits by the teacher, parent teacher conferences at school, and parent education seminars. Parent participation refers to the "taking part in" and the sharing of oneself, i.e. ideas, time, skills, in programs, resources, and activities which include school field trips, programs, committee meetings, classroom aide, and volunteering.

Trust and mutual respect between the home and school are strong factors which govern parents behaviors, attitudes and perceptions toward participation. Schools that serve the poor and minority groups have even greater difficulties in building trust and agreement between home and school

(Comer, 1986). The teaching methods, achievement levels, credentials of the teacher, parenting resources, and the quality of the curriculum content are aspects of education that are of little value for many low-income minority and non-English speaking parents. The reasons for this are lack of understanding and information. Therefore, parent participation in a well-structured, well-managed program are invaluable resources for the academic, social, and psychological development of children.

Schools across the country are starting to put together new and broader definitions of parent participation. According to Davies (1991), the new definitions of parent involvement go beyond the term "parent", which is too narrow to describe today's reality. "Family" is considered a more encompassing term. The most significant adults in the lives of many children may be grandparents, aunts, and uncles, brothers and sisters, or even neighbors who provide child care. The new definitions also go beyond heads of families to include all of the community agencies and institutions that serve children.

Urban families need support and assistance particularly those under stress because of economic hardship, the struggle to find adequate housing, or barriers of language and social custom. Urban schools and Head Start centers also need support and assistance to understand families so

that communities can contribute to children's academic and social development. With Head Start families, improving the capacity to foster the social and academic growth of their children means building on the strengths of those families and of their diverse communities. Cultural differences are not diseases to be treated but healthy opportunities for learning (Davies, 1991). The definitions outlined by Davies emphasizing families can be more effective in all aspects of child-rearing.

In conclusion, Transition programs and research on families with children in the elementary grades have shown that families of all socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups want to learn more about how to help their children learn and succeed. Too often, lower socioeconomic families, particularly minority women, are described as if they were a homogeneous group. Personal preferences and choices rarely enter into discussions of how they organize, maintain, and sustain their families. As is true for many minority groups, investigation of their values, beliefs, and attitudes is rarely extensive beyond studies of child rearing. How they perceive and participate in surrounding social institutions will inevitably influence their perspectives on their own families and children. Given the current mandate for Head Start to be responsive to the changing needs of American families in an extremely

challenging and complex society, this research addresses parents' own views of involvement and participation in Head Start\Transition Programs.

Evaluation Studies of Head Start Parents

Although some studies have shed light on the effects of Head Start on parental attitudes, there has been no systematic research on the effects of Head Start on minority parents concerning employment, educational status, personal aspirations, and other measures of economic mobility (Oyemade & Washington, 1989). In a study conducted at four sites: Baltimore, Maryland; Nashville, Tennessee; Chicago, Illinois; and Akron, Ohio; parental activities at local Head Start centers were identified and rated during two of these years: 1978, 1982, 1984. The centers were rated either high, medium, or low concerning involvement based on specific criteria such as the number of parents who participated in various Head Start activities. The results of the study suggest that Head Start, and particularly its parental involvement component, has had a positive effect on the upward mobility of Head Start parents.

Overall, these findings clearly suggest that Head Start parental involvement is an appropriate and effective way to advance the skills knowledge of Head Start parents far beyond the acquisition of child development information

(Oyemade & Washington, 1989). The effectiveness of the Head Start parental involvement component is partly determined by the parents opinions of the program as it is implemented at their local Head Start site. According to The Handbook For Involving Parents In Head Start (U.S. Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, Administration for Children, Youth, & Families, 1980) participation in the parent program should lead to positive effects in five outcome areas: effective parenting, self-esteem and confidence, family life, education of the parent, and employment.

In a sample of Chicago Head Start mothers from three centers, Slaughter (1989) conducted a descriptive study focusing on the relationship between degree of parental involvement, preferred parental activities, parental personality processes and social background. The rate of parental participation was subjectively judged. The four criteria evaluated were: approximate number of parents in the classroom in both volunteer and paid positions, number of nonclassroom activities, amount of community involvement, and number of parents taking part in the agency. Eligible parents had been involved in the center during 1982, 1984 and 1987. Parental involvement was assessed through an interview designed by Oyemade & Washington (1989) and specifically created for the evaluation of Head Start parental involvement programs.

Evidence was found that the Head Start center contributed significantly to the level of parental involvement by increasing the availability of options to parents interested in various activities. The findings support the literature concerning parental involvement in Head Start benefiting the parents' personal growth and development (Slaughter, 1989). Although this study was not on a public school Head Start\Transition Program, it affirmed the need for a thorough evaluation of parental involvement. It suggested including diverse measures of parental involvement, mostly directed at assessing the parents' own perceptions and direct observations of Head Start centers with differing patterns and rates of participation.

Madison (1976) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the perception of parents regarding services provided in Head Start programs in Washington, D.C. The parent population for eight Head Start centers operated by the National Capital Day Care Association in the District of Columbia was selected as the sample for the study. A sample of 106 parents was selected by choosing every fourth from a total of 424 parents identified by the personnel center.

A modification of an attitude questionnaire described by Thorndike (1955) was used as the primary tool to collect the data regarding the parents' perception of services in

the Head Start programs. The questionnaire, with instructions, was completed and administered once to three groups of five parents.

The findings indicated parents recognized the importance of the listed services to the development of their children. The findings also determined a relationship between parents' age and how important the services were viewed. It was concluded from the data that education and employment had minimal bearing on how parents felt about the importance of comprehensive services.

Overall, these findings indicated that Head Start parental involvement is an appropriate and effective way to advance the skills and knowledge of Head Start parents far beyond the acquisition of child development information. Low-income families, particularly minority families, in recent years are more likely to be headed by women due to the decreasing rate of two-parent families, increasing family disruption, and higher unemployment rates among men. These women are likely to be younger than in the past, and more likely to be working. A primary function of the parent involvement program must be to enhance its effectiveness in improving the economic viability of poor families, its effectiveness in serving minority families and its impact on children.

The Future With Head Start\Transition Programs

Since the inception of Head Start in 1965, provisions have been made to involve parents actively in programs for preschool children. The Head Start Manual of Policies and Instruction (U.S. Government Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D.C., 1980) provides that parents must be recognized as an important part of Head Start. Every Head Start program must have effective parental participation. The kinds of parental participation in Head Start include: participation in the decision-making process involving the nature and operation of the program, participation in the classroom, volunteers or observers, and participation in educational activities which they have been involved in developing.

Ziegler (1989) asserts that the actual extent of parental participation in Head Start has not been fully documented. It is known, however, that there are numerous limitations to parental involvement such as a lack of convenient and affordable transportation, a lack of child care for other children in the family, and a frequent rotation of participating parents.

It is a sobering fact that even given the best of intentions by the program and the variety of offerings, some parents will choose not to participate in their children's program. Perhaps, the lack of interest, or desire, are

typical reasons why some parents choose not to get involved (Fredericks, 1990).

Teachers, counselors and schools must be prepared to deal with the barriers to parental involvement. Schools must make available a broad range of opportunities for parental involvement and explain those opportunities to parents. They must also allow parents to select forms of participation with which they are most comfortable.

Building both self-confidence and self-esteem with parents is a major goal of Head Start programs. The guidelines emphasize the importance of "grass roots" decision-making as a means of enhancing this goal as well as providing explicit means of involving the parents in regular program activities.

Conclusions

In summarizing the literature (which is representative, not exhaustive), few studies were found relating to parental perceptions of services provided in Head Start\Transition Programs. However, there is evidence that educators commonly believe that the environmental factors which have the greatest impact upon the educational attainment of children is influenced by the parent and family setting. The involvement of parents can often bridge the gap between the home and the school. When parents are active

participants in determining the direction of programs involving their children, they tend to become more comfortable and supportive in their approach to those who administer services to them. In 1976, Ira Gordon wrote the following:

Working with parents is not a missionary but a cooperative program, one we have learned can be done. We believe, with good evidence, that virtually all parents want a better life for their children than they have had...We know that parents, when properly approached, want to be involved in the direction of their children. They will become involved in a variety of ways when approached as equal partners on their own territory in ways that make sense to them.

Success requires an outreach operation and an attitude that encourages an outreach operation. We have found that parents, regardless of region, race, or economic status, respond when the school reaches out to them in positive, nonthreatening, nonscolding, nonmanipulative ways (Gordon, 1976).

Galen's Parent Involvement Model

Galen's parent involvement model assumes that participation and involvement in activities, programs, resources and services can increase the inclusion of parents in a school system. The approach to this goal is systematic according to Galen. Based on a continuum of parental involvement, which shows a range of parent involvement from high to low, Galen's model points to the fact that the forces for participation and involvement begin with the overall school administrators and staff and extends to the parents.

Analyze Parents' Needs (Point 1)

The first point of the model suggest that the principal and other school district administrators analyze the school needs. A crucial component for success of the Transition program is the involvement of the school and administrators. A research-based policy statement, *Right from the Start* (1988), from the National Association of State Boards of Education concluded parents need to be included in decision making about their own child and on the overall early childhood program.

It is very important for teachers and principals to have flexibility to respond to changing needs and

discoveries within the building. Control over major decisions about resources, services, curriculum, schedules and teacher assignments builds commitment, and professionalism among the staff (Carnegie, 1989; Chubb, 1989; Goodlad, 1984).

Specific Parents' Needs (Point 2)

Representation of parents on planning committees are the only insurance for parental support according to Galen. The most critical dimension in providing education programs for parents is to make sure that the programs offered are responsive to parents' needs and interests as the parents perceive them. Some form of needs assessment is important, whether it be through interviews, questionnaires, group meetings, or some combination of these activities.

All parents should have an opportunity to respond, and every effort should be made to ascertain that the sample of parents is representative of the whole body. This may mean translating questionnaires into relevant languages, reaching out to "hard-to-reach" parents and using teams of parents to contact one another. Gathering information from parents is important because it demonstrates that parent's concerns and needs are of interest to school personnel (Epstein, 1988).

Several Head Start\Transition Programs (treatment schools) have various ethnic committees and organizations

which meet several times throughout the school year to brainstorm issues and ideas ranging from academics to particular family concerns. The principal and assistant principal are part of these meetings.

Importance of Goals to Parent Involvement (Point 3)

The goals to increase parent involvement suggest to start small, target at least one area where parents would benefit personally and feel comfortable for their involvement and participation in teaching-related activities, programs, or services. There are major differences in parent involvement for parents and children between Head Start and the Transition program.

Aside from classroom participation, many parents require information designed to meet their basic obligations as parents as well as needs not directly related to their parenting role: e.g., self-esteem, educational services, career information, job-seeking skills, financial management.

Training for both Parents and Teachers to Establish Partnership (Point 4)

In order to establish the legitimacy of parent involvement and participation as a responsibility and a function of Head Start\Transition Programs, parent and

educator training are needed along with policies. Okakok (1989) relates that classrooms are now filled with children from several different backgrounds and cultures. As a result teachers need to be responsive to children and families from those different cultures and traditions. Without consultation and training, attempts to respond to this diversity may result in fragmentation of teachers and the instructional programs. Epstein (1988) indicates schools can help parents perform in various roles by offering information and training in decision-making and communication skills.

Benefits of Parental and Community Involvement (Point 5)

The model emphasizes that once parents are encouraged and motivated to participate in school and community activities in some form or another, eventually they would feel that school and community involvement is important.

Lightfoot (1978) explains:

It is important to recognize that the presence and benefits of parents in the school not only provides more adults to teach reading or offer help and support to children but also transforms the culture of the school.

Jackson & Cooper, (1989); Jackson, Davies, Cooper, & Page, (1988) provide many examples of family-community linkages that not only help parents to help their children, but also to help themselves, such as GED (General Education

Diploma) classes, English-as-a-Second Language classes, or group trips to cultural activities. For many minority parents, the lack of family/community networks and support systems are difficult and creates a powerful influence on their ability to participate. Consequently, the need to help themselves educationally or personally becomes secondary.

"Hard-to-Reach" Parents' and Barriers (Point 5)

"Hard-to-Reach" families are those who have not initiated contact with the school and who have not responded to three invitations from the school to work together with them on the child's education (Olmsted, 1990). In some cases, even though parents may realize the importance of their role in the child's education, they are unable to participate in a major way due to being overwhelmed by "basic survival needs". Sometimes, single parents with limited support networks may find themselves in this situation. In this case, the situation is not so much one of underestimating the importance of their involvement in their child's education as it is of lack of time and resources.

"Hard-to-reach" parents sometimes identify specific barriers that they say restrict or prohibit their participation. For some parents, these barriers may be the

actual reasons for non-involvement (e.g., lack of transportation). However, other parents may identify one of these barriers when in fact there is an underlying barrier that is not identified (e.g., lack of child care given as a barrier when low self-esteem is an underlying barrier).

Communication (Point 7)

The model describes ways to consistently reinforce communication and appreciation as a critical link that bring parents and educational staff together. Good communication between home and school is the key to parent involvement, and the key to good communication is an attitude that welcomes parents as adult peers in a context of mutual respect. Communication strategies might include standard activities such as conferences, newsletters, report cards, notices, and open-house programs, as well as more innovative strategies developed by each school (Epstein, 1988). The model indicates parents should be encouraged to share information that might help teachers understand their child's learning style, special needs and strengths, and crisis that might impede the child's responsiveness.

Evaluation (Point 8)

Finally, the model suggests establishing evaluation procedures for parents by allowing them an opportunity to

provide feedback ideas. Advisory committees of parents and educators is recommended to review priorities, and evaluate program ideas. In addition, school, parent, and community representatives should contribute to the evaluation process by developing goals and long-term program plans for parent involvement.

Head Start\Transition Programs are a new concept in the public schools. It is a demonstration pilot project which incorporates parent involvement as a component of the program. Head Start and the public schools have a sparse and rather tense history. The issues of working together, becoming a vehicle for the delivery of social services, and parent involvement becoming a part of the functioning in the school is most important to this program. In the past when structural innovations have been introduced into the public school organization, a great range of reactions were generated. Although literature on innovation and change is extensive, little is known about the inconstant response by school systems. Much of this may be due to the culture of the school and the school administrators.

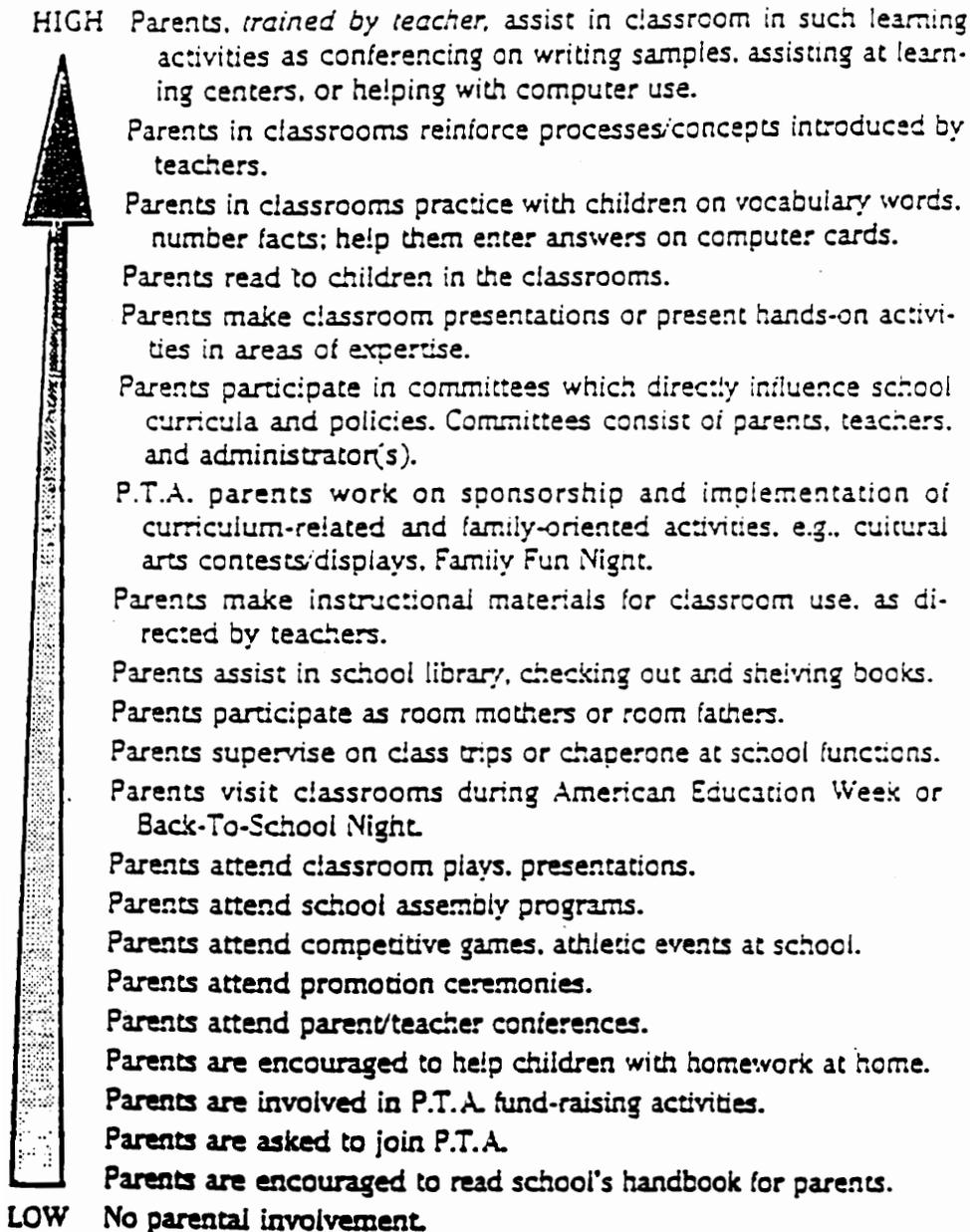
Regardless of the many models, parent involvement and parent participation is essential. Chapter 4 discusses the major themes and concepts that were derived in the case research analysis. A research-based policy statement, Right from the Start (1988) from the National Association of State

Boards of Education recommend that primary programs should:

- * Promote an environment in which parents are valued as primary influences in their children's lives and are essential partners in the education of their children.
- * Recognize that the self-esteem of parents is integral to the development of the child and should be enhanced by the parents' positive interaction with the school.
- * Include parents in decision making about their own child and on the overall early childhood program.
- * Ensure opportunities and access for parents to observe and volunteer in classrooms.
- * Promote exchange of information and ideas between parents and teachers which will benefit the child. (p.19)

In general, this model incorporates formal and informal parent involvement opportunities to express their reactions and to ask questions concerning programs, services, and activities. The model further allows parents to evaluate the educational resources, activities, and services and are encouraged to establish a link between home and school.

GALEN'S PARENT INVOLVEMENT MODEL CONTINUM



(Galen, 1991, p.19)

CHAPTER III

Method

Design of Study

In the last three years the Head Start Bureau has taken steps to develop national models to help low income and minority families. As part of Head Start expansions in 1990-1993, several pilot research programs and grants were funded in order to broaden the scope of services. These services include: Family Service Centers, Substance Abuse Programs, Family Support Projects, and the Head Start\Public School Transition Studies. The National Head Start\Transition Program studies have focused on determining how Transition programs are being incorporated into the school system and how both children and families are involved in the program.

The design used in this study is the case study approach. The case study is an intensive descriptive analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as a individual, group, institution, or community. Because the case study concentrates on a single entity (case), it seeks to explore the interplay of significant factors that are characteristic of the phenomenon or case (Merriman & Simpson, 1984). One of the purposes of the case study is to

"reveal the properties of the class" under investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 371). Bromely (1986, p.23) observes that case studies attempt to "get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by their access to such subjective factors and feelings, thoughts and attitudes."

This research uses Harlene Galen's (1991) model of parent involvement for purposes of understanding parent participation and involvement. The components of the model involves analyzing parents' needs, identifying specific parents' needs and goals, training parents and teachers, benefits of parental and community involvement, "hard-to-reach parents", barriers, communication, and program evaluation. Providing parents an opportunity to incorporate their views, thoughts, and opinions objectively and subjectively in this process is vital.

Case studies are "particularistic and descriptive". Based on the logic underlying the use of multiple-case studies, Yin (1991) suggests that each individual case study consists of a "whole" study in which evidence is sought regarding facts and conclusions for the case. Consequently, the rationale by which the researcher intended to understand parents' perception and how to acquire that understanding dictated the choice of a qualitative design for this study.

Data for this qualitative research study are derived

from observations, written documentation, and interviews. The case study approach to qualitative analysis is a specific way of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data (Patton, 1988). Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1988).

In summary, the use of a case study qualitative research design is appropriate with the research issue of interest. Its complexity is difficult to capture through quantitative study. Part of the intricate aspects of parents perceptions of services is the issues and events parents experience that influence their views and opinions. Many of these events and issues are difficult to disperse into independent, distinct, quantitatively measurable variables.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The single most powerful influence on the lives of each and every one of us is our family. The sample for this study is the parents with children in Head Start\Transition Programs.

Thinking of parents as systems where members interact to meet their needs is particularly helpful. Understanding needs and perceptions of parents fosters options on alternative ways which can meet those needs. The unit of

analysis for this study focuses on the views, thoughts, opinions, and perceptions of the parents.

The more parents can be involved in the participation and analysis of information within the schools, the more willing they become to share this information. With more "hands-on" experience, parents have greater motivation to participate and to utilize its results (McAtee, 1992).

A specific goal of this study was to describe in detail the process by which parents decide to participate and to become involved in their child's education. This study tracked this process, retrospectively, over time to explore how perception's of services influence participation. Nichols and Schwartz (1991) assert that perception and insight are based on the belief that if people understand themselves they will be free to act in their own best interest.

DATA TECHNIQUES

As in any research, validity, reliability, and ethics are major concerns in a qualitative study. One strategy, which is used in this study, is triangulation. This process requires using multiple investigations and multiple sources of data or methods to confirm the findings (Merriam, 1988). This included the use of multiple sources of information such as questionnaires, interviews, observations and

document analysis with the local school administrators, teachers, and Family Service Coordinators.

Another critical aspect to qualitative case study involves making inferences concerning an event when it is difficult or impossible to observe. According to Yin (1989), a research design that anticipates questions such as: is the inference correct, have all the rival explanations and possibilities been considered, and does it appear to be airtight justifies the beginning of dealing with the issue of inferences. The researcher attended meetings with the Family Service Coordinators, principals, and Transition teachers, scheduled site visits with each treatment and control school identified in the study, and collaborated with Transition Project peers and committee members to analyze and interpret the data objectively.

Reliability in a qualitative research design is based on the assumption that there is a single reality, which if studied repeatedly will render the same results (Merriam, 1988). To ensure the notion of reliability with specific emphasis on this study the researcher took an iterative "step by step" approach to describe and document specific details concerning how the data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry.

Yin (1989) believed, in order to achieve reliability,

that a qualitative researcher must document procedures clearly describing and documenting the data to be coded for the study. The researcher used transcribed information, descriptive field notes, and a computer software program, Ethnograph, (Seidel, Kjolseth, Seymour, 1988) to assist in the organization of the data. An outline explanation of the utilization of "The Ethnograph" follows.

Explanation of the Utilization of
The Ethnograph: A Users' Guide

1. Collect & Select: Collect data through interviews
2. Transcribe: Type on word processor, from tapes made during interviews.
3. Convert: Convert document to usable Ethnograph program form.
4. Number & Print: Using the Ethnograph, number the lines of the text and print it.
5. Code Mapping: Using the printed copy as a scratch copy, on which one can mark up, make notes, underline, highlight, etc. Suggested event categories would be noted in the margins as memos.
6. Enter Codes: Allows the numbering of start and stop lines for each segment that one wishes to code and name in a particular way either for events or information.
7. Search: Search the various code documents by use of a single code word or multiple words (events/categories/themes).
8. Reflect: Reflect on what was found from the search.
9. Modify Codes: Decide which code words are useful and/or add or delete code words.
10. Re-Search: Search again to make sure that no appropriate data was missed.
11. Report: Type report, putting the whole narrative together and revealing the finds.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), there are several ways to approach the process of coding. Once the major ideas and themes are labeled, a thorough analysis is conducted. The basic procedure by which coding is accomplished in this study is as follows: the asking of questions about the data and the making of comparisons for both similarities and differences between each incident, events, and other instance (Merriam, 1988).

With respect to the collection of data through interviews, this study considered the points of Taylor and Bogdan (1984) in conducting preliminary interviews which addressed the following:

1. The researcher's motives, intentions, and purpose of the inquiry;
2. The protection of respondents identities through the use of pseudonyms;
3. Payment/incentives (if any);
4. Informed Consent (See Appendix A);
5. Others involved in the study;
6. Issues of confidentiality;
7. Logistics regarding time, place and number of interviews scheduled; and
8. Interview questions (See Appendix B)

The second and third interviews were conducted in an "open-ended" fashion. Several key questions were asked of the parents, and each were encouraged to respond freely (See Appendix B). Each interview was audiotaped to provide for accurate recording of data and was approximately one and a half hour in length.

The nature of this research study required fieldwork

and participant observation by going to the site, program, or institution to observe the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1988). The major reason for participant observation in this study were to provide a firsthand account of the situation under study and when combined with the interviewing data, allowed for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated. As Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 213) state: "In situations where motives, attitudes, beliefs, and values direct much, if not most of human activity, the most sophisticated instrumentation we possess is still the careful observer-the human being who can watch, see, listen, question, probe, and finally analyze and organize his or her direct experience."

Ethical concerns are likely to emerge in any case study. Therefore, it was crucial for the researcher to be cognizant of the potential issues of confidentiality inherent to the interviewing process. Self-examination and knowledge can form the guidelines one needs to carry out an ethical investigation (Merriam, 1988).

Sample

The Fairfax County Public School System, as a Head Start delegate agency, administers Head Start Centers through the Office of Early Childhood and Special Services. These Head Start Centers are located in public schools. A number of these schools and their associated Head Start Centers have been selected as clusters for the Transition Project. Seven percent of all kindergarten children in Fairfax County meet federal poverty guidelines. Of the participating Head Start families, forty-nine percent are headed by single parents and reflect a variety of ethnic diversities (Office of Early Childhood Education, Fairfax County Schools, 1993).

Specific schools in the treatment and control groups were selected based on the enrollment for the 1993-1994 school year. These enrollment expectations are based on the number of children that previously attended Head Start centers in each school in Fairfax County. A sample of schools were selected of approximately 150 Head Start children in ten treatment schools and 150 Head Start children in ten control schools.

The overall task of this national project was to determine how the Transition program is being incorporated into the school system, how the program operates within the context of individual schools, how individual children and their families interact with the program (i.e., how

developmentally appropriate curricula and social services are provided to children and families), and how some children respond academically and socially to the program.

Process of Selecting Participants

The participants selected for this study are parents of children enrolled in a Head Start\Transition Program. Participants were selected from an existing data-base of Head Start families participating in the local Transition Demonstration Project located at Virginia Tech in Northern Virginia.

The criteria for selecting these particular parents for an in-depth study were based on purposive sampling and a need to research minority populations in a Head Start\Transition program. The general rule in grounded theory research is to sample until theoretical saturation of each category is reached (Glaser, 1978). This means, until no new relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category, the category development is dense, and the relationships between categories are well established and validated. Consideration to stop collecting data for each category was driven by time limitations and practical concerns.

Analysis of Data

Galen's parent involvement model was used to draw conclusions about parental participation in the Transition program. Themes were derived from the model and from Virginia Satir's descriptive styles of communication. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for coding the data.

The researcher used a comparative method of data analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to conceptualize and categorize data from the transcribed documented notes of the interviews. This method is a means of naming and organizing data in a systematic way. Each event, issue and occurrence is given a name and contrasted to previous events in the same or different categories to determine similarities and differences and to develop appropriate codes and categories.

Conceptualizing the data was the first step in analyzing patterns of meanings from the transcribed taped interviews. In using this strategy, a description of the data was compared, named, and organized. Each category was labeled, provided a name, and compared to similar and different categories. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), categories have conceptual power because they are able to pull together around them other groups of concepts or subcategories.

In this study, data were coded throughout the data

collection process. Each written transcript was reviewed as the researcher listened to the audiotape recordings to correct any typing errors prior to the coding. Each interview was read repeatedly and through the process of open and axial coding, the data were named, categorized and placed in a variety of categories. Strauss & Corbin (1990) refer to this as a procedure that allows data to be put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories. A commonality of categories were developed to determine solid grounded explanations of the data.

There are several different approaches used in the process of open coding. Open coding was accomplished first by analyzing the first interview as a line-by-line analysis. This allowed the researcher to closely examine phrase by phrase and frequently single words. In the second interview with the same sample, several categories were defined and the data were coded sentence by sentence. Analyzing and coding for similarities and differences was accomplished by considering the entire interview. As new information emerged, categories were reorganized, divided into subcategories and renamed.

Another specific feature of open coding is theoretical notes. Theoretical notes pick up where code notes leave off (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, theoretical notes were used to document data, observations, and other pertinent

information. This became a record of insight and understanding into the data and relationships among various codes and categories. These notes also became instrumental in the conclusion and discussion of the final report.

Using theoretical sensitivity in the process of selecting particular families is also commonly associated with grounded theory research. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to the data, the capacity to understand, and the capability to separate the pertinent from that which is not (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Considering the minority population of this study, theoretical sensitivity allowed the researcher to develop understanding and insight into the people involved.

The Interview Process and Analysis

A total of ten Head Start minority families were selected from a data base of Head Start parents located at the Transition Project office at Virginia Tech in Falls Church, Virginia. After the sample was selected, telephone contact was made requesting consent to be interviewed. Time, date, and place of the interview was established.

First, the National Transition Family Interview questionnaire and the Virginia Parent Supplemental questions were administered. At that time, the parents were asked to sign an informed consent form agreeing to be interviewed.

(Appendix A) This form was explained carefully to the parents. The researcher used her skills as a counselor to build trust and establish rapport. May (1967) considers the first phase of any interview to be taken up with establishing rapport. After both interview questions were completed, parents were given \$20.00 for participating. Before leaving each home the researcher utilized the opportunity to talk about this study. All 10 parents verbally agreed to participate.

Five parents, four African Americans and one Hispanic were specifically selected for this study. These particular parents were selected because of their previous experiences and involvement in Head Start. A second interview was then scheduled with each parent. A third interview was necessary with three of the parents to obtain additional information. As with the National Transition questions and Parent Supplemental questions, this study required only one family member to respond to the interview questions. For each family, the female parent chose to participate.

The major means of data collection in this study were interviews (See Appendix B). The researcher used interview questions as a guide to generate thoughts, views, and opinions. In case study research, specific questions must be carefully worded, so that the researcher appears naive about the topic and allows the participant to provide a fresh

commentary about it (Yin, 1989).

The interview data were documented by using a variety of methods. The researcher took notes of the parents comments after the interview. This procedure was especially useful in gathering specific information which was not apart of the interview questions such as personal and career information. The researcher relied on her memory to recall any incidents or cues that were useful in analyzing the data. Post interview notes, as pointed out by Merriam (1988), allowed the investigator to monitor the process of data collection and analyze the information itself.

At the completion of the interview, the notes and taped conversations were reviewed. Verbatim transcription of quotes and notes taken during the interview were analyzed and grouped into themes and categories. Data obtained were analyzed in order to identify emerging themes, perceptions and patterns toward their participation in the program.

The purpose was to build a literary narrative that captures the complexities of these specific parent's views. One of the advantages offered by the presence of the interviewer is that respondents are more motivated to participate when they feel the presence of the other party (Downs, Smeyak, & Martin, 1980).

Summary of the National Transition Family Questionnaire and the Virginia Parent Supplemental Questions

This section of the research process was accomplished by the use of questions in the National Transition Family interviews and those designed by the Director of Evaluation for the local Transition Project. The National Transition Family Interview questions' were used to gather information relating to seven categories: family background, child's adjustment to school, school climate, social skills, perceptions of child's health, parent dimensions, and neighborhood people services. The National Transition Family Interview questions intent is to make the interviews sensitive to individual families and to cultural settings.

The Virginia Parent Supplemental Interview questions has sixteen questions and is used to gather information from the parents concerning their participation in Head Start Fairfax Early Childhood Education Program (FECEP) and the Head Start\ Transition Program. The Parent Supplemental Interview responses provided specific information relating to Head Start (FECEP) and the Transition program.

Only one child did not attend a Head Start preschool. For the other parents, they consistently visited and participated in several aspects of Head Start. They were involved in social activities and parental programs in Head

involved in social activities and parental programs in Head Start. Jackie shared her disappointment with a particular Head Start center teacher concerning a negative classroom situation that occurred while her youngest daughter was enrolled. In terms of parental involvement in the Transition program, all visited the school at least once to meet with the teacher or other school personnel, attended school programs, or helped out as a volunteer. None could recall meeting with school staff concerning the role and function of the Transition program.

The responses of both the National Transition Family Interview Questionnaire and the Virginia Parent Supplemental Questions were of great importance in understanding participation and involvement in the Transition program.

The areas on the National Transition Family Interview Questionnaire which parents expressed a need for family assistance were job training and career information, child care, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) skills, tutoring, financial planning and budgeting, and a stress management support group. It should be noted that job training and career information were stated as the most important areas of need for each family.

Pilot Study

A pilot study of 2 separate parents was conducted with the intent of refining the interview process and providing the researcher a chance to gain insight and understanding in the data analysis process under the close supervision of the research advisor. Both parents were African American women with a child enrolled in kindergarten during the 1993-94 school year. Both children attended a Head Start\Transition Program in an identified control school.

These interviews were conducted in June and July 1994 and were transcribed in August 1994. The researcher conducted each pilot interview for in-depth study. The first interview involved the questions from the National Transition Family Questionnaire Booklet, and the Virginia Parent Supplemental Questions designed by the evaluation director of the local Head Start\Transition Project. After the first interview, the parents agreed to be interviewed a second time. The second interview involved more in-depth questions concerning participation and involvement in the Transition program, family issues, school activities and programs, resources and services, and career information.

Each of these pilot interviews lasted about two and a half hours. As a result of the pilot interviews, the researcher collaborated with the research advisor to determine

information, insight and approach into specific areas and future interview questions. It was decided that a quality tone audiotape was needed so that the interviews could be transcribed with ease. Several questions were eliminated from the researchers interview schedule because of the overlap of questions from the National Family Interview questionnaire and the Virginia Parent Supplemental questions. Additional questions were added to address the climate of the classroom and teacher interactions.

Since both pilot participants fit the criteria for the study and provided useful and pertinent information, their interviews were considered part of the general pool of data in the study.

SUMMARY

This research was designed to study parents' perceptions regarding services provided in Head Start\ Transition Programs. The methodology used for the study was the case study approach which involved interviews, observations, and site visits. The following is a narrative description of the site visits for both treatment and control schools, and interviews with school personnel.

School Context

Visits to Head Start\Transition Programs were done during the course of the study. There were scheduled and unscheduled meetings with teachers, assistant principals, Family Service Coordinators, a secretary, and the Director for the Family Service Coordinators. The purpose was to gain insight into the culture of the school, the relationship between the school and parents, and the function and role of the Transition program. Many aspects of the Head Start\Transition Program was discussed.

In one control school I visited, the office and building was totally renovated, decorated, and furnished with new furniture. The assistant principal led me on a guided tour of the school and I had an opportunity to visit the classroom with Transition students in the class. The

Head Start\Transition students are integrated with other students in the kindergarten class. The students were engaged in writing tasks, some were coloring, and others were playing with educational toys. The teacher and assistant appeared to have control of the classroom and the children showed enthusiasm while working.

During our walk through the halls, the assistant principal shared satisfaction with the level of teaching performance at the school. She described the teachers and overall staff as, "providers of information."

One of the services mentioned to assist parents is the local screening committee which is designed to help families with counseling and educational services, and individual family and child needs. For example, if a child needs eye-glasses, the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) will supply the funding for families who cannot afford them. Many of the services and programs needed by Head Start\Transition families are assessed in the local screening meeting.

As far as Head Start\Transition Program services, this school did not have them. However, according to the assistant principal, "If a family is in need of food, shelter, or clothing, the school would provide." All the children in the school are eligible to receive free and reduced price lunch or breakfast if their families qualify. The parents at this school receive a special newsletter

informing them of the free and reduced price lunch or breakfast and how to go about receiving it for their children. A letter is sent at the beginning of the school year providing each family with this information.

Overall, the assistant principal felt, "It is very difficult to get parents involved in school activities and programs; especially the non-English speaking parents." She talked about a separate Back-to-School night for ESL (English-as-a-Second Language) parents.

As far as barriers concerning participation, the assistant principal believed, "Parents poor school experiences, crisis within the family, and feeling uncomfortable contacting the school for family needs," was the main reason for a lack of participation. Pride was another factor that prohibited them from being involved.

The visit to the treatment school was interesting and exciting. This school has a 30% ratio of Hispanics and less than 10% African American. I participated in greeting the children as they arrived to school with the assistant principal. Many of the kids hugged the assistant principal as they entered the school building from the bus at 8:45 a.m. Of course they did not know me but many hugged me as well.

The assistant principal and I walked to several classrooms. She introduced me to the FECEP (Fairfax Early

Childhood Education Program) teacher and other teachers. I also had an opportunity to meet the principal. We toured the entire school. The school has been totally renovated and continues to undergo construction.

I observed several children in the cafeteria at 8:50 a.m. eating breakfast. I was informed by the assistant principal many of these children received free and reduced price breakfast and lunch. She explained the criteria for families to fall within particular income standards to obtain this service.

All the classrooms were decorated with various children's art. The class with Head Start\Transition children had two computers, many toys and games, a sand pod, pillows, and art drawings. The blackboard had the schedule of the day and several children's names. During my visit, the teacher was assisting children with art projects. Some of the children were focused on the art project and some were moving about in an orderly fashion. There were approximately five diverse cultures in the class for Head Start\Transition children. The assistant principal commented, "The school is culturally diverse and the children are well disciplined."

After a tour of several classrooms, the library, and the gym, we continued our discussion of the services available for families in the Transition program. The

Family Service Coordinator and the secretary joined us. The Family Service Coordinator acts as a community advocate for Head Start\Transition parents.

The Transition program plans to establish a newsletter to parents and a parent resource room according to the Family Service Coordinator. The assistant principal named the breakfast program, reduced cost lunch, SULA (Step-Up Language Arts) program, and the Reading Recovery program as services of the Head Start\Transition Program. She also included the local screening committee in the school which is used to identify special needs, a clothing drive, and a strong parent liaison as additional services to the Transition program. The SACC (School-Age Child Care) program is also available for Transition families. However, there is a waiting list for the program and according to the assistant principal there is a babysitting problem for many parents.

As far as parent participation, parents and children are involved in field trips and various school related activities. The Transition class has a 15 to 1 ratio with a teacher and teacher assistant. The assistant principal believed, "The school is well represented with parents." The school also provides for minority organizations (Hispanic, African American, Asian) to meet once a month to discuss school and child related issues. The assistant

principal is in attendance at these meetings.

I asked specifically about African American children receiving services and the issue of "race relations" among the children. She responded, "This is the product of a new ratio and is the new wave of the future." Although I felt she was apprehensive in responding to the question, she acknowledged an awareness that other minority children were getting more attention and consideration for programs and services than African Americans.

In another treatment school, the Head Start\Transition Program holds monthly parent meetings, invites guest speakers to share a variety of parental skills information, and hosts different parties during the holiday season and at the end of the school year. The school has an Outreach Program for families in need of clothing and food. Tutoring is provided for children in reading and math and for parents with limited English speaking skills and for parents seeking a G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) Recreational activities sponsored by community and civic organizations also give support to families during the summer.

The assistant principal acknowledged, "Some parents are not responsive to the services of the program." The reasons she believed they are not, is because of a lack of time, lack of opportunity to get to the school, work schedules, and child care affordability. However, to help meet the

needs of some families, the school is planning to establish a co-op for parents without transportation. She felt parent participation was not a situation of parents not wanting to be involved in the school. Instead, she believed parents are not comfortable working with the children because of their own educational limitations.

The assistant principal at the school views the Family Service Coordinator as the strength of the program. She reaches out and communicates with the families and supplies information about them to the teachers.

The FECEP teacher at another treatment school shared thoughts concerning the Transition program. We talked specifically about parent participation and involvement and the impact of the Transition program on teachers and parents. She believed language was the greatest barrier. The Transition program at this school has a large population of Hispanic and Vietnamese families.

Among the parents at the treatment school, there was a moderate amount of participation in classroom related activities and a greater amount on field trip activities. The FECEP teacher suspects parents don't participate in other types of school or classroom activities because, "They are not comfortable coming into the classroom because of the language and educational barrier." She felt parents see the Transition program as "...more formal and less interactive

with a lack of personal contact."

The FECEP teacher believed, "Having children in a Transition program is a great idea, but there were no clear or specific objectives established prior to the program starting." She outlined several key factors which she felt the program needed: 1) guidelines and objectives for the teachers, administrators and parents, 2) the concept of Transition defined to the parents and teachers, 3) identify the difference between Head Start and Head Start\Transition, 4) ways in which parents can be hooked into the program, and 5) how to communicate with parents so they can become more understanding of the nature of their participation.

The Director of the Family Service Coordinators describes the role of the Family Service Coordinators as a link between the home and the school in a nonpartisan way. The Family Service Coordinators are independent from other school staff and they make a strong attempt to build trust with the families. They act as advocates to the parents by making contact with community agencies. A needs assessment is updated on each family once a month. This is usually done through a home visit or by telephone.

In conclusion, significant information pertaining to the function and design of the Transition program was discussed with the schools and Transition program staff. Suggestions and ideas for implementation were provided in

each interview. These recommendations are included in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents a profile summary and a narrative summary with identified themes of five case studies. The case studies were conducted in the homes of each of the five Head Start\Transition Program participants.

This chapter presents results of the interviews in two phases. The first part consist of a profile summary of the five parents. The second part is a narrative summary and the major themes that emerged from the transcribed interviews and coding.

Each parent's level and nature of participation was different, yet there were patterns that portrayed a commonality among them. This resulted in an effort to build a purpose and theory to explain the rational of how these parents perceptions of services influenced their participation. Only the first names of the parents were used throughout the discussion to protect their identity.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

JACKIE

Jackie, a single, 42 year-old African American parent has solo duties and responsibilities for her three daughters, ages six, eight, and ten. She is a native Washingtonian. Most of her adult life she lived in New York. In the 1980's, she moved to Virginia. She divorced in 1986 and had extensive abdominal surgery resulting in being unable to work since that time. Prior to 1986, Jackie was a federal government employee. She worked for the government for 18 years before leaving. Jackie completed high school in her home county and has received on-the-job training and skills from the federal government. She also has taken classes at the Northern Virginia Community College.

Jackie's parents resided in the same county as she does. Her father died in 1994. She spoke of her father as a fun-loving and kind man. Jackie indicated a close relationship with her father. However, after his death, "There was some friction in the house. My mother sees things a little different than me, so I didn't have that support system that I needed from my family." There was no mention concerning financial or emotional support with her ex-husband.

Jackie's oldest daughter has epilepsy and the middle daughter has been diagnosed with a stomach disorder. The stomach disorder has required her to eat special foods and take prescribed medication. She is being medically treated at Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C. All three of her daughters had been enrolled in Head Start. The youngest daughter is currently in a Head Start\Transition Program.

Jackie and I sat and talked in the living room of her townhouse. The townhouse was neatly but scarcely furnished with a sofa and loveseat, a dining table without chairs, a dining cabinet, T.V., two bookshelves, and several pictures on the wall.

Jackie spoke extensively and continuously regarding her thoughts and views of Head Start. Jackie participated in many field trips, assisted the teacher in the classroom by helping the kids with drawings and painting, Easter Egg Hunts, and a variety of other activities. At school, Jackie maintained her name on a list of volunteers in various programs. She felt less involved in the Transition program compared to the Head Start program. When asked the reasons for spending less time at the school, she responded, "Because they have a lot of volunteers at the school."

Jackie is motivated and willing to be involved in helping her children with their homework, school activities, and in obtaining educational support services. She said, "I

want to know if something goes wrong. I want to be able to help them with their homework when they come home at night. I want to take time with them to help them do their homework. I will be at their PTA meetings and the back-to-school night. I make myself known to the teachers. I'm willing to do anything, just let me know. I try to stay involved."

Overall, Jackie articulated positive feedback about the interactions with the staff at Head Start and the Head Start\Transition Program. She also enjoyed having her kids in the SACC (School Age Child Care) program at the school.

There were several unpleasant events that occurred with her youngest daughter at Head Start and the Head Start\Transition Program. Jackie was not pleased with how the situations were handled and contributes each event to the lack of discipline in the classroom. She shared,

"This is why I went to the school a lot last year because Candice (youngest daughter) was so upset all of the time at things that were happening in the classroom. I stood outside the classroom door in the hallway and observed and the teacher denied. They said that Candice wasn't willing to interact with the other kids. I stood outside the door and watched Candice walk up to 2 Hispanic girls to look at what they were doing. They pushed her away. Now I saw that, and I also saw Candice come home and tell me that there was some friction between her and another girl. The girl had hit her in the stomach and the teacher yelled, "Candice, why did you do that. Then she discovered later that the girl had hit Candice. The teacher was willing to punish Candice and put her in a chair in the corner but then she asked the Hispanic girl, do you want to go to the table for doing that? The girl said

"no". She let her go and play. And when I brought this forward to the staff, she kind of took it out on Candice."

Frequently Jackie visited the school and had conferences with the teacher and principal. The teacher did not make a home visit while her daughter was in kindergarten. In her opinion, kindergarten was a waste of time for her daughter. "Much of the materials and activities she was exposed to was a repeat of preschool." Jackie thought the classroom was not conducive to all children's learning needs. She described the classroom as having three computers, a housekeeping area, a sand pile area, and a reading area.

In addition to the events that occurred within the schools, Jackie also experienced environmental issues. She lives in public housing in Virginia.

"Living under this program is kind of degrading; a different type of situation. In the housing program, you have no privacy and on top of that, if you discuss anything in reference to housing or any problem that you might have with neighbors, it is not confidential. It is suppose to be confidential, but it is not."

Jackie and her family have lived in this neighborhood for four years. The community is a place where she is not happy about living but due to her divorce and other personal issues, has no choice. Jackie does not have ongoing communication with her neighbors. Her children also are not active with other children in the neighborhood. "I can't

leave them outside because there was friction with the neighbors and the children even tended to react according to the way the parents feel."

In regard to her connection with other parents in the Transition program, Jackie did not observe much contact between the parents and the kindergarten class at the Head Start\Transition Program. She felt there was more parental contact in the Head Start program. "They were there, actually there. You could meet them, you could shake their hands and say I'm Candice's mom. So I got a chance to meet the mothers," she said. Overall, Jackie believes there were parents that wanted to participate and go with their children certain places but could not.

"They wanted to participate, they just couldn't get there. The Head Start program had more participation than the Head Start\Transition Program. Now maybe that is just an isolated incident. From what I understood, they were working parents."

When asked what areas she thinks her family needs help, Jackie expressed,

"Through an increase in income I would enroll them in a private school and through getting a better job for myself, I would move out of this area to a different environment. I would also like to get them involved in outside activities like Ballet and Girl Scouts."

The major barriers discussed focused on programs and services within the school. One of the issues she reacted strongly to was "race relations."

"I think a lot of emphasis is being put on the foreigners and making sure they get what they need in reference to programs and services and when it comes to the Black children, they are being left out. There is no problem with "them" getting into the programs but whenever I ask for my children to participate in any program or receive any services that they may need, it is either closed or I'd have to file next year."

She felt Black children specifically in the Transition program and the Head Start program are treated differently and that other minority children are provided special consideration.

In terms of specific programs and services within the Transition program, Jackie's perceptions were,

"The programs that my children actually participated in, I had to really work hard to get those programs, for instance the speech program. I had a very difficult time getting my children in the program. I don't know what the problem is but we tried to get our children but they were found ineligible. Then I had to file an appeal and once I filed the appeal they were found eligible."

Jackie's negative experiences with school services and programs did not deter her involvement and participation. She circumvented these barriers and continues to be an active participant in her children's education.

Jackie is very enthusiastic and interested in seeking career opportunities to obtain additional income for her family. We talked several times on the phone and met at a Career Center in Virginia to discuss career options and plans. Jackie was reluctant to attempt a full-time or part-time job due to her lack of skills and knowledge. The

researcher suggested that Jackie volunteer with an organization where she could obtain training, skills and enjoyment.

One of the fun activities she enjoys with her children is visiting the library. Given this, it was suggested that she volunteer in a public library. Although her purpose in volunteering was to gain experience, she realized, "I also need a job that will help me manage my home life and be able to have a career too." In the career decision-making process, Jackie was confused and needed guidance. "I'm at a toss-up, should I go and try a 40 hour work week with more pay or work a part-time job and also be able to maintain my family."

Jackie was also unclear about what she wanted to do in reference to a career. She had no problem articulating many of the past job experiences that led to devastating health and family problems.

"I'm not sure. I don't know if I can maintain a household, three girls and work full-time and still participate in some of their activities at school which is what I have been doing. That's why I thought about part-time, just to give me some experience and to build my self-worth and to establish a career."

As we talked about writing a resume, Jackie shared softly, "I really don't have anything to say. They will wonder where has she been all these years." It has not been easy for Jackie to consider returning to work. However, she

is determined and confident, and willing to take the appropriate steps to return to the job force.

Themes: Individual Characteristics, Expectations, Involvement, Perseverance, and Goals

Several inter-related themes, which represent the issues in Jackie's life, arose from the interviews. First and foremost was the desire to defend her family, next she wanted to be a motivating force in her children's education.

Individual Characteristics---Leveler

Jackie's role of defending the rights of her children began in the early years of their education. In listening to her express her interactions and connections with the school teachers and administrators, her voice and tone were anxious but with a sense of purpose.

Being sensitive to her children's needs was an important objective for Jackie. Many of the visits to the school while her daughter attended the Transition program were unexpected.

"I spent a lot of time going into the school to see what was going on in the classroom and observing some of the behaviors of the other children and the responses when Candice would raise her hand."

Jackie's sensitivity to her daughters conversations led her to the school on numerous occasions to verify the

information.

Jackie describes herself as an assertive person. "I want to know what's going on and I expect answers. This is why I go to the school. This is why I have to make sure I am at the meetings." She voiced her concerns to the school staff but she felt they were not receptive to her needs. Instead, the youngest child's classroom behavior which Jackie addressed with the teacher became more serious. Jackie felt the discipline measures for Black children were different when compared to the other minority children in the class. When Jackie brought forth her concerns to the teacher,

"She kind of took it out on Candice. The teacher did indirectly. So when you go forward with these concerns, you have to be worried about how the teacher is going to react to the children. So you have to back down a little bit. I told her I was very upset about the things that were happening in the class and that I send my kids to school to learn and not to be intimidated and not to be frightened."

In keeping with the role of leveler, Jackie was asked about the relationship with her family. She responded,

"Basically I'm doing it by myself. There's some differences in my family. When I had to get into this Social Service Program, I suggested to them that I wanted to come back home and live. My mother said it was no room and that was her house. So what can I say. I have to take care of my children. I have no hard feelings or anything, it is just one of those things. On top of that, my children were feeling very insecure, very nervous. When I broke up with their father, there was a void and they felt very lost. They were always afraid that I would go away. So they were going through some kind of stress themselves. I spent the

last few years trying to do everything I could to make them feel more secure and keep them involved in things and let them know that I was here for them. That even though I do go to work, I'm coming home. So I think they are now more secure. That mom is there."

Expectations

Jackie has educational expectations of the school, staff, and Transition program. She believed the problems her youngest daughter encountered in a particular class at school was a result of a negative environment. Jackie became very excitable as she recalled a specific event that occurred in the classroom.

"One day I walked in the classroom and Candice was at the computer and I think they have time at the computer and she was working there and this particular little girl wanted to get there. She was standing by Candice and it was a little friction that took place. I really didn't like the way the teacher handled it. So this little girl pushed Candice back. The teacher yelled at Candice. "Candice go sit at the table!" The teacher made no attempts to bring both children together. When Candice tried to intermingle with the other kids, the teacher told me, "well I told Candice to go find someone else to play with." These two girls were spanish, from another culture and had been together for a long time. There were very few Blacks in there and she was new with the other Blacks. But this teacher didn't seem interested in bringing the group together. So therefore, it brought on a very negative attitude with Candice."

Jackie felt the teacher exhibited a bias against her daughter without just cause.

Jackie shared positive experiences while attending school as a child and she wanted the same for her daughters.

She strongly believed teachers should promote positive attitudes in school and exhibit fair treatment towards all children in the classroom. Several situations occurred inside and outside the classroom involving Candice when Jackie was not contacted by the teacher or school staff.

"I expected the school to call me when things happen at the school. I felt very disturbed about a lot of things that were going on in the classroom. Not just because I'm Candice's mother, but because I want her to get the best possible education."

As we talked about the specific climate of the classroom and school, Jackie did not have positive comments.

"I felt the teachers spent a lot of time controlling the classroom. The things she was exposed to was a repeat of preschool. I felt the teacher should have done a little more in academics. When I say academics, I'm not talking about anything complicated, just alphabets and numbers. They did have some games on the computer in the classroom. The library and reading materials could also be changed and updated. But I truly think Candice didn't learn one thing in kindergarten. I'm kind of disappointed."

Consequently, Jackie felt kindergarten was a waste of time for her daughter.

We talked specifically about her relationship to the school and the classroom and how she was viewed by the school staff.

"One teacher thought that I was a very concerned parent and she could tell by the way I talked and by the way I participated. They knew that I wanted the best for my children in reference to education. They knew that I wanted my children to integrate and learn. They knew that I wanted a positive learning environment for my children because this was one of the things that I stressed all the time in my conversations."

Many of the materials used in this classroom Jackie described as the same type of materials used in preschool. "I wanted Candice going to kindergarten with new things to learn, new ideas, and new exposures."

Jackie was not able to provide suggestions to the principal, assistant principal, or teacher pertaining to her concerns. "No, I didn't have an opportunity to do that. I made some suggestions during a walk in the hall with the assistant principal but it wasn't a sit down meeting to talk about those things." In reference to the teacher, Jackie had scheduled conferences to discuss Candice's report card. She felt intimidated during her dialogue with the teacher. Jackie's voiced began to crack as she talked about this meeting.

"She made her statements but she never asked me my opinion. I made statements about the things I wanted Candice to learn. I asked about the techniques they used to teach the children to read and what kind of academic program did they use for kindergarten. I felt I wasn't asking for anything complicated but I wanted to know what did they use in reference to getting them prepared for moving along to the first grade."

Jackie likes to know specifically what her daughters are learning in school, academic strategies, and teaching techniques which are incorporated in the classroom. In a conference with the teacher, some of the strategies and techniques were briefly explained.

"She went over some of the things they do in the classroom on a daily basis. She had on the board what

they do from 8:30 until whenever. So for each day they had reading groups and housekeeping activities."

Participating in school activities and requesting services for her children were necessary educational components in being a supportive parent.

"At one point, I really needed the assistance of the teachers because Candice should have been tested for a Learning Disability Program. There were things that I thought my children needed based on sitting down going over their homework."

Jackie eventually received Learning Disability services for her daughter but without the help or referral from the teacher.

Participation is something that the school expects of parents. Jackie believes participating means,

"something that I am doing at the school. I'm getting my children into programs and participating in whatever is going on in the classroom or activity they are having. Whenever they have a Book Fair and maybe when they need someone to go on a trip as a chaperon with the children or when they need someone to be at the field activities or to hand-out awards. It's what I am actually doing at the school."

Involvement

Jackie is a participant, not a spectator, in reference to her children's education. She speaks of not just participating in school activities but also desires involvement in the academic areas.

"I made it known to the school, to the teacher, when we sit down at our dinner table, I give my children time to talk about what they did in the classroom no matter what they did. I had a hard time with this and they

usually talked about their school studies or maybe a Science project."

Although Jackie was not satisfied with the quality of academics in the kindergarten class, she continued to participate in many activities.

"Whenever the teacher needed someone to go on a field trip, she would call and I would go. So that was pretty good. Every time there was something special going on in classroom, I was there. I was there most of the time even if I only spent an hour or 30 minutes and sometimes I spent a half day."

Jackie attended meetings at the school for African American parents. These meetings were designed to support the parents, get them more involved in programs, and to encourage participation in the classroom with the children. The meetings provided an opportunity to network with other parents.

"In those particular groups, we would be able to give our input and they would be able to respond and get more out of what's going on in school."

Involvement to Jackie meant how her daughter was progressing in school. The relationship of involving the teacher, child and herself she described as a,

"...three-fold thing. Her academics, helping her with her work, what she is actually doing in the classroom is involvement to me. Some of the techniques that the teacher used in phonics and when I help her at home, I consider this involvement."

Perseverance

Jackie attributes her successes to effort rather than

ability. Her personal struggles included lack of job skills and training and needing financial assistance. She acknowledges being unemployed and living in public housing has been tough and degrading. Jackie is making attempts to stabilize her life. "I thought maybe I'd give working a try while the kids are at school. So I've been trying to get things organized for the past year."

Jackie remains motivated to assist her children in school. Her voice became strong and forceful as she talked about the children in her daughters class. She perceived many of the children considered for services were not African Americans but of other nationalities.

"For programs such as speech and reading, kids of different nationalities were the first on the role. This is based on my observation and on finding and asking to get in certain programs and then to find that there were children in the same classroom getting into programs."

Jackie has persevered many conflicts and barriers and gotten results. She spoke of parents with children in the same class were very disappointed at the school. "They felt that the teachers were not putting their best foot forward for the Black children. Yet, they were quick to discipline the Black children." In several visits to the school, Jackie was seeking answers to how children were being considered for the speech and reading programs.

"I checked by going to the school and speaking to the speech therapist and talking. I wanted to have Candice

put into a reading improvement program and they said that it was a back log. I went to the school to see how many children were on the list. They said most of those children were of another nationality."

She encountered difficulty getting her daughter into a speech program.

"I had to really work hard to get those programs. I brought my concerns to the teachers and they disregarded them. We were not getting the support for the services that we needed. When I asked about the specific services, I was told it was either closed or I'd have to file next year."

After numerous calls and talking with the appropriate specialist, Jackie was able to get her daughter into a speech and reading program.

Jackie also related the problems of health, lack of education, and personal relationships created in her life. In her mind, personal situations have stood in the way in her pursuit of happiness. Disappointment and frustration were salient issues in Jackie's dealings with societal pressures. Jackie continued to tell about incidents in her life that made her sad, angry, and left her feeling hopeless.

Jackie is enrolled in four public assistance programs.

"I had to go to court to obtain those services because of it being a financial disaster and because I was pregnant at the time. I had no where to go. Even though I had a family in the area, their house was full. I went to court to get child support and it was suggested there that I go to social services."

In Jackie's pursuit to gain a better life for her family,

she realized that she could no longer be devastated by the events in her life. She responded to the challenges by obtaining information, networking with others and began to look at things positively.

Goals

To improve things for her family, Jackie would like to seek employment. Another goal would be to provide extra tutorial assistance for her children in school. She has considered private school but realizes she cannot afford it.

"I would like to move out of this area to a different environment. Getting them involved in outside activities is also something that I would like to do as well as cultural exposure."

When Jackie decided to seek employment and resolve her personal issues, she became confident in her capabilities.

"I had decided because of personal reasons in the past that I would go ahead and work. I just wanted to get my daughter into first grade then it would be time to get my life organized. I have been basically supporting my family myself and it has been a real strain. Now it's time. I feel better mentally."

Jackie has been able to obtain work with the library system as a library aide. She works part-time, three days a week. She plans to continue her involvement in her childrens' education and participate in school activities. She eagerly hopes having a job will lessen her financial burden on society.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

ANGELA

Angela is a 27 year old African American female with six children. The children ages two, four, six, seven, eight, and nine live with her. Angela lives in a three bedroom townhouse in Virginia. Angela is currently separated from her husband. At the onset of the research study, Angela was expecting her seventh child.

Angela was born and reared in Virginia. She completed senior year of high school in Virginia while pregnant with her first child. While growing up, she lived mainly with her grandmother and three siblings. Angela is the oldest. She maintains a close relationship with her grandmother. The grandmother and an aunt assist in child care and financial support. She does not receive any financial support from her estranged husband but indicated he helps her by providing transportation to various places and is dependable in providing emotional support to the children.

Angela worked for a financial company as a loan assistant prior to quitting. Working around computers while pregnant was the main reason given for leaving. Someday she would like to return but realizes child care issues would pose a problem.

Angela was very comfortable and enthusiastic during our

conversations. Her six year old daughter Sakenna, attended a Head Start program and is currently enrolled in a Head Start\Transition Program. She had positive things to say about both schools. Angela was involved in several aspects of Head Start. She attended meetings, programs, and various field trips. However, since Sakenna has been in the Transition program, Angela has not been as active.

As far as participation at the Transition school, it was minimal. Angela worked as an administrative assistant three-quarters of the school year. Consequently, she was not able to participate in many activities or be involved in school related tasks. She said, "The only thing that I participated in was when they had the Fund Raising thing. I helped my kids go around and sell their candy products and all of that."

She admitted that the school probably offered more services and programs but she was not able to utilized them because of a scheduling problem with her job. She explained, "I know there was a lot of things offered, I mean a lot of things I could have participated in but I just didn't have the time." Two factors controlled Angela's lack of participation, time and child care issues.

Although Angela did not utilize many of the services or resources of the Transition program, she contacted the social worker at the school to assist her in obtaining

financial assistance. "I got a lot of help from them cause at the time I had financial problems and they helped me out, so I got services from them." Angela considered the financial assistance from the social worker at the school a service. During the time in which Angela received the financial assistance from the school, she was very much in debt. Being on a fixed-income, Angela finds herself barely surviving by the end of each month. She talked about the public household assistance she receives is not enough. "I am receiving AFDC, this is no lie, it is gone. My bills just took everything and I had maybe \$40.00 left. That's why I need a job but right now I can't get a job."

Lack of awareness and information on the availability of services is the primary reason for Angela not utilizing them. She attempted to get her children in the SACC (School Age Child Care) Program. However, she found there was a waiting list. "I tried and wanted to get them in there but I was just having bad times, car problems." She did participate in a parenting skills seminar which shared information on child rearing strategies.

Angela was also not aware of the extent of participation or involvement of other parents in the Transition program. She felt more parents participated at Head Start because the classes were smaller.

Angela was in contact with the teacher at the

Transition school several times a month. The teacher visited the home several times to discuss Sakenna's progress. Angela felt that Sakenna learned a lot and the classroom was a place that she enjoyed going each day. Almost everyday Angela takes the time to talk with her children about school and listen to them share what they learned. "Sakenna use to come home everyday with something new. I use to ask her what did she learn or maybe days when I was tired she would say well mommy you want me to read this book to you." Angela had positive comments to share about the administrators and the teachers at the school.

In the future, Angela would like to move to a different environment and find a job. She cites two barriers which contribute to her families overall problems, lack of a job and financial debt.

"I think that's what's really holding us down is that I don't have a job and we're living off of AFDC. It's not worth it, it's no good. They think that what they give you will take care of all of your bills. I mean the time you get it from the next time you get it, that's not right. I mean, it's a living hell."

She enjoys participating in their trips and she intends to be involved in their school activities after the birth of her child.

"I like participating with their trips and everything. I might continue to do that. I never turn them down on those and if a teacher sends request, if they want me to help bake something, I've always done that."

Themes: Individual Characteristics, Expectations, Involvement, Perseverance, and Goals

During much of Angela's life, she has been the victim of emotional abuse. Feelings of rejection and discouragement in relationships with men have caused her the greatest distress.

Individual Characteristics--Blamer

Angela described herself, "A good person who just got involved with the wrong people." She finds rearing six children unbearable at times. Prior to her separation, she had been married for two and one-half years. We talked frankly about parenting six children independently. "It is very tough," she expresses passively. In a calm manner, she talked about the men in her life and the struggles she encountered with them. "I guess I was just hard-headed and didn't listen."

Angela points to lack of proper guidance as a child as a factor in her situation. "Sometimes when you're not talked to as a child, you really don't know and things happen. My grandma always said, you learn from your mistakes." We discussed whether having six kids was a mistake. "Well my first one I can't say that it was but with my second and the others, it was a mistake." It appeared Angela was clearly able to protect herself from the

last six pregnancies. Yet, she seemed to require a strong need to be loved and accepted in her relationships. Having children was one way she felt she could make this happen.

In growing up, many of her peers were no different. They would have discussions about having kids and working. "When you're younger and growing up and everybody would say, how many kids do you want. I would say three. I only wanted three up until the time I had my fourth child." Angela continued to live with her grandmother after the birth of her first child.

Most of the emotional support she receives comes from her grandmother and aunt. Although her brothers and sisters live in the area, she has no contact with them. "My grandmother is a big help to me. She raised us all. She raised two of my aunts children and my fathers. She was also a single parent." Angela's family history indicates a pattern of single parenting.

Angela shares feelings of helplessness and despair with her socioeconomic situation. Her lack of confidence and low self-esteem results from years of emotional abuse brought on by her negative relationships. "Its like I am all by myself, just me and the kids." She feels responsible for the experiences in her life but to a degree faults the men for abusing her. The marriage with her estranged husband ended abruptly. "We just had differences but it was mainly

me." Angela takes full responsibility for the marriage failing. She feels that she rushed into the relationship swiftly without giving it much thought. She claims, "it was more like peer pressure and all the time I thought I was ready for marriage and I wasn't. Now I am having another child."

Angela has few friends she can depend on for emotional support. She firmly believes she gets taken advantage of by others. She became somewhat quiet and emotional as she talked about a specific friend who took her kindness as a weakness.

"It seems like I was always helping others and that's the way it was. I was helping whoever needed help. But right now I just can't do it. I was giving money to my friends. They were having problems. Now when I need help, they're not there."

Expectations

Angela receives \$600-800 per month to shelter, feed and clothe six children. She depends on social services to financially support her family. Angela attempts to make ends meet but finds herself struggling to do so. Paying utilities is an element which consumes much of the extra money she receives. "My electric bill when I am not even here is \$233.00 per month. I don't know what they are doing to figure that but I will have to talk to somebody."

With the assistance of Social Services, Angela receives

Food Stamps. The amount of Food Stamps is based on the number of children and adults in the home. Angela stretches her limited funds by shopping at grocery stores with bulk departments and purchasing clothing at thrift stores. She has a lot of household items given to her from private donations.

Angela maintains a fairly isolated life. Her communications with the Transition program and the Family Service Coordinator were by means of a note or telephone call. There was no specific expectations expressed by Angela of the Transition program. She felt very strongly that the teachers and administrators helped the students to be friendly and kind to each. Angela felt her kids expected her to be involved in school activities. "I would like to do more but when I think about me having a baby and then trying to go back to work, I try to squeeze all that back in again. It's not easy but I am going to do the best I can."

Angela could not recall any special strategies she used to get her daughter prepared for kindergarten. She remembered one experience that occurred in the classroom. This involved another little boy and her daughter. "I had to go to the classroom and talk to the teacher and she took it from there." She specifically described the situation.

"The little boy sat behind Nicky, we call her Nicky, and he use to kick her chair a lot. She asked him to stop but he didn't. This really annoyed her and she

became very upset. At that time she was easy to get upset. And I didn't like to see her going to school upset. So I went to the school. Now she and the little boy are friends."

Angela was comfortable with the manner in which the teacher handled the situation.

Angela had concerns when her daughter missed school during the year due to ear infections. "When she returned to school she felled behind." Angela was satisfied with the teachers helping her daughter in maintaining various academic skills. She felt a sense of relief when the teachers took extra time to help when she experienced problems learning. "She learned a lot. She always came home with something new to talk about. I liked her teacher. All of their teachers are nice."

In responding to the National Transition Family Interview questions concerning school adjustment, Angela felt her daughter gets along with her teacher extremely well. She is very pleased with the school program in terms of helping her learn basic skills to prepare for first grade. Overall, Angela was very pleased with the school program as far as meeting the social and emotional development needs of her daughter. She believed Sakenna's adjustment to school has been very good.

Involvement

Angela views her involvement in her children's education as a sacrifice. She sees her world through a doubting, pessimistic lens. Her low need for involvement and mental stimulation is satisfied by remaining home with her children. Her early years set the stage for connecting with others outside of her family group. She was required to take care of her younger brothers and sisters or help her grandmother around the house. She felt that she had not been guided as a teenager to develop future goals and plans. She sought interaction with her peers outside her home who portrayed similar interest of getting married and having children.

When Angela married, intimate involvement with a husband and six children was unnatural to her. She refers to bearing six children as "...not knowing. I was just learning."

Angela makes the time to involve herself in home activities with her children. "They learn things and I learn things. We do a lot of games and stuff together." She discusses daily with her children their school day.

In the neighborhood, Angela's children have few friends. When they take trips to their grandmothers house, they participate in fun activities with relatives. To entertain her children, Angela takes them to a park when

transportation is available. Angela lives less than five minutes from the school. She prepares breakfast for them and then walks with them to school each day.

She smiled as she talked about the activities she participated in at school.

"I like participating in school activities and their field trips. If they need something, I've always tried to help."

Angela was aware of particular folders sent home from the teacher every Tuesday. "Everything that is happening that week is in the folder. They send a complete package of information." To keep abreast of school information, Angela makes a point to read the information. She could not recall reading information relating to particular services offered in the Transition program. She was only aware of obtaining special needs services through the social worker.

"I know that they have parent conferences and parent meetings. Some are through the school and some are through the social worker. I use to attend before I started work and then I was getting off too late."

Before the end of the school year, Angela participated in a "Getting Children Ready for Kindergarten" workshop for parents with children attending the Transition program. Enthusiastically, she shared, "we colored, played games, and made ice cream. It was really fun." Participating in activities with her children enables Angela to put behind her many of the unpleasant memories of her past.

Perseverance

Angela's drive to make her life different has not been entirely successful. She could only cite two situations which made her feel good about herself.

Angela was fortunate to obtain employment as a loan assistant. Her cousin, the job supervisor, saw to it that Angela was trained on various computer programs. "It is a hard thing for me," she recalls. She expressed fears of learning to operate a computer without sufficient skills.

"I was scared to death because I only had typing skills from high school. They told me it was on the job training for a week and after a week there, I was on my own. I was really scared that I had to do that and that I would not do a good job. But after a while, I caught on really fast. They use to call me quickie."

Angela found few successes in her life and this was one of them.

Although Angela was not able to attend school after the birth of her first child, she was able to graduate on time. She credits her grandmother for this success. She expresses proudly, "I was out like eight weeks and I got all my work to come home. I did it and sent it back and graduated that June. That was O.K. for me. I thought that I wouldn't do that but I did. It was pretty easy." At that time in Angela's life, she had few positive experiences. She is now somewhat ashamed that she has six children. This attitude is played out in her interactions with the outside world.

Goals

Presently, Angela feels "stuck" and unable to move out of her emotional distress. "But I am going to keep my head up. Things will work out," she tells herself.

Occasionally, Angela becomes depressed and impatient with her children. She recognizes her feelings are the result of her socioeconomic situation.

Angela would like to start work in the near future. Her aunt plans to assist her in babysitting the children after school. "I will have her here, she will be around. She's a big help." Angela also has the help of her grandmother to assist her with childrearing. She realizes that when she obtains work, there will be less time with her children, but she feels working is a necessity in order for her family to survive. However, she believes making her work hours to accommodate the family is important. "I would have to make my hours pretty flexible."

Moving into a house in which she could arrange a rent with option to buy contract is another goal for Angela. Angela had plans to move last year but decided to stay another year. "My children really like the school." Consequently, her decision to stay in the community was based on the school.

Angela someday would like to take college courses and obtain more training in computers. She received classes in

Lotus and Word Perfect from her previous job. Angela left her prior job in good standings and believes returning there is a possibility. "That was a good opportunity for me. So that's what I really am going to be looking for after I have the baby." Angela would like to return to her previous job or search for other employment related to computers.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Barbara

Barbara is a 44 year old, African American women who has legal custody of her daughters two sons. The sons, ages five and six, have lived with Barbara for three years. Brian, the six year old, is enrolled in the Head Start\ Transition Program.

Barbara was born in Maryland and has resided in the Maryland-Virginia area all of her life. Siblings include a deceased brother, and one sister living in New York. Barbara and her husband have been married for 28 years. In this household, of three adults, to include her 20 year old son, the family has a monthly income of \$1500. Currently this family receives S.S.I. (Social Security Income) and AFDC (Aid for Dependent Children). Living in an overcrowded, three bedroom apartment, this family has experienced financial and medical problems for the past 15 years.

Barbara has worked most of her life in the dry cleaning business. "I've been in and out of the dry cleaning business since I got out of high school." Barbara talked about having typing skills but has not had a need to utilize them.

Barbara enjoys participating in Brian's education

and in various school activities. When asked about her specific participation, she said,

"I mean if they have a field trip going on and got plays and if I have time to participate in it I will. I was not working then and it was in the evening and I had the time to go and it made the kids more participatory in their work. I went to one PTA meeting and when the dinners came up at the dinner theater, I couldn't go. I had to work that night. I also participated in the breakfasts and coffees and a Book Fair."

It seemed apparent Barbara understood the significance of participation as a parent. Barbara remembers the foster parents that reared her were actively involved in PTA meetings, plays, and seeing to it that her homework was completed each night. Brian's mother, who lives in Baltimore, Maryland is also an active participant in his education. She attends programs and activities when it is convenient. As we talked, Barbara shared an educational game which she purchased for her grandsons. She is willing to do all that she can to enhance and improve their learning. "I try to do all I can. Brian has some interest in school. We sit down and read to them and so forth."

Barbara spoke very highly of Head Start.

"Most of the services that they had at Head Start, they were educational but it was more educational working with the older kids than the younger kids. I guess because they were into making shapes, numbers, and letters. As far as the first graders, they are learning to read and learning to write."

Barbara found working with the children quite rewarding.

When asked to evaluate the Head Start program, "I would evaluate the program as good, very good because it does help the kids get ready for kindergarten. It also helps them in being away from home especially when they are use to being stuck with mama all the time but when they get there, they forget all about mama. They are too busy with toys or making shapes and different things." The progress Brian made socially and academically is one area in which she credits the people of Head Start.

Barbara provided glowing complements about the staff and teachers at both Head Start and the Head Start\ Transition Program. Although she indicated her grandson's current teacher did not make a home visit during the school year, she was satisfied with the staff.

Barbara was an active participant in various programs and activities at the Head Start\Transition Program. She earned a certificate from the school for being an active parent volunteer and teacher assistant.

Barbara did not utilize public assistance services while her grandson was enrolled in Head Start. As far as services at the Head Start\Transition Program, she recalled Brian being enrolled in speech therapy. Brian's paternal grandparents are of Jamaican decent. She feels this had contributed to his speech problem. Barbara is pleased with the service he is receiving. "So far he has been doing

well. I mean his words are coming out clearly and he really likes going to speech."

When asked her opinion about parent participation at the school, she responded, "it's not good." She thinks that parents don't take the time to read the newsletter from the school to be informed of the various programs and services that the school offers.

"Half of them don't even read it because they don't have the interest. They have a job and they have house chores to do that takes up all of their time. If they went and found out, it is really relaxing. A lot of things that they should be doing in the home is really stressful. If you go some place to the school with the kids, you find out it is not that stressful."

She also felt that parents don't understand what to do when they become involved in school and classroom activities. "I only met one other African American parent throughout the entire year at school. Parents also work all day so their involvement in the school is less."

Barbara has made attempts to enroll in a program geared to computer training. However, she has not been successful in making contact with the appropriate people to enroll. She has prior typing skills and would like to improve those skills.

Major barriers Barbara cites include environmental, financial, and lack of training for herself. She is currently attempting to return to her old job at a dry cleaners in Virginia. Although, she wants to pursue

training in becoming a nurse or medical assistant.

Themes: Individual Characteristics, Expectations, Involvement, Perseverance, and Goals

The themes which portray the effects of Barbara's life surfaced in the conversations with her. The key to knowing Barbara was the sharing of her families' personal struggles and the need for the presence of harmony in her household.

Individual Characteristics---Placater

Barbara's need for harmony, began in early childhood as the result of being reared in a nurturing environment. The desire in maintaining a sense of balance and understanding is evident in her family relationships today. In discussing her past,

"My real mother and father, I didn't see but two or three times and the people they gave me too, I always thought they were my parents and they raised my children when I was working and in school. Now here I am raising my daughters children while she is in school."

During the course of our conversation, she put her arms around Brian and spoke softly to him. He responded in the same tone. Her tone of voice remained caring and kind as she patiently explained to him the reasons for her displeasure at his behavior.

Pleasing her family and supporting them emotionally is

an important part of Barbara's life. "I try to do all I can," she told me in a firm, no-nonsense voice. "It's been real hard for us but we have survived." Barbara encourages her grandsons to be successful in school and to use proper manners. "We teach them to behave and respect older people. That's how I grew-up and we expect the same from them."

Barbara works hard at maintaining an open communication with her family. Family discussions concerning their grandsons school day occurs daily. This family owned a maintenance business until 15 years ago. The business folded due to her husbands health problem. He is currently totally disabled and is required to take several prescribed medications daily. Barbara occasionally has to physically assist him throughout the day. "I don't know what I would do without her. I was fortunate to have a supportive wife," Mr. W. shared.

Barbara described her relationship with her daughter as very good. They are supporting her efforts to obtain a G.E.D. as she works a full-time job. She is involved with her sons' education and participates in various activities throughout the school year. Barbara's daughter was also a Head Start student.

The quest for harmony extends to her home environment where she displays pictures on the wall of her family and awards in which they have achieved. She proudly pointed out

to me her high school diploma on the wall and school certificates earned by Brian. "Brian has one from Head Start and the Head Start\Transition Program." In telling of her observations and visits to the school, she described the specific arrangement of the classrooms and the types of activities provided for the children. In explaining her reasons for volunteering in the school, she felt it was "very fun and relaxing."

Expectations

Barbara had clear expectations of the school. "I want the school to provide as much education for my grandsons as possible." Volunteering in the school was one way Barbara was willing to assist her grandsons to be successful educationally.

She was allowed to assist the teacher with classroom activities, supervising field trips, and monitoring the kids on the playground. "I had a role when I was there." She enjoyed the relationship with the teacher and felt welcome when she participated. "The teacher Brian had we would relate back and forth and when I was there she would act just as normal as everybody else."

Keeping abreast of his academic progress was another expectation. Barbara read weekly progress reports sent home by the teacher and made comments on them. She sent the

comments back to the teacher. This allowed her to maintain open communications with the teacher and school staff.

Barbara enrolled Brian in the speech program at school. Because of his Jamaican grandparents, she believed the slurring of words was a result of his biological lineage. He was recommended by the teacher to be tested for this service. A letter was sent home by the teacher and the local screening committee. Both grandparents participated in the Individual Educational Plan meeting for the speech program.

"We didn't have any strong feelings about him going into the program. So far he has been doing well. I mean his words are coming out clearly and he really likes going to speech, which makes a big difference. I believe if the teacher wasn't interested in him, then he wouldn't care and he would keep on talking the way he use to. He's doing fine."

This families financial existence is mostly from Social Security.

"They don't give us but so much and the insurance Blue Cross Blue Shield, they only pay a little bit and they want us to pay out of our checks. So it makes it tough to live. But we do the best we can."

Barbara has personally attempted to receive information geared to computer training, clerical skills, and nursing assistants. She has made periodic calls to various county offices to obtain this information. "It's very frustrating." Barbara felt people should follow-through on calls and be available to assist others. After many

attempts, she eventually received information through the mail.

Involvement

Barbara tries to maintain balance and makes sure everyone in her family is cared for in some way or another. She remembers her elementary school days as a positive experience. Her foster parents helped her with homework, and attended school activities. "They went to PTA meetings, helped me with my homework. They went to the plays. They sat there and watched me on stage and took pictures." Barbara's elementary school experiences made her feel better about herself. The relationships she established with her classmates were also positive.

In responding to the questions on the National Transition Family Interview questionnaire relating to parent participation, Barbara indicated she discussed the school day with her grandsons almost every day, participated in school activities planned for parents 1-2 times a week, volunteers 1-2 times a week, and maintains contact with the teacher or school staff 1-2 times a week.

We discussed Brian's enthusiasm attending the Head Start\Transition Program. She indicated on the Parent Supplemental questions, "He enjoyed getting up going to school each day." She talked about the teacher visiting the

home every grading period. Barbara was pleased with the manner in which the school related to her. She had an ongoing dialogue with the school and frequently spent time in the classroom. "I worked there six months doing different things in the classroom."

Barbara purchased educational activities and games for home use with her grandsons. She takes the time to be involved in the activities with them. "I even showed Brian how to write cursive so when he does his work and when he writes his name, he sometimes signs his name in cursive." During the weekend, Barbara works with both grandsons on spelling and math.

"We'll sit down and I'll write these numbers down and give them to him on a plain sheet of paper. He will write over the numbers. He likes that! I also give him spelling tests. I'll look at the word first and he'll spell them. He spells great!"

Brian's mother also is involved with his education and upbringing. Living in Maryland makes it difficult for her to maintain daily physical contact, but she makes frequent telephone calls throughout the week. Barbara supports the efforts of her daughter to work and attend classes.

"Anytime they have something at the school, she comes. She has to request that day off and so she comes that night so she can be here that day." On one particular occasion, Barbara recalls her daughter participating in a classroom activity. "We were just having fun. The kids would ask

questions and we would answer them. My daughter had six and I had six." Barbara and her husband accepts the custody arrangements and takes full responsibility for them.

Barbara voiced disappointment at the number of African American parents who do not participate at the school. "People just don't take the time. That's all it is. That's the way I feel about it. So they let their kids run loose and put the responsibility back on someone else." She contributes her participation to motivation, willingness and the availability of time.

Perseverance

Barbara talked candidly about what they had experienced to obtain workers compensation and Social Security benefits. Barbara's husband has one lung and glaucoma, consequently he is unable to work. She indicated they had been doing fine in terms of living, "Then this happen and we lost everything." This loss included their maintenance business, home and left them with little means of obtaining food and shelter. They filed bankruptcy and suffered through severe financial problems. Writing numerous letters to the state of Maryland and maintaining a file to justify her husband's disability was one way Barbara was able to receive financial assistance. "Sometimes you just have to be patient when you're dealing with those kinds of people." The entire

period to begin receiving compensation took around 18 months.

Barbara fears the influences of drugs on kids. She talks to her grandsons about these issues and encourages them to stay away from negative peers. "If its anything he wants, if I have a dollar, I give it to him. I believe he shouldn't ask anybody for nothing."

Barbara would someday like to move from her present neighborhood. "It's pretty expensive here plus when I was not working it made it really bad." She is not close with many of the neighbors and doubts whether they would respond if they observed inappropriate behaviors involving her grandsons in the neighborhood. Many of the parents, she feels are "lazy and lack the motivation" to be involved with their children. Barbara attempts to export her interests to others in the community by sharing school information with them. However, she found many of them continue not to participate.

Goals

Barbara previously worked as a dry cleaning assistant in Virginia. She returned to the cleaners after a six months lay-off. "I think I'll be there for a while until I can find something else. I know how to type but I just need to speed up my accuracy."

Barbara wants to obtain work in the health services field. She attended several Job Fairs related to food services and clerical. "I'd like to be in nursing or a medical assistant. I always wanted to be a nurse or a nursing assistant."

She intends to continue her involvement and participation with the school in assisting her grandsons' education.

PROFILE SUMMARY

Name: Chris Ethnicity: African American
Date of Birth: 12\25\66 Marital Status: Single
Employment: No Monthly Income: \$401-\$600\month
Number of Children: 3 Language Used: English
Training\Educational Programs: Literacy Program\Reading Program
Number of adult(s) in the home: 1
Specific adult(s) in the home: mother
Type of housing: public housing (apartment)
Length of time at current residence: 2 years
Sibling(s) in Head Start: current 1, previous 1
Household Assistance: AFDC (Aide For Dependent Children)
Food Stamps
Public Housing Assistance
Medical Assistance
Literacy Education (tutoring and remedial services)

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Chris

Chris is a single 28 year old, African American female. She has three children, two daughters ages fifteen months and five and a son age six. Chris is a native of Washington but has lived in Virginia most of her adult life. She graduated from high school in Virginia. She has never married but made a point to tell me, "all my children have the same father." Chris has lived in several areas of Virginia within the last five years.

Chris' parents reside in Washington, D.C. She was reared in a family of nine, four brothers and five sisters. She revealed emphatically that her relationship with her parents was fairly shallow. She contributes this to their work schedules.

Chris admits to having a difficult time in school and "ran" with the wrong crowd. Although, she shared, "I managed to finish high school," she felt she could have learned more while there. Chris has problems with reading and realizes a need to improve her reading skills.

This family lives in a two bedroom apartment which is considered public housing. The interviews were held in the living room. The furniture consists of a sofa and coach, a dinette table and two chairs, a large color T.V. and several

pictures on the wall of her children. Several toys were scattered about on the floor.

Chris was somewhat uncomfortable and reserved at the beginning of each interview. Some of her responses were very brief and she did not elaborate on her answers during our conversations. However, as we began to talk about her children and their involvement in Head Start, she became more relaxed and open. Her son, Da'Von, is currently a student in a Head Start/Transition Program and her daughter attends Head Start.

Chris spoke slow with a low pitched voice as we discussed views of Head Start and the Head Start/Transition Program. Several times she was asked to repeat responses and to speak a little louder. Finding a job, a better place to live, establishing a budget, and involvement with her children was the thrust of our conversations.

Chris described her experiences with Head Start as positive. She was very expressive in describing her thoughts on participating in the Head Start program. She talked about participating in a Fun Day at the end of the school year, occasional field trips and parent dinners. "Like Head Start this year was great. They did a nice thing. They did something for the working mothers and like they know we don't have transportation. They took us to a play, LORD HAVE MERCY. They took us one night." Chris had

been very excited in having an opportunity to attend her first play and socialize with the Head Start parents.

Chris made minimal contact with other parents at Head Start. As she described the Fun Day at the center, she became less sluggish with her words and more easier to understand. When asked what made her participate,

"because my kids kept saying, mommy please go, please go and I told them well I just had the little baby and it would be hot that day outside. And I said O.K. I'll go but I'm not going in the morning at 7:00 when they go on the bus. I'll come later."

She indicated that from observing other parents at the Fun Day, "Most of the parents came and some of the parents didn't come."

As far as the Head Start/Transition Program, Chris was quite definite in expressing her lack of involvement as a parent. Her rational for not participating were work related and problems with transportation. When asked specifically about various activities in the program,

"I think they went on about three field trips. They went to the zoo. I'm like, time I get ready to take a day off, somebody else had ask for a day off and I was working too. I went once on a field trip with my kids. I told them I would do as much as I could for my kids cause I'm like you had to find your own ride there. And you don't know what time you could come back and then like the school is way like, it's a bus line but when you get off the bus you got a 5 to 10 minute walk."

Chris felt the school was not concerned about her transportation dilemma and did not care or become involved

with those type of issues.

She had little contact with the teachers or any other staff at the school. Although Chris attended a Back-to-School meeting, she expressed feeling uncomfortable meeting the principal and teacher. "When I went to the Back-to-School night, I like see him in the hall but I never, I like, it was not me to really go up to talk to people." Chris' insecurities about meeting people and problems with transportation have been a barrier to her participation in the Transition program.

We talked about being a single parent and the issues she experiences with her children. Chris makes attempts to be involved with her children's education at home. "Once a week we have read-out time and during the year I started helping him with his math and he also says he likes playing with the computers."

Chris receives several services from the Department of Social Services. She does not receive any services or participate in any programs that the school provides. Currently she receives AFDC, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance, and Public Housing Assistance. Chris, with the assistance of Social Services, enrolled in a Literacy Reading program to improve her reading skills. Her reason for enrolling in this program, "I found that my skills were not where I wanted them to be."

As far as future plans and goals for herself and family, she realizes that she needs a better job but she is not sure where she would like to work. Chris would like to move to another environment but she wasn't clear if moving would occur within the near future. Chris had no timetable of events for her life as she stated, "I take it day by day."

Themes: Individual Characteristics, Expectations, Involvement, Perseverance, and Goals

The major issues around which Chris' life evolved contained several themes. Most importantly were the things which influenced her style as a mother. The themes which emerged indicated ways in which Chris connected with people and conducted her life.

Individual Characteristics---Distractor

Chris gave a shallow description of herself as a parent. She characterized herself as wanting a better life. On a scale of 0 to 10, Chris evaluated her parenting skills as a seven. "Because of the different things I do with my kids, I'd give myself a seven." Rearing three children is very difficult for Chris. She receives no emotional or financial support from her immediate family. Chris has a few community friends she communicates with in her building.

Throughout the interviews, several neighbors came to the apartment to borrow household items. Chris appears to be a person in which her neighbors use for various reasons and gets little in return.

Chris felt defeated by the "system." Thus she has lost her motivation and due to this hinders her from obtaining workable skills. She has been able to find gratification in spite of life challenges. In her personal life, Chris believed it is complete without a spouse. "I don't need no husband," Chris expressed. Although her needs would benefit from dual incomes, she feels no strong need to "find a man."

It was difficult to bring out a smile while talking with Chris. Periodically, she had to address the behavior of her 15 month old. There were at least ten times during the second interview we stopped for periods of 15 minutes. These interruptions and distractions resulted in having to repeat questions and summarize phrases.

Caring for her children remains important to Chris as a parent. She spends most of her time with them. "Most of the time I take them with me wherever I go. But if I go to work, I take them to a babysitter. Actually I don't go anywhere, as you can see, I stay in the house."

Growing-up in a family of nine, Chris admits her parents worked constantly and were frequently away from home. She experienced a lack of guidance and direction as a

teenager. The general attitude of her parents ranked making a living as more important than obtaining an education. Consequently, Chris' attitude toward child rearing is similar to her parents.

Although she encourages her children academically, much of her way of relating with them is similar to her family and environmental exposure. This is not to judge the pattern was good or bad. However, it does illustrate how Chris' upbringing has affected her life.

Each time we met, Chris' personal appearance and living environment was unclean and untidy. While there, she attempted to clean specific areas for us to sit and talk. Chris has a poor image of herself which includes personal perceptions regarding capabilities, goals and ideals.

Chris' limited communication skills prohibit her from adequately articulating her needs to appropriate persons. Consequently she becomes very frustrated and quickly abandons her pursuit of needed resources. This results in personal and family suffering. Chris is a proud yet poor individual with limited abilities to transform.

During one visit to her home, Chris had problems obtaining food for her family. She had spoken with Social Services but had not been able to receive the needed aid. As Chris shared this telephone experience, it was evident that she had been unable to communicate her needs to the

appropriate person. "I was given the run-around. The lady I was originally talking to was out sick for three weeks and I couldn't talk to her supervisor and I was told I have to wait until she comes back. But in the mean time my kids have no food."

Chris considers herself a failure and restricted to the conditions which she confronts on a daily basis. She views her life as being controlled by others especially the social service providers. "Those people in the social services don't care about anybody." Blaming others is another way Chris has coped with her situation. She does not see her inability to communicate or handle anything within her personal influence as factors affecting her present situation. Chris has developed a "learned helplessness" in responding to day to day situations. As a result, when negative situations occur, Chris is left feeling oppressed and withdrawn.

Expectations

It appeared to the researcher, during the interviews, that Chris behavior was disjointed and inconsistent. There were spurts when Chris appeared lethargic and unable to follow our conversation. Statements and questions were repeated several times.

Chris expected Social Services to supply her family

with the necessary elements to survive. The problems she encountered with Social Services to obtain Food Stamps was one example of services she expected. We talked about how she handled this situation. "I told them I lost my job and she was like O.K. But I told her my Food Stamps haven't come cause I get them cash."

When Chris made attempts to inquire about receiving the Food Stamps, she felt that she was not getting sufficient answers. They indicated to her that the Food Stamps had been mailed.

"I told her she was lying and that she better see to it that my kids get some food this weekend cause we were not going to sit around here all weekend with no food. They are just kind of taking their time. Like I was suppose to have gotten Food Stamps for this month. And here it is the 18th of the month and still don't have the Food Stamps yet."

Chris was anxious yet disappointed while sharing this story. How much of this was true, it was difficult to determine.

Medical assistance is another service on which Chris relies. "I can take them to any doctor that accepts medicare." She talked about finding a dentist for her children. Yet, she indicated it may be a waste of time to take them there. "I know I need to find a dentist around here soon but all they do is clean their teeth. I mean, they can do that at home." Lack of information and understanding on the purpose of preventive dentistry has resulted in negligence or a threat to the oral hygiene in

her children.

According to Chris' responses on the National Transition Family Interview questionnaire, she indicated being sort of pleased with the school program in terms of meeting her child's social and emotional needs. She felt her son gets along with his teacher and other children in the school extremely well. Overall, she rated his adjustment to school extremely good.

Chris had expectations of the teachers and administrators of the Transition program. The kindergarten teacher did not visit her home during the school year. She felt that teachers don't understand or meet the needs of the parent or student. "When you go to the elementary school, they don't care. They not like daycare. They don't really get involved like that." Chris responds best to feelings of being taken cared for especially by social service providers.

Involvement

Chris considers herself involved with educating her children. Participating in school activities has been minimal.

"I went once on a field trip with my kids. I told them I would do as much as I could for my kids cause I'm like, you had to find your own ride there. I think they went on about three field trips. They went to the zoo."

Chris displays interest in assisting her children educationally at home. The "Back to School" night at school was the only event she attended during the school year. "They had one meeting before they started school and one after they started school. They were talking about the same thing."

Chris was not enthusiastic about attending programs or events at the school. "Well like I know it's mandatory that you go to your son's first conferences. I will go but it's not mandatory that I go to the rest of the year conferences." She expressed minimal commitment to work with the school in any way. Considering the manner in which Chris connects with others, she had no motivation of becoming involved with the school.

While her son attended Head Start, Chris spent time in the classroom and participated in field trips. "I went there eight times. I helped in Art class and went on field trips. I participated in helping with the dinners with parents and the children. We also went to the zoo."

She recalled a particular situation with a close neighbor concerning parental involvement.

"She (neighbor) hadn't been all year. I'm like, how do you think you know anything about your child just because they send notes home from school. I'm like that don't mean anything. You need to go see. She's got kind of a selfish attitude."

Obviously, Chris finds it easy to point the finger at others

without looking at her own degree of parental involvement.

On the neighborhood scale rating of the National Transition Family Interview questionnaire, Chris felt unless you know the right people, you can't get services in the neighborhood, and getting help when you need it always takes more time and energy than she seemed able to provide. Neighbors are a burden to her although her relationship with them appears to be a fairly close one. She believes her neighbors ask too much of her and many of them are more willing to ask for help than to give help.

Chris shared plans for being more involved with the school and various activities. The sincerity expressed in following through was questionable.

"This year if I'm not working, maybe I'll go on a picnic. I've told them I really don't like going on a field trip with babies. I'm like if they don't listen to you, you'll get some of them and then you have some parents like take candy and stuff with them but they not suppose to give kids candy and stuff and sometimes when I went on a field trip with them, I tell the teacher I don't want this group of kids. They are too racist. If you can't give me kids like my kids, I don't want them."

Chris' method of volunteering in the school was by identifying specific types of children and activities for which she would be responsible for monitoring. The exact meaning of Chris making a statement of "racist" was unclear. It was thought perhaps she had a previous negative experience participating in a school activity.

Chris felt involvement meant being available and responsible to her children. She exhibited this by accompanying them to the bus stop every morning before school.

"I take them to the bus stop then the babysitter picked them up at 12:00 noon. She picked them up at the bus stop in the evening and sometimes my neighbor would walk home with them."

Chris also spent time after school helping her son with reading, learning numbers, and writing the alphabet.

On a frequency chart relating to parent participation in the National Transition Family Interview questionnaire, Chris' responses indicated the least amount of participation of the five sample parents. She indicated discussing the school day with her son every day, participating in school activities planned for parents less than monthly, volunteering did not apply, and maintained contact with the teacher or school staff did not apply.

Perseverance

Chris contributes her ability to survive to the assistance of other people and various public assistance services. She has received public assistance services for six years. Chris has worked in a variety of jobs including working in food service as a cook, and office work. "I've worked around kids. I like kids. That's why I

worked around a kitchen at the school." She is interested in working but is limited in skills.

Chris stopped work a few months prior to the birth of her last child. "I stopped working on my own but I suppose to start working soon." Chris made contact with Social Services to obtain work. She realizes the money she receives per month is not enough to maintain her household. The job referral from Social Services involves working as a cleaning maid. "I have done that kind of work before for this lady. She will pick me up." Chris talked frankly about her cleaning experiences. Concerning one of her houses, we laughed about having to clean around dog and cats. "I told them I didn't want to clean no houses with dogs and cats. Kids O.K. but no dogs and cats."

We talked about the Literacy Reading Program. Her voice became soft and speech unclear as she shared how she became involved in the program. "I just sort of like to get back on skills for reading. I just thought that I could use it." Chris recognized her reading limitations and used community resources to improve her skills. She found the program beneficial and rewarding. "The lady came to my house since I had the kids. I wanted her to come twice a week but she could only come once."

Lack of transportation is a major barrier for Chris. During a trip to the first meeting at the school,

"We had to walk when I first went to register him. I said to myself, I know where the school is at, it is near a church or something on the right-hand side. As we walked I thought that was the school. I'm like, that's not the school. It was hot that day and I'm like Lord have mercy are we ever going to get there. We got there but that was a walk. You need a car for that distance."

This is an example of Chris' attempts to participate with the school but lack of transportation made it difficult to do so.

Goals

Chris' shared she had limited career guidance in high school. Her parents did not provide much direction in terms of work training or skills. Chris has learned survival through a system of dependency and neglect.

We discussed changing her family situation. She confirmed that a "job" would be one way out of this dilemma. "If I had money like a millionaire, I would not have to live like this. If I had all the money, I would make sure my kids would live in a house not like this but a nice house."

Chris voiced no thoughts on continuing her involvement or participation in any activities or programs for her children during the school year. She realizes the importance of education for her children but does not appear motivated or confident enough to commit personal time to participate.

In the future, Chris would like to move her family to another apartment and gain employment. "I'd like a three bedroom apartment." Yet, she showed no indication of a plan to make these things happen.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Francis

Francis is an immigrant from Guatemala. She moved to the United States with her family in 1980. When Francis located in the United States, she had limited knowledge of English. She attended school in Maryland to learn the language. Presently, Francis is bilingual and fluent in English.

Much of Francis early life in Guatemala involved working to support her parents, brothers and sisters. She has been unable to obtain a high school diploma due to her present family's economic demands.

Francis is an attractive, petite lady in her mid-thirties. Her words, spoken fast with self-confidence, are nevertheless punctuated with a smile and laughter. She was willing and receptive to the times we met.

Francis married in 1980 and relocated in Virginia. They have three children, ages four, six and ten. They live in a three bedroom apartment (not public housing) in Virginia. The apartment is neatly furnished with a sofa, couch, lamps, a dinette set, and a T.V. It appeared the household furnishings had a particular place and order. They have lived in this apartment for 6 years.

Both she and her husband are employed full-time. Her

husband works as a restaurant waiter and part-time carpenter, Francis is a nanny for a family in Virginia.

We talked about her daughter, Laura, who attends a Head Start\Transition Program. Francis indicated her daughter did not attend Head Start preschool. She was instead enrolled in Accu Day Care Preschool. Francis felt the day care was very good and she was pleased with the staff there. Laura attended the day care all day from 6:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Laura took naps there, ate breakfast, lunch and snacks.

She speaks quickly, smiling a lot. Her voice gets higher at her excitement in talking about her participation. Francis discussed the parenting classes the day care had in the evenings and the various field trips going to the zoo, and the pool, in which she participated. Overall, Francis believed Accu Day Care prepared Laura for kindergarten. She felt day care was a positive influence both socially and developmentally. She has seen improvement with her numbers and writing her letters. "We teach her to have good manners and respect others," said Francis. She felt Laura, "...makes friends easily, a happy girl, self-confident and her self-esteem is good."

Francis met Laura's current teacher at school on several occasions. She spoke of one occasion in which the teacher came to her home. Francis talked extensively about

one incident which Laura hit a student in the classroom over a disagreement with a game. The teacher, principal and Francis talked to Laura in great length about the situation. Her words stated clearly, "Laura promised not to do it again," gave weight to the way she expects Laura to behave.

Francis attended several meetings in the Transition program. Specifically, she enjoyed the parenting classes at the school. The classes were for three weeks, for one hour and a half, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

"We really need those because sometimes they would talk about behaviors, attitude, and spending time with your child and other issues. A lot of behaviors and the people would come from the Office of Children."

We talked about participation and involvement in a Head Start\Transition Program. She paused briefly, "I felt bad about not attending the school trips and plays. I would like to be more involved to help in the class more and volunteer to participate in activities and programs." Due to both of their work schedules, Francis is unable to participate in various activities or programs within the school or Transition program.

Francis politely interrupts our conversation to answer the phone. She greets the caller and converses in Spanish. Later her husband enters the apartment. We stop briefly while she responds to him. This allowed me an opportunity to observe her interactions and admire her ability to shift

between two languages.

When asked about her knowledge of specific services of the Transition program, she was not aware of what was available. Francis and her family receive several public assistance funds per month. These services were previously mentioned. Francis is satisfied with the public assistance her family currently receives.

In reference to interactions with the school staff, Francis talked with the principal a few times and she knew the secretary well. She was aware of the school changing principals and admitted not knowing the new person. Francis had no contact with other parents in Laura's class. She and her husband attended two "special meetings" at the school. When asked the purpose of the meeting, she could not recall.

In sharing the needs of her family, she is interested in obtaining information concerning the GED (General Education Diploma), her husband needs to learn more English, and their ten year old son requires a tutor for English and Math. Francis and her husband have problems helping their ten year old son with his homework. Consequently, she believes a tutor would be able to assist and help him academically. She admitted that her husband, who speaks primarily Spanish, has difficulty helping the children with their school work.

Francis plans to continue her full-time job as a nanny.

She intends to alter her schedule to be more available to spend time in the school and assist in the classroom when needed. Francis also would like to help others who have difficulty speaking English. "I would like to be a translator but I need the G.E.D. first."

Themes: Individual Characteristics, Expectations, Involvement, Perseverance, Goals

Certain themes from Francis' life emerged during the discussions with her. The most striking part was her candid, and matter-of-fact style in communicating. She appeared to be a rational person, calm, cool, composed and reasonable. Francis chose her words carefully as she rapidly spoke. She cited situations and facts much like a computer.

Individual Characteristics--Computer

Francis' requirement to maintain a sense of levelness began in early adulthood. Living in a foreign country without the ability to communicate was difficult for her. "I was determined to learn the language and much of it I taught myself." Francis is proud of her efforts to accomplish whatever she sets her mind to do.

Assisting financially is one way Francis supports her family. Together, the couple earns \$2000.00 per month and

receives public household assistance from five resources. "We spend a lot of money because it takes so much to live here." Francis realizes the importance of a high school diploma and someday would like to receive more education.

During our interviews, she spoke of wanting things to be a certain way for her family. "If we had an opportunity to better our education, we would live differently in a house and not as renters. This is the way we would like to live."

Francis has high expectations for her children and finds it difficult to believe the children in the neighborhood have no goals or ambitions.

"Many of the children here lack positive thoughts. They get involved with the wrong group. They want money but they don't want to work for it and they think selling drugs is the answer. That's not good judgement."

Francis is a sensible and reasonable lady. Both parents communicate with their children frequently by explaining the "right and wrong way" to behave in school. Francis strongly believes children should respect their elders and do what they are told. "I grew up that way and I expect the same thing from my children."

Expectations

Francis was quick to respond as we talked about obtaining services. Francis spends time explaining

information to her children. "I take the time and sit and talk with her, and I have her to look me straight in the eyes." Showing respect is very important in Francis household and culture. She expects her daughter to be kind and display appropriate manners, such as saying "thank you and please." Being grateful to her parents and appreciating all the advantages she has is important to Francis.

As we talked, Francis asked periodically for explanations of words or phrases she had difficulty understanding. Word and phrase clarification were provided for "praise, interfere, and critical." Francis spontaneously responded when hearing the meaning of each word, "Oh I knew what that word meant", affirmed her knowledge of the meanings.

Involvement

Francis gathered packets and brochures of information on several day care centers before enrolling her daughter in Accu Day Care. She became familiar and knowledgeable of several centers. "We went around to several day care centers to look at how they work with the children before we choose Accu Day Care." Francis gave a complete description of the teacher, to include hair color, and size with occasionally posturing her mannerisms. "They actually prepared her for kindergarten. We can see that she respects

other kids, is nice and can share." Although Laura did not attend a Head Start center during preschool, she acquired adequate educational skills and social development to prepare her for kindergarten.

The teacher had an opportunity to visit the home once during the school year. This was an informal visit. "She took her to the store and brought her back home. So it was not anything special."

Francis attended the Transition school for various reasons.

"I went to the school so many times. We went to the school for a parent teacher work day meeting because a note was sent home to inform parents of the meeting. We met with the teacher to see how she was doing. It was a good meeting."

Although Francis did not get a chance to participate in the field trips, she saw to it that her husband was there.

"My husband went to the zoo with them. Laura came home one day and told us about it and wanted both of us to go to the zoo but I couldn't go. Her father went instead."

In her responses to the National Transition Family Interview questionnaire, Francis indicated discussing school almost every day, participating in school activities planned for parents 1-3 times a month, volunteering less than monthly, and keeping in touch with the teacher and other school staff 1-2 times a week. Due to her rigid work schedule, Francis was not able to participate in many school

activities or volunteer.

Francis feels people in the neighborhood have no concern to make life better for themselves. "They really don't care," she believes. She makes plans to enroll her children in "fun activities." Their children are enrolled in Karate. "They go to Karate once a week. The master is very nice." When compared to other options, Francis accepts her living environment but she feels parents are not involved with their children and the neighbors are sometimes "distant". For the most part, Francis believes a low percentage of children in the neighborhood will graduate from high school, complete college, or enter the military. "I find it quite disturbing when children don't want to complete high school."

Perseverance

Living in an unfamiliar environment and being culturally different has been a struggle for Francis. She considers herself as a "hardworking" individual. She had to endure many obstacles in America culture. "I knew that I was different but that didn't bother me. I enjoy working with people and helping them." Having a drive to obtain the best for her family has been her major focus despite the struggles.

Learning to speak the English and integrate with others

has also been a challenge for Francis and her family. After 14 years, in this country, she now feels a "sense of belonging."

We talked humorously about learning to speak English. "It took me about six months. Then I was teaching my husband. It took me only about 2 years to be fluent." Francis believes Spanish is an easy language to learn. "You need to be around people who speak it to learn it better," she explains in a matter-of-fact way.

"We had problems with our oldest son," she recalls. Francis contacted the appropriate services to get help for him. "This was hard on our family but we knew he needed help. He is a hyper child."

Francis has made certain her family obtains whatever services needed to survive. She is the one to follow-through on information and makes sure others respond to requests.

Goals

Francis is focused on obtaining the G.E.D. (Graduate Education Diploma. She plans to rearrange her schedule to be available to participate more in school activities and programs. Francis thoroughly enjoys her current job. "The people are nice there and they are kind to me." She is willing to spend the extra time studying to acquire skills

to be a translator. "I think I want to do more for people and help out as much as I can."

**SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEW DIALOGUE RESPONSES
IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Five parents participated in the interviews. Four female African American parents and one female Hispanic parent were interviewed. Of the five parents, one African American and the one Hispanic had both parents in the household. However, in both two parent households, only the wives participated in the interviews for this study. The average adult age of sample household--34.6. The average educational attainment grade--11.6. The average household size--5.2 and the average number of children per household--3.8. The types of housing for each household varied from public housing, house (not public housing), to apartment (not public housing). The African American households previously and currently have children attending Head Start. The Hispanic household had one child who previously attended Head Start. As previously indicated, all the households receive various types of public assistance and one head of household is enrolled in an educational\training program. Of the entire sample, only the Hispanic household has both husband and wife employed full-time. The total sample claimed no health problem or disability that interferes with their ability to take care of their child's needs. Almost all the parents shared areas in which their family required

services and assistance.

Before fully presenting the results of the interview dialogue, it will be necessary to review the main research questions that guided the process of this inquiry. These questions were: (1) What does participation mean to parents in the Transition program? (2) What is the extent of utilization of services made available through the Transition program? (3) What is the familial and social context within parental involvement in the Transition program? (4) What was the historical factors that contribute to parents' perception of services?

The findings of the research study are presented in relation to the original research questions that guided the course of the study. Before providing a detailed analysis of the research findings, it is pertinent to mention that the researcher felt confident that a good rapport was established with the parents that enabled the researcher to accept the views and opinions at their face value.

Additional contact in the form of telephone calls, mail correspondence, and planned meetings were arranged to provide information and assistance to the parents. A six-month follow-up was done on each of the five parents. The researcher provided Jackie, Angela, Barbara and Francis with career advice and information. Toward the end of this study, Jackie and Barbara obtained jobs, Chris and Angela

remained unemployed, and Francis continues to work in child care.

Research Question #1.

What does participation mean to parents in the Transition program?

All parents who participated in this study felt they participated or were involved in some way or another in their child's education. All of them have participated in at least one field trip, a school sponsored activity, a cultural event, and a teacher meeting or conference during the school year.

Jackie, Chris, Barbara, and Angela considered involvement as being active in the child's academic assignments and particular school-related tasks. For example, listening to the child read, assisting with memorizing numbers, cursive writing and helping with speech sounds are several ways cited as samples of their involvement.

All agreed that participation and involvement, were important yet the barriers which were mentioned previously hindered their ability to be fully involved. Also, two of the sample parents indicated that they had no transportation which made getting to the school a major problem for them.

At the time of the initial interviews, all were unemployed with the exception of Francis. The implication

is that parents who are unemployed would have more time to participate and be involved in their child's education. However, this was not the case. Of the four unemployed, Barbara and Jackie were the only two to participate and show involvement in the overall aspects of the school program. Barbara earned a parent volunteer certificate for her time and effort. Francis, Chris and Angela acknowledged that they had limited participation in the Transition program which they justified with work schedules, lack of child care, and feeling uncomfortable about the school staff.

Research Question #2.

What is the extent of utilization of services made available through the Transition program?

As mentioned in the previous section, most of the parents indicated they were not aware of the specific services offered by the Transition program. Most of them utilized at least one Head Start\Transition Program service and several public assistance services. Barbara's grandson and Jackie's daughter received speech therapy. Jackie's daughter was also enrolled in the SACC (School Age Child Care) Program. Angela received financial assistance from the Transition program through the Family Service Coordinator. Francis and Chris did not indicate having received any services through the Transition Program,

although, they are enrolled in a variety of public assistance programs through the Department of Social Services. Without these services, these parents would have a significantly lower quality of life. In each case, a major life event was the cause for needing household assistance. These events were child birth, divorce, medical, unemployment and relocation.

For Jackie and Angela, educational services and programs were difficult to obtain. Jackie tried on numerous occasions to enroll her daughter in the speech program and a class for learning disabled students. She was given unclear and vague answers as to the process. Jackie finally took her concerns to the central office administrators. There she received the information needed to get her daughter tested for both services. Angela was told there was a waiting list for the SACC Program and therefore she was unable to enroll her daughter into the program.

Research Question #3.

What is the familial and social context within parental involvement in the Transition program?

In addition to expressing their views and opinions concerning the Transition program, the parents appeared to have clear feelings about the general type of interaction between the school staff and the community which influenced

their type of involvement. All the parents had interactions with the Head Start\Transition teacher and the Assistant Principal. These interactions took place at Back-to-School nights, school activities, or specific meetings or conferences. These parents also recognized they were not totally involved in the school and were somewhat uncomfortable about approaching the staff to inquire about the parent involvement process. This insecurity on the parents part was due to issues of limited formal education, poor economic conditions, low self-esteem, and unemployment.

On the National Transition Family Interview questionnaire, the parents indicated a number of factors that contributed to the negative affects on the community and on the barriers of services. Most of them identified internal and external barriers as reasons for nonparticipation in school activities and programs. Lack of child care, transportation, lack of information and knowledge, and work schedules were the most cited external factors. In addition, economics, living environment and limited education were also cited. Feelings of depression, stress, and lack of confidence were the internal barriers mentioned.

Research Question #4.

What was the historical factors that contribute to

parents' perceptions of services?

Most of these parents had been active participants in their children's preschool education. All but one shared their interactions with other parents in the Head Start Program. Barbara, Chris, and Angela all shared positive views towards Head Start programs, services and staff. Although Francis' daughter did not attend Head Start, she felt the daycare she attended helped her to prepare for kindergarten. Barbara believed participation meant going to the school and knowing what was being taught, helping the teacher and going on the field trips. Barbara's thoughts concerning participation was not different than the other parents. Similarly, all the parents expressed interest in being informed of various school activities and events. If they are expected to perform a service in the school, they need a "job description" for parent participation in the program. A recommendation is forwarded in Chapter V on how this could be achieved.

Most of the parents viewed themselves, in relation to their participation, as having an interest in becoming involved in more school activities on a more consistent basis. However, the sources of barriers as previously mentioned are very important factors to parent involvement. Clearly, despite a desire for parents to participate, most of them will not.

A FINAL THOUGHT ON THEMES and GALEN'S PARENT

INVOLVEMENT MODEL

Woven within these individual narratives are themes which give definition and meaning to the manner in which these parents obtained services and participated in their children's education. These themes emerged from identifying the styles of communication these women used and how it influenced their participation in school activities, programs and in obtaining services. These women communicated in a number of different ways. The words they each articulated may be the same, but they had different meaning and connotation.

Virginia Satir, therapist and author of Peoplemaking (1972) has observed that people generally respond in one of four communication styles. The five communication styles; placater, blamer, computer, distractor, and leveler are used to identify the individual characteristics of the women in the study. Satir describes each style as:

Placater- The placater is eager to please and will agree to most anything to keep the peace. They tend to always apologize or sacrifice themselves. They are dependent and hesitant to take risk.

Blamer--The blamer does just that --blames. They always point the finger at someone else. Nothing is ever their fault. The blamer's attitude is always on the defensive. They criticize, nag and find fault. Blamers act disagreeable, hostile, and controlling.

They are usually angry and feels unloved.

Computer--The computer is a super rational person who are calm, cool and composed, and very reasonable. They choose their words carefully, deny their own feelings and cite facts and information much like a computer. Everything is in a logical sequential order.

Distractor--The distractor is unfocused, usually frantic, can't look you in the eye or answer direct questions. They like to ignore or change the subject. They are very talkative but rarely say anything meaningful. Inside they're frightened and distracted.

Leveler--Leveler's use logic, reason, and assertiveness without aggression. They are described as warm, sincere, sensitive and exhibits a sense of purpose.

The themes which derived from each woman's individual characteristic are exemplified in their past and current lives.

In the end, these women followed a similar pattern.

Several elements common to each woman emerged from the study:

- * Despite differences in their upbringing, struggles and experiences, they all used whatever means necessary to survive.
- * The nature of socioeconomic deprivation exist with each parent.
- * Each parent fit the profile of the traditional Head Start parent as described in earlier research.
- * All five women experienced difficulties with socioeconomics and in their personal lives but persevered in the face of strong opposition. They all made and took opportunities and responsibility for parent involvement.

Galen's (1991) model suggest that parents should have an opportunity to respond to program needs and interest as they perceive them. These needs and interest can be in the form of questionnaires, interviews, surveys, group meetings or a combination of these. On the basis of the present data, it is implied that these processes contributed and influenced these parents' responses. The model of parent involvement captures several points and patterns of participation and involvement which relate to the study.

Parent Participation

Parents establishing a partnership with the school is an important component according to Galen (1991). All parents in the sample felt they participated in a variety of ways in the Transition program. One parent, Jackie, believed that African American children in both Head Start and Head Start\Transition Programs are treated differently because of their race. She observed her daughter being involved in several situations which she felt were not handled appropriately. Overall, Jackie's perceptions of the classroom is based on her interactions with the teachers and staff and her participation in various activities and programs. Barbara believes when parents are involved with the school, children are more attentive in their work. Angel and Francis acknowledged having a problem with child

care, work schedule and transportation for their lack of participation. "I know there was a lot of things offered, I mean a lot of things I could have participated in but I just didn't really have the time. My schedule was tight," Angela explained. Chris expressed interest in doing as much for her kids as possible. She said, "I went once on a field trip with my kids but you had to find your own ride there."

All expressed interest in participating in school activities and programs. Most of the parents also said they would do anything to assist with their child's education. They all felt in some way or another that participation and involvement was important and rewarding.

Parent Involvement

According to the parents in this sample, they informally defined parent involvement as: 1) the school providing parents with "success reports" via written notes, fliers, home visits, and telephone calls, 2) parents participating in informal group discussions, 3) parents contacting other parents, 4) teacher's sending home ideas for parents to work with their children, 5) teacher's sending home notices of programs and cultural activities for their children, 6) recruiting parents to participate in the afterschool parent programs, 7) schools organizing parent-teacher seminars and workshops and 8) parents helping their

children with school assignments. Overall, they believed that communication is a necessary component of knowing what the school has to offer for parents and children.

Services and Programs

Many of the schools which house Head Start\Transition classes provide support to minority families by making information available to them. From this sample, the services indicated by the school personnel and Family Service Coordinators as available to the parents of the Head Start\Transition Program included: Reading Recovery, SULA (Step-Up Language Arts), Financial Assistance, Fund Drive, Free and Reduce Breakfast and Lunch, Clothing Drive, Special Educational Services, and After-School Programs. A number of these programs and services are offered in the designated treatment and control schools for the Transition parents and children. Many of these parents received a range of services during the time their children were enrolled in Head Start. However, now that these children are enrolled in a Head Start\Transition Program, many of the parents were not aware of the available services.

Each parents' experience with the Transition program was different in many ways. For Jackie, her experiences and contact with the program was the most striking. Barbara appeared the most active of the five parents in terms of her

participation and utilization of services. Although Angela, Chris, and Francis had a need to obtain services from the school, they were not aware of the services the program offered nor where they able to make themselves available to the school to participate in many activities or programs.

Family and Personal Issues

Social scientist have identified four common stresses and difficulties that many low-income minority parents and their children experience. They include: economic problems, practical responsibilities, social and interpersonal relationships, and emotional adjustment (National PTA, 1983). According to Galen's model, parent's needs must be analyzed and considered. The financial difficulties, especially for Head Start parents, Head Start\Transition parents, and many disadvantaged minority parents can in turn affect many aspects of their lives. For example, following a divorce, as in the case of Jackie, the family may have to move to a new neighborhood and obtain public assistance to survive. As a result, neighborhood supports and friendships may be lost and children have to attend new schools. Jackie has not maintained a job in 8 years, she now finds the public assistance she receives per month is not enough to maintain her household. In returning to work, child care arrangements will be an issue and her

children will have to adjust to an altered lifestyle.

When faced with new or excessive demands and limited resources, low-income minority parents often experience one of three kinds of overload, according to sociologist Robert Weiss. They are: responsibility overload, task overload, and emotional overload. The parents in this study experienced, in many ways, all the overloads mentioned by Weiss. Jackie, Chris, and Angela have sole responsibility for all aspects of child rearing; consequently family life becomes overwhelming. All believed that there is too much to do and not enough time and energy to do it all. Unanticipated demands and decisions tended to further deplete parents energy and emotional stability.

Socializing for most of these parents is limited. Many experienced difficulty meeting other parents within the Transition program, developing social contacts, and establishing friendships. These parents felt socially inept and isolated.

Due to internal and external issues, these parents occasionally felt depressed, anxious, angry, rejected and incompetent. The emotional stress and difficulty verbalized by these parents is mainly due to economics, environment, and lack of employment.

School and Community Involvement

School and community involvement is defined as of actions that organizations and individuals take to promote student and family development (Nettles, 1990). Galen's parent involvement model suggests parents use their personal resources of time and energy, a commitment to schooling, and prosocial behaviors. Regardless of the degree to which parents interact with the school and community, they are linked to both via their perceptions of the school climate and their own personal attributes.

Historical\Demographic Factors

Poverty is rising as is the number of homes headed by single parents. Almost one in four children now live below the poverty line. About one million immigrants enter the United States each year, many of whom do not speak English fluently (Swap, 1990). These changes in circumstance and background for the culturally diverse population make it difficult for parents to participate or become involve in their child's education.

Minority parents were the major focus of this sample. Along with the demographic properties, the social organization of the family (single parent, number of siblings), family network, educational and employment

resources, and family stability varied.

Goals and Future Plans

Galen (1991) suggest the goals for parent involvement should start small then increase. Most of the parents had vague goals and plans for themselves and their children. All spoke of wanting a better place to live and to find a well-paying or better paying job. None shared a timetable in which to accomplish these goals. For all the parents, we talked extensively about career goals and job training. For Jackie and Angela, they planned to return to work within two to three months. Francis planned to continue to work as a nanny. Barbara and Chris were seeking employment. All shared that they planned to be involved in their child's education this school year but were not sure of the extent of involvement. They also planned to participate in school activities and field trips.

For the schools, goals should include involving parents in a variety of roles. These goals should be designed to:

- 1) help parents develop parenting skills and foster conditions at home that support learning;
- 2) provide parents with the knowledge of techniques designed to assist children in learning at home;
- 3) provide access to and coordinate community and support services for children and families;
- 4) promote clear two-way communication between the

school and the family as to the school programs and children's progress; and 5) involve parents, after appropriate training, in instructional and support roles at school.

The climate of schools is considerably enhanced when parents are included in the planning and organizing of school activities and contribute to important decisions about significance events and programs in the school (Haynes, Comer & Lee, 1989). Several key school personnel, specifically the school counselor and school psychologist, has a particularly important part to play in fostering and helping to nurture a healthy relationship between home and school. With their training in human development, group dynamics, human learning, and their sensitivity to family relationship issues, they are important in schools' efforts to involve parents.

Barriers

It is very difficult to explain why those who received public assistance services did not utilize the services and programs within a Head Start\Transition Program. One factor the parents consistently stated was a lack of awareness of the services available to them through the Transition program. The sample in this study consisted largely of low-income individuals living in public housing or low cost

rental property. Olmstead (1989), listed specific barriers for hard-to-reach parents of special populations. These barriers include: lack of transportation, lack of child care, lack of teaching skills, overwhelmed by basic needs of families with limited resources, language difficulties (e.g., non-English speaking, illiterate), employment schedule(s), and feelings of alienation toward schools, teachers, and administrators.

Many of these barriers have been advanced as major obstacles confronting these parents from fully utilizing, participating and becoming involved in a Head Start\Transition Program. These obstacles are classified into two major categories: (a) situational barriers which arises from one's situation in life at a given time and (b) psychological barriers which are related to attitudes and self-perceptions about one's self. Examples of external barriers include lack of time, child care, lack of transportation, lack of money, lack of information and knowledge. Examples of internal barriers include lack of interest, feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, depression, and uncertain future.

In the study, parents were asked to talk about the barriers they encountered that impacted on their ability to participate in the Transition program. Their responses were consistent with the two major classifications mentioned

above. External barriers were the most frequently mentioned of the two barrier classifications.

Feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem were the internal barriers most often mentioned. Two parents, Jackie and Angela, expressed depression and stress as a factor. Chris, Angela, Jackie, and Barbara cited unemployment as a major external barrier towards participation in school and community activities which required money. Francis cited lack of knowledge, understanding, and information as a factor.

The environmental and historical background of the sample population was marred with poor housing, overcrowding, low income, victimization, dependency on welfare, lack of adult role models for children to emulate and in three of the five cases single female head of households. It is difficult for those from such challenging socioeconomical backgrounds to transform their willingness and motivation to participate in school programs and activities with all these negative forces acting against them.

PERSONAL DISCLOSURE

Finally, the researcher would like to make a few observations regarding this study. First of all, its context is important to the findings in the study. That is, as noted earlier, perceptions can greatly influence participation and involvement. However, it was discovered early in the research process that many of these parents had no perceptions of the services due to their lack of knowledge of the services. However, it became evident that the communication style of each parent dictated the manner to which they became involved and participated in a Head Start\Transition Program.

To substantiate the data, visits were done to each of the schools. Conversations with Principals, Assistant Principals, Family Service Coordinators, and Teachers provided supporting information concerning the Transition program and the extent of parental participation. The researcher had an opportunity to tour the school building and observe teachers and children engaging in activities in the classroom. For a treatment school, several programs and services are offered to the students and parents. The programs and services were: SULA (Step-Up Language Arts Program), Reduce Breakfast and Lunch Program, Reading Recovery, Community Fund Drive, SACC (School Age Child Care)

and the local screening committee to assist in identifying specific academic needs.

Conversations with school staff supplied specific information pertaining to programs, services, parent involvement and overall concerns of the Head Start\ Transition Program. Factors of poor school experiences, pride, uncomfortable contacting the school for family needs, and educational limitations were cited by the school staff for lack of parental participation. They saw this being more prevalent with minority and non-English speaking parents. According to the teacher at one of the treatment schools, "There were no set guidelines or expectations," for the parents.

The process by which Head Start\Transition staffs communicate information to the parents were by newsletter, note, and telephone calls. Several of the schools did not have a consistent system to impart information to the parents.

The parents in this study provided numerous hours to share information to the researcher. The researcher made use of her skills as a career counselor to assist Jackie, Barbara and Francis with career information and advice.

What Should the Head Start\Transition Program be doing?

Head Start\Transition Programs should be meeting

educational, social and emotional needs and providing assistance for social service needs to the families. Most of these parents were not able to explain what the Transition program was about and how they were or were not able to take advantage of the services. Jackie was the only one who appeared to be knowledgeable about the function and role of the program. After a year in the Transition program, Francis and Angela did not understand the purpose and function of the program. Although Chris' and Barbara's children are enrolled in a Head Start\Transition control school, it was apparent they could benefit from the services of the program.

I can only speculate the reason for these parents confusion and misunderstanding concerning the program is due to lack of communication by the project staff. Parents were not informed or introduced to this program by the school from the onset according to the Director of Family Service Coordinators. Consequently, the schools were not prepared to incorporate the parents in the program.

The designated advocate for Head Start\Transition parents, the Family Service Coordinator, assesses the families needs. However, with a case ratio of 42 to 1, they are only able to make contact with the families once a month. This contact is usually done in person or by phone.

The Director of Family Service Coordinators believes

schools somehow are not confident that they can adequately carry-out the mission and philosophy of Head Start in grades K through 3. Transition is a different resource in the schools, and therefore needs to operate under different guidelines with a different framework than regular classes.

Without the appropriate attention to specific Head Start/Transition families, it can't be assumed these families will utilize the services. The parent involvement and educational practices of the program are vital components. Including parents in the decision making process, revising the parent involvement component, and developing support in Outreach Programs are ways the Director of the Family Service Coordinators suggests would improve the total program.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

In the preceding chapters, this research project has dealt with the issues of participation and involvement and parental perceptions in services of Head Start\Transition parents. The research has focused on the parent involvement model of Harlene Galen (1991) as a means to understand the elements of Head Start and Head Start\Transition Programs. The research took the various elements in the model and applied it in exploring the meaning of participation and involvement and how it influenced the perceptions of services among these particular parents. The identified themes that were developed and presented in the previous chapter represent the researcher's efforts to organize the information provided by these parents' to facilitate understanding and knowledge. Selected segments of parents' interviews experiences were used to illustrate themes of communication and the role they portrayed in the lives of each of the five parents. These themes were not limited or exhaustive, but they were a way to organize the data and explain the views and opinions of these parents.

What is portrayed in this study is only a small segment of the overall picture. It is interesting to note that the parents in the study receive a total of 21 household

assistance services collectively which is also the main reason cited by each as a need to continue receiving services. It is also important to recognize the sample in this study was limited to African Americans and Hispanic parents.

The research findings support the literature that parent involvement improves when parents work and home schedules, household needs, support and information concerning the availability of resources and services are clearly communicated to them. This is evident among the lower socioeconomic status parents and many minority parents. The research findings also support the literature that race, education, economics, and single parent mothers are less likely to attend meetings and participate in various activities for their children and therefore are reluctant about being involved. Three of the five households in this study is headed by single mothers.

Conclusions

After participating in the interview process with these parents and listening to their views and experiences of Head Start and Head Start\Transition Programs, it became clear that these parents had limited knowledge of the services in the Transition program. Rather, their individual styles of communicating and specific internal and external barriers seemed to be an extension of factors which

influenced their participation. In the study, parents indicated child care, transportation, lack of information from the school, and inconvenient times of activities and programs as prohibitive to their participation and made them more apprehensive to become involved.

Based on the discussion of these issues, the parents had minimal choices concerning the factors which influenced their participation. Most of these factors were a result of being overwhelmed by basic needs of family with limited resources and services available, employment schedules, lack of transportation and child care, language difficulties, feelings of inadequacy toward school, teachers and administrators, and lack of education and "teaching" skills. In addition, it can be concluded that the Transition program seemed to have unclear guidelines and expectations for these specific parents.

According to Comer (1986) parents need clear mechanisms for involvement; just inviting parents to school is not enough. Therefore, parent participation programs must be structured to accommodate their interest and needs. Many less well-educated parents and parents with fewer mainstream social skills are cautious to come to school. Comer believes the lack of a well designed program for minority parents is the reason many traditional parent-teacher organizations do not do much to improve the climate of the

school.

One of the important pieces in the parents' conversations seemed to be their openness and trust to disclose personal information concerning themselves and how they viewed themselves and their relationships with their families, friends, community and the school. The events and issues which strongly affected each parents' participation also affected their perceptions of the school services, resources, and activities. Lack of consistent support from family and friends, divorce, separation, adequate housing, economic hardships, were factors which influenced their participation.

Jackie, an active Head Start volunteer, became disenchanted with the Transition program because she felt the program should offer different educational activities than preschool. Jackie experienced many conflicts and problems associated with obtaining services and enrolling her daughter in various programs. There were also other factors which influenced this populations participation and involvement. For example, Francis, an immigrant from Guatemala, was unaware of the services available in the Transition program for her family. With the help of Social Services, her family receives services from 5 different public assistance programs.

Much like Francis, Angie, a single mother with seven

children, was also unaware of the services and programs available to her through the Transition program. Angie kept close contact with the Family Service Coordinator at the school but was unable to participate or become involved in many activities. On one occasion, she requested financial assistance from the school. Her request was granted. This does not necessarily prove that the services needed by each parent influenced participation or involvement. However, the sources of information could be a significant factor in services made available to these parents.

Recommendations

The participants in this research study were minority women between the ages of 27 and 44. Four were high school graduates with two of the four having some college education. One was without a high school diploma. Future research efforts could attempt to determine if the same issues that were identified for these parents also occur in other cultural groups within Head Start/Transition Programs. The parents indicated lack of awareness concerning services provided in a Transition program as the greatest factor to nonparticipation. One of the ways to achieve this might be to provide specific handbooks, guidelines, and criteria and to offer alternative ways to solicit information concerning the needs of the parents. Any strategy or intervention

which improves parent-school communication opportunities may have a significant impact on the behavior of each parent.

Some of the other reasons cited by parents for nonparticipation were family and personal reasons. One way to combat this would be to organize support groups to allay their concerns and apprehensions with the school system and provide them with counseling on parenting skills, self-improvement strategies, career training and educational information. Based on current congressional discussions, the restructuring of the welfare system will be a major factor for many low-income families. Therefore, efforts at providing exposure and information relating to career skills and training is important. More research needs to be done in this area to determine the best way to deal with this issue.

Findings in this research suggest that the most comfortable method by which parents participated was through school activities such as field trips, hands-on classroom activities, or being a monitor or assistant. Therefore, Head Start\Transition Programs should incorporate specific classroom activities, tasks, and duties for parents to effectively maintain consistent participation. It was learned in the findings Head Start\Transition Program teachers communicated periodically with the parents via notes and telephone calls concerning school activities,

programs and meetings. One way to facilitate and improve the process of communication is to establish a regular scheduled newsletter of the various activities, programs, resources, and planned events. Such an approach is ideal for communicating information to parents.

Elementary school counselors can also play a valuable role in incorporating mechanisms for family support into Transition programs and for influencing change. Benjamin and Walz (1979) recommend a model counselors can use to develop strategies to be change agents. The steps are: 1) establish the need; 2) build interactive relationships; 3) assess the situation; 4) generate options; 5) decide upon a goal and 6) facilitate adaption and implementation. By informing school administrators of the importance of a continuum of options for parental involvement, school counselors can help assimilate family support variables with the greatest likelihood of enhancing child and family potential. In addition, school counselors are in a unique position to offer direct family support via individual and family counseling (Hohenshil & Hohenshil, 1989).

Head Start enhances the learning environment of children, and counselors can draw from these experiences to create additional intervention strategies that will strengthen the child's development and increase parent participation. Wolery (1989) identified several factors in

assisting early childhood transitions, including assessment of and attention to child and family needs, establishing and maintaining communication among sending and receiving programs and service recipients, and involving parents and families in decision making. Many of these activities relate to family communication and support from which school counselors are especially well suited (Hohenshil & Hohenshil, 1989).

The environment and community context observed by the researcher in areas considered "low-income and public assistance housing" supports the literature that residential density has a substantial impact on children and parents. Children who live in crowded apartments reported more frequently than their counterparts in less crowded households that other people distracted them while they were doing their homework (Aiello, Thompson, and Baum, 1985). The researcher on one occasion visited a parent who had no food for several days and the children were sleeping on mattresses and blankets on a hardwood floor. Because of the living conditions and level of poverty for several of the parents, the research points to a need for additional intervention programs featuring home visits, and neighborhood-based support groups.

Dr. Harold Hodgkinson, a lecturer and analyst of educational issues, believes that child abuse, neglect,

welfare recipients, and other family-related factors contribute to low parental participation and sets the stage for failure in school even before the child enters the kindergarten door for the first time. Hodgkinson calls for entire communities to become involved in resolving these issues (Lam, 1993, p.7).

A review of the multicultural research on parent participation and parent involvement, and the research findings from this study leads to the following recommendations for working with educators and parents with children enrolled in Head Start\Transition Programs.

- 1) Administrators, teachers and counselors need to collaborate with parents to develop a clear and concise statement about the goals of Head Start\Transition Programs. The statement needs to be one that parents can relate to and understand.
- 2) Each school should develop written policies about working with parents from various multicultural groups. Written policies often encourages more participation, activities and foster enthusiasm.
- 3) Teachers, administrators and counselors should be provided not only with practical training in the proper ways of working with minority parents, but also they need to be taught about minority cultures. Perhaps assistance in obtaining "how-to-do-it" materials and understanding the best strategies for effectively involving parents would be beneficial.
- 4) Minority role models should be incorporated in the schools and participate actively in home-school partnership efforts. Key civic organizations and clubs, churches, and persons in the community who can provide linkage between families and schools need to be identified.

- 5) Minority parents should be asked how they would like to be involved and participate with their child's education, and a variety of opportunities should be provided. Teachers in Head Start\ Transition Programs need to look beyond the traditional ways of working with parents.
- 6) Head Start\Transition Programs should make certain that a variety of opportunities, based on the interests of parents are available for parent participation in the schools. Educators should be sensitive to parents' education and skill levels, child care issues, means of travel to the school, work schedules, and individual preferences as they plan with parents the most appropriate parent involvement activities.
- 7) Finally, Head Start\Transition Programs need to make available the appropriate kinds of services, resources and activities for parent involvement. In particular, there should be staff, space, and career development information and services identified and allocated for the implementation of effective parent involvement efforts. The provision of these resources and services will help emphasize the importance of parent involvement and participation in education and demonstrate a commitment to its success.

It is concluded from the findings in this research that parent's knowledge of services in Head Start\Transition Programs was minimal. However, the extent of participation in school programs and home-study activities varied. Rich (1988) believes there is both a renewed interest in parent involvement and a convergence of effort at the federal, state, and local level to make schools more effective. Certainly, the challenge is not an easy task. It will not only take time but also special attention to Transition programs before we see long-term positive results from

parent participation efforts for minority parents and children.

Parents can play many roles in schools, from recipients of information, to volunteers, to problems-solvers and decision-makers. For parent involvement to be transformed into meaningful support, parent programs need to be carefully planned, implemented, and monitored with the goal of educational excellence. Although the literature indicated many creative and successful ideas and programs upon which to draw, there is no single recipe for effective home-school collaboration with a Transition Program. However, when the overall goals shape the program philosophy, when planning and goals are the norms for communication, and when effective leadership continues over time, there is little doubt that this program can become effective to parents and children.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

Title of the Study: A Study of Parent's Perceptions Regarding Services In Head Start\Transition Programs

Purpose of the Study and Procedures:

The purpose of the study is to determine how parents view the importance of Transition services through their participation and involvement. I am interested in learning and understanding your opinions, thoughts, and feelings about the services of Head Start\Transition Programs as well as your participation and involvement with these services.

Your participation will consist of one or two interviews which will be audiotaped and transcribed. These interviews will include questions relating to demographic profile (e.g., family structure, racial composition, employment status, age, and education), resources and services, parental involvement and participation, and assessing and evaluating the Transition program.

Name of Investigators: This study is being conducted by Rita G. Giles as part of a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Marvin Cline and Dr. Johnnie H. Miles at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Falls Church, Virginia. Rita G. Giles can be reached at the Head Start\Transition office at Va. Tech in Falls Church, Va....(703) 696-6066.

We are pleased that you have agreed to take part in this study. We also understand that any information given to the researcher will be kept confidential. The audiotape from this project will be reviewed solely by members of Virginia Polytechnic Institute School of Education Graduate Faculty.

Please sign below if your rights and your role concerning this research investigation are understood and you wish to participate. A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

_____ Participant's Signature Date _____

_____ Researcher's Signature Date _____

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Interview Protocol and Demographic Questions

Interview Protocol:

- a. Description of the study
- b. Informed consent
- c. Historical/Demographic profile of parents
- d. General questions about Head Start and Head Start\ Transition Program

Questions relating to parent involvement and participation in services, resources and education...

- a. How they were made aware of the resources, services, and educational components of the Transition program
- b. Description of involvement and time in which they were involved in the program
- c. Reason for involvement
- d. Description and utilization of services made available
- e. General and most important resources needed for family
- f. Would any of these contribute to or hinder participation or involvement

Questions relating to parent assessment/evaluation of Transition program and services...

- a. Explanation and description of the program services meeting family needs
- b. Description of the changes in which the family has experienced since participating in the program
- c. Description of these specific services that contributed the most to the changes within the family
- d. Suggestions in the area of changes for this program...
Description of services that would be added
- g. Would any of these contribute to or hinder participation or involvement

Questions relating to historical/demographics.....

Each Participant

- a. Age
- b. Education
- c. Racial composition
- d. Employment status
- e. Income
- f. Description of family...number of adults and children living in the home, names and ages of each, length of stay in current residence, others who share in the

- g. parenting duties of child enrolled in Transition program
- g. Positive/Negative qualities, special strengths and weaknesses within the family
- h. Goals and plans in the area of improvement or change for family
- g. Would any of these contribute to or hinder participation or involvement

Additional interview questions....

- a. How would you assess the difference between the Head Start program and the Transition program? Was your time spent in Head and the Transition program different or the same, explain?

Were you more or less involved with the activities and the various programs of Head Start or the Transition program, explain? When you were at both Head Start and the Transition program, what did you do there? How often did you go? What was it like to participate or volunteer your service/time? Were other parents there? Did you get to know them? Did your son/daughter enjoy you being there? What was the most rewarding or exciting event or activity that you participated in? If you had to change any thing that you or your son/daughter experienced at Head Start or the Transition program what would it be?

- b. What were the positive/negative events for you and your son/daughter during the school year?
- c. What were the teachers at both Head Start and the Transition program like? Did both come to visit your home? What did they do while there? Did any other staff of the programs come to visit? Who were they and what was the reason for their visit?
- d. What were some of the programs and services that you and your family utilized? Are these programs still needed for you and your family?
- e. Who are the people that have provided you with the most assistance in both programs? Are these people still involved with you and your family?
- f. If you had an opportunity to make things different for you and your family, what would it be? How would you began to make that change?

- g. How was the classroom designed and organized? What were your interactions and communications with school personnel, i.e. office staff, teachers, principal, assistant principal.

APPENDIX C

The University of Alabama Family Questionnaire Booklet

For copies of the complete Family Interview
Questionnaire Booklet contact:

Civitan International Research Center
University of Alabama at Birmingham
1719 Sixth Avenue, South
Birmingham, Alabama 35294-0021
(205) 934-8058

APPENDIX D

PARENT SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Parent Supplemental Interview School _____ Family ID# _____
Date _____ Interviewer ID# _____

I would like to ask you a few questions about the Head Start (FECEP) your child (name.....) went to last year.

Record the responses to the questions written in CAPS. Other questions are asked as opening statements or probes.

1. WHICH HEAD START DID..... ATTEND BEFORE KINDERGARTEN?
NAME _____ DON'T KNOW _____

2. Didgo to H.S. all year? Did he (she) get shots there?
Did you think the food was good?

3. WHO WAS THE TEACHER?
NAME _____ DON'T KNOW _____

4. WHO WAS THE ASSISTANT?
NAME _____ DON'T KNOW _____
(ANY EVALUATIVE STATEMENTS RECORD VERBATIM)

5. DID.....NAP AT HEAD START? YES _____ NO _____
DID.....NAP AT HOME? YES _____ NO _____

Did.....look forward to going to Head Start in the mornings?

6. DID.....MAKE SPECIAL FRIENDS AT H.S.? YES _____ NO _____
DID.....MAKE FRIENDS EASILY? YES _____ NO _____
DID.....PLAY WELL WITH ALL CHILDREN
OR JUST WITH SOME CHILDREN? ALL _____ SOME _____ DK _____
DID THE TEACHER HELP HIM/HER MAKE FRIENDS? YES _____ NO _____

7. DID THEY DO MUCH SCHOOL WORK, GETTING READY FOR
SCHOOL AT HEAD START?
MUCH _____ A LITTLE _____ NONE _____ DK _____

DID YOU THINK THIS WOULD HELP.....WHEN HE/SHE GOT TO KINDERGARTEN? YES _____ NO _____

8. DID YOU MEET THE FAMILY SERVICE WORKER (SOCIAL WORKER)? YES _____ NO _____
If YES, ask: NAME _____ DK _____
HOW OFTEN? MORE THAN 5 _____ 3-5 _____ 1-2 _____
WHERE? HOME _____ SCHOOL _____ BOTH _____ OTHER _____

WHAT DID SHE HELP YOU WITH? LIST VERBATIM:

9. DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL TO MEET WITH.....TEACHER? YES _____ NO _____
HOW OFTEN? MORE THAN 5 _____ 3-5 _____ 1-2 _____
DID YOU TALK ABOUT HOW.....WAS DOING AT SCHOOL? YES _____ NO _____

10. DID THE TEACHER COME VISIT YOU AT YOUR HOME? YES _____ NO _____
HOW OFTEN? 3 OR MORE _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
DID SHE SHOW YOU THINGS TO DO WITH.....? YES _____ NO _____
WERE YOU ABLE TO DO THEM? YES _____ NO _____
IF NO, WHY NOT? RECORD VERBATIM:

11. DID YOU GET A CHANCE TO VISIT AND SPEND SOME TIME IN.... HEAD START CLASS? YES _____ NO _____
WHAT DID.....DO WHEN YOU WERE THERE? RECORD VERBATIM:

12. DID YOU GET A CHANCE TO SPEND TIME IN THE FECEP CENTER OTHER THAN IN CLASS? YES _____ NO _____

WHAT DID YOU DO THERE: (record EACH as appropriate:)
GO ON TRIPS WITH CHILDREN _____
PLAY WITH CHILDREN IN CLASS _____
HELP WITH ADMINISTRATIVE/COOKING/MAINTENANCE/ETC _____
WORK ON A COMMITTEE _____ OTHER _____
ATTEND A SOCIAL DINNER _____ ATTEND A CENTER WIDE MEETING _____
SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS FOR FUN _____

NOW THAT..... IS IN KINDERGARTEN, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW SCHOOL.

13. WHAT IS..... TEACHER'S NAME _____ DK _____
HAS SHE VISITED YOU AT HOME? YES _____ NO _____
DID SHE SUGGEST ANYTHING TO DO WITH.....
AT HOME? YES _____ NO _____
IF YES, DID YOU DO IT? YES _____ NO _____
IF NO, WHY NOT? RECORD VERBATIM:

DID THE TEACHER TALK ABOUT ANY OTHER THINGS THAT YOU MIGHT DO AT SCHOOL? YES _____ NO _____
IF YES, WHAT DID SHE SUGGEST YOU MIGHT DO AT SCHOOL? RECORD VERBATIM:

14. HAVE YOU MET THE FAMILY SERVICE WORKER (SOCIAL WORKER)? YES _____ NO _____
HOW OFTEN? MORE THAN 5 _____ 3-5 _____ 1-2 _____
WHERE? HOME _____ SCHOOL _____ BOTH _____ OTHER _____
WHAT DID SHE TALK ABOUT:

- NEEDS ASSESSMENT _____
- FAMILY PLAN _____
- HOW TO CONTACT SPECIFIC SOCIAL SERVICE _____
- BEHAVIOR OR SOCIAL PROBLEMS WITH _____
- HOW TO HELP..... IN SCHOOL _____
- HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES _____
- OTHER (SPECIFY) _____

15. HAVE YOU HAD A CHANCE TO VISIT.....SCHOOL (OTHER THAN PICKING HER(HIM) UP AFTER SCHOOL? YES _____ NO _____
IF NO, WHY NOT: RECORD VERBATIM _____

IF YES, WHAT DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL FOR; RECORD ALL APPROPRIATE:
MEET WITH TEACHER ABOUT _____
MEET WITH OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL ABOUT _____
HELP OUT AT SCHOOL AS A VOLUNTEER (SPECIFY TASK) _____
ATTEND COMMITTEE MEETING _____
ATTEND FIAT MEETING _____
ATTEND PTA _____
ATTEND A CULTURAL/MULTICULTURAL/ETHNIC EVENT _____
ATTEND A SOCIAL/FAIR/DINNER _____
VISIT PARENT RESOURCE ROOM FOR FUN _____
OTHER (SPECIFY) _____

16. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS? RECORD VERBATIM.

APPENDIX E

CODE NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

CODE NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS:

Mrs. D6....Third Interview

BAR	BARRIERS
BAR - RI	Race Issue
BAR - TB	Teacher Bias
BAR - CLM	Child's Lack of Motivation
BAR - LIT	Lack of Involvement from Teacher
BAR - CE	Classroom Environment
BAR - LPP	Lack of participation due to personal reasons
BAR - S	Services

SCH	SCHOOL
SCH - E	Environment
SCH - CP	Classroom Problem
SCH - TCM	Teacher\Classroom Management
SCH - POT	Perceptions of Teacher
SCH - NEX	Negative Experiences
SCH - AP	Academic Perceptions
SCH - R	Resources
SCH - SI	Staff Interactions
SCH - I	Information
SCH - POA	Perceptions of Activities

PI	PARENT INVOLVEMENT
PI - COB	Classroom Observation
PI - M	Meetings
PI - D	Disappointment
PI - CR	Conflict Resolution
PI - AP	Academic Perceptions
PI - I	Information
PI - SW	School Assignments
PI - SP	School Programs
PI - T	Tasks

APPENDIX F: REPRESENTATIVE CASE REPORT

The purpose of this appendix in the dissertation document is to provide one example of a case study report. Twelve such reports (two for three participants and three for two participants) were produced during the conduct of the research project. An iterative "step by step" approach were conducted for each case. Each report were transcribed, coded and used as data for the study.

RESEARCHER'S THIRD INTERVIEW

		2	
	Mrs. D6	5	
	Rita....One of the things that I would like to talk about is your participation and involvement. You shared the last time we talked that you enjoyed going on the field trips and going to the meetings and you were also pretty vocal in making yourself known within the	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	
#-SCH-E	schools. That's very important to do. However, one of the things that I would like to explore at this point is your views and thoughts of the school and the classroom. How do you feel about the school overall? Do you feel that it is a good place for your daughter to go? Do you feel she's interested in learning, enthusiastic and motivated about going to the school?	14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	-#
\$-SCH-CP	Mrs. D6....O.K. when Candice was in kindergarten, she had some problems in	25 26	-\$
%-SCH-T\CM	the classroom. And I think it was and I know it was in reference to the environment. The teachers attitude and the teacher's concerns. It was basically the teacher's discipline. Probably the way she controlled the classroom.	27 28 29 30 31 32 33	-\$-% -#-%
	Rita...Um..hum...	35	
#-BAR-RI	\$-BAR-TB		
	Mrs. D6....When I think about it, it was more of a um..prejudice or preference. In this particular classroom, this teacher had preferences for certain children and Candice wasn't one of those children she had that preference for. But I also felt that it was another Black child that she ..she displayed that same kind of negativism when she responded to these children later..you know. Ah..hum..so therefore	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47	-#-\$ -\$
#-BAR-CLM	Candice didn't want to go to school. she was very unhappy in kindergarten.	48 49	-# -#
#-PI-COB	So I spent a lot of time going into the	50	-#

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

school. You know those unexpected	51	
visits to see what was going on in the	52	
classroom and observing some of the	53	
behaviors of the other children or the	54	
responses when Candice would raise her	55	
hand. she would overlook Candice and	56	
pick another child. Candice would raise	57	
her hand again she'd overlook Candice	58	
and still pick another child. You	59	
know...or when they needed someone to do	60	
something, they had something they	61	-#
#-BAR-TB		
called it the "Leader". You know...she	62	-#
had this teacher had certain preferences	63	
and Candice just wasn't one of those	64	
which made her unhappy. And when it	65	
came to the discipline, she was much	66	
harder on Candice and as a matter of	67	
fact...it was three Black children. And	68	
I know a mother now that's still	69	-#
\$-PI-M		
concerned about it. We wanted to bring	70	-\$
it up in the African American meeting.	71	
Ah, it was a community meeting but she	72	
#-BAR-RI		
decided not to And what she was going	73	-#-\$
to say was, every time a Black child	74	
does something, they make a big issue	75	
out of it. A minority kid of another	76	
culture can do something and it would be	77	-#
#-SCH-POT		
nothing said, no nothing at all. And I	78	-#
think what they're doing the school	79	
in this particular class is..ah...I	80	
think what they're doing, I think she's	81	
suppose to promote positive attitudes.	82	
\$-SCH-NEX		
Positive encouragement, but Candice, it	83	-#-\$
all came out very negative because of	84	
all of the things that happened in the	85	
school. She had a very bad... I mean	86	
kindergarten was the worse. If I had to	87	
do it all over again, I would have	88	
transferred Candice to another school	89	
out of this area. Ah..this particular	90	-\$
teacher did a very poor job. A very	91	
poor job. Not because of the things	92	
that happened to Candice but it happened	93	
to some other children and some of the	94	
mother's took their children out.	95	
Ah....	96	
Rita...You said...excuse me for cutting	98	
you off...But when you went to the	99	
classroom to observe Candice and what	100	

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

	the events that were going on, what did	101	
#-PI-COB	it look like to you? How was the tone	102	-#
	of the class with the children when you	103	
	walked into the classroom?	104	
	Mrs. D6....One day I walked in the	106	
	classroom and Candice was at the	107	
	computer and I think they have time at	108	
	the computer and she was working there	109	
	and this particular little girl wanted	110	
	to get there and she was standing by	111	
	Candice and it was a little friction	112	
	that took place. And I really didn't	113	
	like the way the teacher handled it. So	114	
	this little girl pushed Candice back.	115	
	The teacher yelled at Candice. "Candice	116	
	go sit at the table!" You know...becaus	117	
	the little girl was crying because Candi	118	
	pushed her back and the little girl just	119	
	started crying...she wanted that compute	120	
	Instead of taking both children and	121	
	bring them together...um...also this	122	
	particular teacher when Candice tried to	123	
	intermingle with the other kids..she	124	
	tried. The teacher told me..."well, I	125	
	told Candice to go find someone else to	126	-#
	play with." Because these two girls	127	
	were Spanish..you know...from another	128	
	culture and had been together for a long	129	
	time. And but...you know...there were	130	
	very few Blacks in there and she was new	131	
	with the other Blacks.	132	
#-SCH-POT	But this teacher didn't seem	133	-#
	interested in bringing the group	134	
\$-SCH-NEX	together. So therefore, you know, it	135	-#-\$
	brought on a very negative attitude.	136	-\$
	Candice sees it as, "they can hit me but	137	
	I can't hit them back and nothing is	138	
	done it they do something to me. If I	139	
	go forward and say so and so did this	140	
	and the teacher says, "well you talk too	141	
	much." You know...I've made notes like	142	
	that you know. But if Candice does	143	
	something or some of the other kids,	144	
	they'll jot it down in their	145	
	records...you know. I'm talking about	146	
	school records. You know...and she's	147	
	been thrown up against the wall and the	148	
	teacher never sees it. And she was	149	
	bruised really bad on the playground and	150	
	I spoke to the principal about it.	151	
	Candice showed me where she'd been hit	152	

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

up under the chin and bruised on her leg 153
 and this big scar and I asked her why 154
 didn't someone call me. The teachers 155
 were standing there said nobody notified 156
 me. This child was bruised. They said 157
 she fell off of the monkey bar. Um..you 158
 know...and they did not contact me. And 159
 I said, I felt like I should have been 160
 contacted. And, you know....I told her 161

#-PI-D

I felt very disturbed about a lot of 162 -#
 things that are going on in the 163 |
 classroom. Not because I'm Candice's 164 -#
 mother, it's because I want her to get 165
 the best possible education. I said, 166
 Candice has a very enthusiastic attitude 167
 about learning. Since she's been here 168
 she's lost all of this. She doesn't 169
 want to go to school. She's got an 170
 attitude that if some child does 171
 something to her, she's suppose to stand 172
 there and take it. This is going to 173
 affect her later and in presenting 174
 herself and being not aggressive but 175
 being able to present herself or to 176
 speak out. You know, public speaking or 177
 whatever. So she didn't seem to see eye 178
 to eye. But this is not, this has 179
 happened a lot. I'm talking about in 180
 reference to Black children. This..this 181
 happened to Crissie. You know...ah..hum 182
 at the school I find that the teachers, 183
 have an attitude about the Black childre 184
 And this is not a positive attitude. 185

Rita...Are you talking about two 187
 separate teachers now? 188

Mrs. D6....Yeah...But I'm saying it's 190
 not only this teacher that Candice was 191
 in with but they have an attitude. It's 192
 not a positive attitude to teach then 193
 the things they need to know. Or teach 194
 them how to integrate or to learn from 195
 other cultures. They're not doing that 196
 and I have to question..you know...the 197
 teachers background. I don't know how 198

#-PI-D

you find this stuff out. But..um..I was 199 -#
 very disappointed and the environment 200 |
 itself. If I could do it all over again 201
 Candice wouldn't have...you know...if I 202
 could, if I had better resources, she 203
 would not go to the school. I would 204
 not have had her in that environment. 205 -#

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#-SCH-E		
	Rita...O.K...ah..hum...given all that,	207 -#
	did you feel that the way the classroom	208
	was organized was one in which learning	209
	occurred for her and the other children	210
	as well.	211 -#
#-SCH-AP		
	Mrs. D6....No..no I feel that Candice	213 -#
	didn't learn the kind of things she	214
	needed to learn to go to the first	215
	grade.	216 -#
	Rita..Um..hum...	218
#-SCH-T\CM		
	Mrs. D6...Um...I felt that the	220 -#
	teachers spent a lot of time....um...she	221
	spent a lot of time controlling the	222
	classroom. The things that she did now	223 -#
	that I think about it..um..I know kids	224
	in kindergarten, I felt like she should	225
	have ..um..done a little more in	226
	academics. When I say academics, I'm	227
	not talking about anything complicated.	228
	You know..your alphabets or ..um..even	229
	you know, kindergarten proceeds to learn	230
	or...you know..what I'm trying to say is	231
	I think she should have more academics	232
	with the children. Now, they did some	233
#-PI-D		
	games on the computer. But I truly	234 -#
	think Candice didn't learn one thing in	235
	kindergarten. I'm kinda disappointed!	236
	I really don't think they need	237
	kindergarten.	238 -#
	Rita...Um..hum....	240
	Mrs. D6...You know...if they had to	242
	eliminate kindergarten at the school..ju	243
	eliminate it because she didn't learn	244
	anything. It's more like a child care	245
	center. It was a repeat. It's a repeat	246
	of preschool. I'm saying! It's just a	247
	repeat of preschool. So her	248
	whole year was wasted. You know...I	249
	think there should have been a	250
	difference between preschool and	251
	kindergarten. And I didn't see that	252
	difference. She didn't learn anymore in	253
	preschool..you know..she didn't learn	254
	anymore.	255

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Rita...Um...hum...	257	
Mrs. D6...That's the way I think.	259	
#-SCH-E		
Rita...O.K. How about the school in general? Do you think the classroom is organized in a manner in which learning takes place for all the students?	261 262 263 264	-# -#
Mrs. D6....For all the students?	266	
Rita...Yes....	268	
#-SCH-R		
Mrs. D6....Um...the library could be changed. They don't have enough up to date books. but, I haven't reviewed their books like I did last year. I was kinda disappointed in the supply of books that they had for the kids. Um..I've seen better at other schools.	270 271 272 273 274 275 276	-# -#
Rita...What about specific classrooms....Do you feel they are furnished and the decor is conducive to learning?	278 279 280 281	
Mrs. D6...Yeah...I'm thinking about some of the classrooms. You're talking about this year and what I've seen.	283 284 285	
Rita..Pretty much last year because when we first met we were talking about Candice and your involvement in her school last year. So we can still stick with last year.	287 288 289 290 291	
Mrs. D6...The children had a hard time in her classroom because of that particular teacher. It wasn't a positive environment for them. Not because Kimberly's problem because I talked to other mothers. It was really that teacher. More than that, it was the classroom. That particular teacher was going through a lot of problems which she shouldn't have been teaching last year. A lot of mothers were complaining about that so I understand that particular teacher has been transferred.	293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306	
#-SCH-E		
Rita...Do you think the students were	308	-#

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enthusiastic about coming in the school	309	
and the classroom last year?	310	-#
#-SCH-NEX		
Mrs. D6...Well, now, I can respond to	312	-#
that by saying that the majority of the	313	
kids that went to school last year...and	314	
we are talking about Black children are	315	
not going there this year. Um..they are	316	
either been transferred because of	317	
disappointment with the school. Some of	318	-#
them have been transferred to another	319	
school. One mother said she took her	320	
children out. The other mother's	321	
children is going to another school.	322	
And one mother was able to put her	323	
children into a Christian Private	324	
School. Um...so these are	325	
children..people that were disappointed,	326	
very disappointed last year. Um...these	327	
were the parents that kids that went to	328	
school with Kimberly last year. We go	329	
to church, (phone rings). The	330	
majority of those children were going to	331	
the school. They are going. (Excuse	332	
me!)...She leaves the room for a brief	333	
moment.	334	
Rita...Um..hum...	336	
Mrs. D6...The majority of those	338	
children, they were joining the	339	
choir..um..youth choir at the church. I	340	
know some of them weren't going, but the	341	
others just there were problems. The	342	
children weren't getting the most out of	343	
the school. You know...some of them	344	
considered it. I know one parent is on	345	
one of the meetings, he considered this	346	
more of a racial thing. You know...and	347	
he was very upset and I agree with them.	348	
Rita...How did you feel about that?	350	
Mrs. D6...I've heard some of the	352	
teachers names make statements. you	353	
know...I've had my children called names	354	
on the bus. The assistant principal	355	
and I had, I had told her that	356	
my daughter was called "nigger" on the	357	
bus line. Um..I think she approached	358	
it. She did a good job of solving it.	359	
Um..but this is something I told her I	360	
was very disappointed to find this kind	361	
of thing is still happening. Um..and it	362	

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has a negative affect on the children 363
 ..you know. So there is friction 364
 between the children..you know. They 365
 can't control what goes on at home. And 366
 I understand that...um..but I do expect 367
 them to control what's going on at 368
 school and in the classroom. And if 369
 that's asking to much..aw..that was last 370
 year. 371

#-SCH-E

Rita...Sure..what are your thoughts on 373 -#
 the image of the overall school? 374 -#

Mrs. D6...Well..basically..this is 376
 last year...many of these children are 377
 not going to the school this year. And 378
 they were suggesting that maybe another 379
 school would be a better school for my 380
 children too. And I had considered that 381
 in reference to the IEP and in trying to 382

#-PI-D

get programs for my children. I was so 383 -#
 disappointed last year when I sat down 384
 with the school staff in a conference 385
 meeting and I presented my concerns 386
 about discipline my older daughter and 387
 the response that I got from one the 388
 staff..I started to get up and move her. 389
 I felt like it was an insult. Um..you 390 -#
 know..not only because of the response I 391
 received in writing but because I think 392
 the response should have been better 393
 than that for a professional person. 394
 They were saying they didn't think 395
 Kimberly's problem was more personal 396
 than whatever was going on at home. And 397
 I felt that was way out of place. 398
 Um..you know...Mrs. M. was the 399
 assistant principal at the time. 400
 Um..she sat in on that staff meeting. 401
 Um..but I felt like..you know..it wasn't 402
 any need to go any further. But, I 403
 thank God that I got in touch with some 404
 good people at the Area II office. 405
 Um...and the man that is down at 406
 Kimberly's school found her after going 407
 through so many examinations eligible. 408
 He found her eligible. Um..and I just 409
 don't understand that...um...maybe the 410
 people sitting at that table didn't have 411

#-BAR-RI

the expertise..you know. They want to 412 -#
 first say when a Black person comes in 413
 with a concern, it's more like a problem 414

at home. You know..I've felt as a Black 415 |
 person, I felt like they said that to 416 -#
 me. You know...um..that the child is 417
 rather just, "slow, dumb, or stupid" 418
 rather than saying that the child has a 419
 problem and see Kimberly has seizures. 420
 And she's on medication and this is what 421
 I was describing..you know. So based on 422
 the teachers comments and mine, it just 423
 didn't work out. So the teacher and I 424
 just didn't see eye to eye. And you 425
 know even..aw..the people that Kimberly 426
 was involved with at school..was the 427
 secretary asked me why Kimberly wasn't 428
 able to do certain things at her age. 429
 Because when you're the secretary you're 430
 required to take notes and do certain 431
 things. And Kimberly's spelling was 432
 low. You know..and she had problems 433
 writing things like that. It wasn't 434
 because she was stupid or anything cause 435
 she had a medical problem and the 436
 teacher just kinda slighted over 437
 her...you know. Not seeing her as a 438
 person that need any assistance. Or may 439
 not wanting to be bothered. It is a 440
 easy statement to make. I...you 441
 know..maybe it could be any of the other 442
 reasons ..you know. But that was last 443
 year that I brought it to her attention 444
 to the teacher. 445

#-SCH-SI

Rita....What was your interaction with 447 -#
 the principal and the assistant 448
 principal like or any of the other staff 449
 people? 450 -#

Mrs. D6...Well in reference to 452
 getting into the files ..you know I was 453
 told that I could not get any records 454
 out of the files. 455

Rita...Was that interaction with the 457
 office staff? 458

Mrs. D6....Well, I had other 460
 interactions but and they were not that 461
 bad but if I needed something in 462
 reference to getting something from the 463
 school, I think they were pretty good. 464
 I think when I went to ask for those 465
 records..uh..I think they though I was 466
 gonna pick something up but I just 467
 wanted to review the records and I 468

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thought that I had a right but there	469	
were all kinds of excuses for me not	470	
being able to see the records.	471	
Rita...It sounds as if your interactions	473	
were more along the lines of requesting	474	
something. Did you have any other	475	
interactions with the staff?	476	
Mrs. D6....The general interactions	478	
were fine.	479	
Rita....What were the general	481	
interactions about?	482	
#-PI-D		
Mrs. D6....Uh..in reference to	484	-#
finding out about meetings or meetings	485	
in reference to setting up conferences	486	
and meeting teachers or talking to the	487	
teacher, I spent a lot of time going to	488	
the school and talking to the teachers	489	
maybe in to just spot checking just to	490	
see how the girls are doing. Uh...they	491	
were fine.	492	-#
Rita...What about the principal and the	494	
assistant principal?	495	
Mrs. D6....Mr. J., I don't know	497	
what I could say about Mr. J. because	498	
he was always too busy or not available	499	
but the assistant principal was	500	
excellent. Whenever I had anything that	501	
I needed to discuss she was there. She'	502	
would greet you well...she follow up if	503	
I had some concerns she would go into	504	
the classroom and observe. So that was	505	
good.	506	
Rita...And what about the teachers?	508	
Mrs. D6...Are you talking	510	
specifically about Candice or all the	511	
children?	512	
Rita...I'm talking specifically about	514	
Candice and her interactions pertaining	515	
to the classroom and various activities.	516	
#-SCH-I		
Mrs. D6....O.K...in reference to the	518	-#
teacher informing me about the	519	
activities that were taking place in the	520	
school, that was good. I got the	521	

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material that I needed. Whenever she	522	
needed someone to go on field trips, she	523	
would call and I would go. So that was	524	
pretty good. Every time there was	525	-#
something special going on in that	526	
classroom, I was there. I was there	527	
most of the time even if I spent an hour	528	
or 30 minutes and sometimes I spent a	529	
half of a day. Or there was times when	530	
I spent no more than 30 minutes and	531	
during those times...uh...in reference	532	
to classroom interactions and the	533	
teacher, she was not really bad but.	534	
o.K...I'm thinking about the trips..I'm	535	
referring to the trips...I'm referring	536	
to going with the class to the library	537	
with the children or helping in the	538	
classroom...this is what you're talking	539	
about.	540	
#-SCH-SI		
Rita...Yeah...So you had an ongoing	542	-#
communication with the teacher?	543	-#
#-PI-D		
Mrs. D6...Yes...I just wanted to be	545	-#
there...(she pauses)..even though I	546	
didn't agree with everything because	547	
Candice said these things were happening	548	
in the classroom and I had to be there	549	
and if she said they were happening when	550	
I was there ...you know I had problems	551	
..so that's why I was there most of the	552	
time.	553	-#
Rita...When you were there, you	555	
observed these things going on.	556	
Mrs. D6...Uh..huh...	558	
#-SCH-SI		
Rita...How did you handle that? When	560	-#
you say various things going on such as	561	
you mentioned her going to the computer	562	
and having an unpleasant interaction	563	
with her classmate. How did you handle	564	
that with the teacher?	565	-#
#-PI-CR		
Mrs. D6...It was with the assistant	567	-#
teacher. I said..you know..I don't know	568	
what procedure you are using in	569	
disciplining the children but I think	570	
when two children are in friction, you	571	
discipline them both. I'm not saying	572	-#

you do anything harsh but you take them	573	
aside and you find out what the problem	574	
is and try to work it out from there.	575	
Uh...that was my response to her. And	576	
there was one particular issue that took	577	
place when Candice is kinda active. I	578	
said I know Candice is active but	579	
Candice is not a nervous child. She	580	
said but she is very active. I said	581	
most children of kindergarten age are	582	
active, most of them are. And I felt	583	
the problem was, she didn't have any	584	
control and that was the assistant too.	585	
She didn't approach the problem right,	586	
#-SCH-NEX		
There was another incident in which	587	-#
Candice was in the restroom and they	588	
wanted her to come out of the restroom	589	
and she was the last in line. Candice	590	
said she was standing in line to wash	591	
her hands and Candice closed the door	592	
and I guess the teacher did not want	593	
Candice to close the door so..uh..I	594	
guess when Candice closed the door, the	595	
teacher must have been walking up near	596	
the door.	597	-#
Rita...Uh..huh...	599	
#-SCH-NEX		
Mrs. D6...And the teacher hit the	601	-#
door in Candice's back. I told the	602	
teacher I didn't appreciate that. She	603	
said that she didn't intend to close the	604	
door on her. Whether she was using the	605	
bathroom or not. She said she was	606	
washing her hands and the door hit her	607	
in the back. I honestly hope that	608	-#
doesn't happen again but it's those	609	
kinda things that..Candice kinda felt	610	
that the things she did in that	611	
classroom that she was discipline all	612	
the time. It could have been anything	613	
but with the other kids if they did the	614	
same thing nothing would happen. I	615	
think that it left a scar but she will	616	
outgrow that.	617	
#-SCH-CP		
Rita..So you felt the discipline was	619	-#
different with the Black kids?	620	-#
#-PI-D		
Mrs. D6....And I became very upset	622	-#
that the teacher kept putting these	623	

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things in her records and even on the 624
 report card. I've even been to the 625
 school and seen these things..the 626
 hitting, the pushing and nothing is 627
 said. But if a Black child gets out of 628
 line...it's line..it's like..no get back 629
 in line..you know...or you'll go to the 630
 principal or that kinda thing. I don't 631 -#
 know what it is whether it is the 632
 publicity that they hear about Black 633
 families or whatever...which is a myth 634
 cause Candice is taught very well at 635
 home. she has good manners and she has 636
 other things that she is involved in 637
 besides the school and she gets along 638
 very well. But I'm really kinda 639
 disappointed in the school system. 640
 I know I'm eventually going to move 641
 them out of the county school system. 642
 Just in reference to...based on the 643
 experiences that I have shared with you 644
 ...if I can't put them in private 645
 school I have to find a school 646
 that will teach my child the most. I 647
 think this teacher had favorites but 648
 the Black children are not it and she 649
 eight years old. 650

#-SCH-SR

Rita...In terms of your relationship to 652 -#
 the school and the classroom, how do you 653
 feel you are viewed by the school staff 654
 in terms of your participation? 655

Mrs. D6....Well, one teacher thought 657
 that I was a very concerned parent and 658
 she could tell by the way I talked and 659
 by the way I participated. 660 -#

Rita...Was this Candice's teacher? 662

Mrs. D6...No it wasn't Candice's 664
 teacher, it was Crystal's teacher. I 665
 also got a response from Kimberly's 666
 teacher. This year Candice's is very 667
 good. she is young, enthusiastic and 668
 got a lot of good ideas and this year 669
 I've observed the classroom. It is set- 670
 up good, her techniques are good. But 671
 last year a complete lost for Candice. 672
 I think Candice could have stayed out of 673
 kindergarten and started in the first 674
 grade and would have done what she is 675
 doing now. I don't think that she would 676
 have been any further behind. 677

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Rita..So basically how did you view your	679	
personal relationship with the school	680	
and in the classroom?	681	
#-SCH-SR		
Mrs. D6..I knew that they knew that I	683	-#
wanted the best for my children in	684	
reference to education. They knew that	685	
I wanted my children to integrate and	686	
learn. They knew that I wanted a	687	
positive learning environment for my	688	
children because this is one of the	689	
things that I stress all the time even	690	
in any of my conversations. I ask what	691	-#
the kinds of techniques that she is	692	
using to teach the children. But I	693	
really saw no technique.	694	
Rita...Uh..huh...	696	
#-SCH-T\CM		
Mrs. D6...Um..she would read to them	698	-#
and they would go to the library. They	699	
would have something ..what would you	700	
call it a children's corner, and a play	701	-#
corner. This is similar to what they	702	
had in preschool and I have had an	703	
opportunity to observe other preschools	704	
in Maryland which are set-up a little	705	
bit different than that for	706	
kindergarten. They can still have a fun	707	
environment but to me they have a lot of	708	
repeat. A lot of things like a play	709	
area and a housekeeping area. I don't	710	
think they should have had that in	711	
kindergarten. I really have a problem	712	
with that.	713	
#-SCH-E		
Rita...Was that how the classroom was	715	-#
set-up?	716	-#
#-SCH-E		
Mrs. D6...Yeah..they had a play area.	718	-#
they had a sand pile and they had the	719	
same thing in preschool.	720	-#
Rita...Uh..huh...	722	
#-PI-AP		
Mrs. D6...So I wanted Candice going	724	-#
to kindergarten with new things to	725	
learn, new ideas. You know..sometimes	726	-#
children get active in school and the	727	

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classroom is boring..you know..uh..that	728	
happen a lot in that classroom. There	729	
was a lot of activity because I don't	730	
think that they had enough things there	731	
to keep the children's attention	732	
especially for things that they would	733	
grab at it or go for it. They would get	734	
bored. They would throw things all over	735	
and I would think this is boring to	736	
them.	737	
Rita... Do you think the other kids in	739	
the class felt the same way?	740	
Mrs. D6...Yes, but I have to say some	742	
of those kids that came to the	743	
kindergarten class was not in preschool.	744	
But for Candice and some of the other	745	
kids that had been in preschool, this	746	
was boring. But for the kids just	747	
leaving home and going to kindergarten,	748	
this was new to them.	749	
#-PI-SU		
Rita...Were you able to provide any	751	-#
suggestions to the principal, assistant	752	
principal or teacher in terms of what	753	
you wanted to see Candice learn	754	
academically?	755	
Mrs. D6...No, I didn't have that	757	
opportunity to do that. I made some	758	
suggestions during a walk in the hall	759	
with the assistant principal but she	760	
said we would consider that. but it	761	
wasn't a sit-down meeting to talk about	762	
those things...no.	763	-#
Rita...Uh...huh. Would you feel	765	
comfortable having a meeting to sit down	766	
and do that?	767	
Mrs. D6..Yeah...	769	
#-PI-M		
Rita...Were you able to have a meeting	771	-#
with the teacher to talk about what	772	
Candice was learning and her social	773	
development?	774	-#
#-BAR-LIT		
Mrs. D6...It wasn't set-up that way.	776	-#
She went over Candice's progress report	777	
with me. She made her statement and	778	
uh..but she never ask me my opinion on	779	

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the environment of the classroom. You	780	-#
know..I always made statements about	781	
things that I wanted Candice to	782	
leave..you know..I asked about the	783	
techniques they used to teach the	784	
children to read or what kind of	785	
academic program did they use for the	786	
kindergarten children. I felt I wasn't	787	
#-PI-I		
asking anything complicated but I wanted	788	-#
to know what did they use in reference	789	
to getting them prepared for moving	790	
along the first grade. You know, I	791	
think that I'm trying to think how she	792	
responded to that. She went over some	793	
of the things that they do in the	794	
classroom on a daily basis. She had on	795	
the board like what they do from 8:30	796	
until whenever. You know Candice was in	797	-#
school for a half day and she showed me	798	
exactly what they were doing. so for	799	
each day they have reading groups. You	800	
know...and housekeeping activities that	801	
kinda thing. You know and that's what	802	
they had. It was a standard thing in	803	
the county.	804	
Rita...Uh..huh...	806	
Mrs. D6...You know...they have the	808	
attitude of that is what's done. We	809	
don't do that in kindergarten.	810	
Rita...Uh..huh...	812	
Mrs. D6...And so I asked ..am I	814	
asking too much for Candice and she	815	
said, "no we just don't do that."	816	
Rita..Uh..huh..that is interesting	818	
because you would think that most	819	
teachers would welcome the parents an	820	
opportunity to provide their input.	821	
Mrs. D6....I'm not sure if the	823	
teachers do that. I'm sure they have	824	
weekly teacher meetings.	825	
#-PI-M		
Rita...Did you have meetings with the	827	-#
teacher?	828	
Mrs. D6...We're talking last year?	830	
Rita...Yeah....	832	

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Mrs. D6...Yeah...I had conferences	834	
with the teacher. Now I'm talking about	835	-#
Candice but in reference to Crystal,	836	
when she was in her classroom, I had an	837	
opportunity to sit down and talk with	838	
the teacher and she suggested things	839	
that I wanted for Crystal.	840	
Rita...But not for Candice.	842	
Mrs. D6...But not for Candice and I	844	
did the same thing for Kimberly and that	845	
followed into trying to get her into the	846	
Learning Disabled Program because the	847	
other two teachers did not do that	848	
because we talked about no matter how	849	
#-PI-SW		
successful it was, there were things you	350	-#
know that I thought my children needed	851	
you know...based on sitting down going	852	
over their homework. I made it known	853	-#
when we sit down at our dinner table, I	854	
give my children time to talk about what	855	
they did in the classroom no matter what	856	
they did. they just suppose to say what	857	
happen and what they learned and what	858	
they liked about school. I had a hard	859	
time with this and they usually talked	860	
about their school studies or maybe a	861	
science project but you know when	862	
Candice came home she didn't like	863	
anything last year half the time she	864	
didn't want to go to the school. Now I	865	
don't know how the kindergarten class is	866	
this year but in thinking back last year	867	
was a lost for Candice.	868	
Rita...Uh..huh...	870	
#-BAR-CE		
Mrs. D6...I think if the classroom	872	-#
had been setup a little differently, she	873	
would have gotten a lot more out of it.	874	-#
She is an active child and she has to be	875	
kept busy. Yet, she understands when	876	
someone says to it is nap time or	877	
whatever she understands that.	878	
Rita... Sure....	880	
Mrs. D6...But she likes things that	882	
she can do with her hands and she likes	883	
to write you know..and she likes to be	884	
appreciated.	885	

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#-PI-M	Rita...What about the African American meetings. You mentioned something about that earlier.	887 -# 888 889 -#
#-BAR-LPP	Mrs. D6...Now, uh..I didn't get an opportunity to go to that a lot last year for personal reasons but this year	891 -# 892 893
\$-PI-M	I went to a meeting. It was basically to support the parents, to get the parents more involved in programs and in the classroom with the children.	894 -#-\$ 895 896 897 -\$
	Rita...Is this specifically for African American?	899 900
	Mrs. D6...Yeah, except they also have an Hispanic. I understand..uh..I understand they have a Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean.	902 903 904 905
	Rita...They have separate groups.	907
#-PI-M	Mrs. D6...Yeah, they have separate groups, it kinda bothers me because I asked that question. I said why you have separate groups.	909 -# 910 911 912 -#
	Rita..Uh..huh...	914
#-PI-M	Mrs. D6...And they said the parents in those particular groups would be able to give some input and they would be able to respond and get more out of what's going on in school.	916 -# 917 918 919 920 -#
	Rita...Right...do they ever have an opportunity where all of the them come together?	922 923 924
	Mrs. Davis...PTA but not at the group meetings. They don't have that.	926 927
	Rita..Uh..huh..	929
	Mrs. D6....I had a problem with that. I said why don't we have just a group meeting with all the parents.	931 932 933
	Rita...When did you share that?	935

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Mrs. D6..That was last year at the African American meeting.	937	
	938	
Rita..Uh..huh...	940	
Mrs. D6...And she just felt that each particular group could get the most out of it or what...	942	
	943	
	944	
#-PI-M		
Rita...Was there African American teachers or other staff involved or apart of these meetings?	946	-#
	947	
	948	
Mrs. D6...They had a parent who was the chairperson in charge of each group meeting.	950	
	951	
	952	-#
Rita...Uh..huh...	954	
#-PI-M		
Mrs. D6...The principal and assistant principal attend those meetings. They have invited speakers to come in.	956	-#
	957	
	958	-#
Rita...And what are these speakers designed to do?	960	
	961	
#-PI-M		
Mrs. D6...To get the parents more involved and to have parents to talk more about their concerns. I think they also get them to provide suggestions.	963	-#
	964	
	965	
	966	-#
Rita...Uh..huh..was there a fair amount of parents to show-up.	968	
	969	
Mrs. D6...Last year, I can't speak about but I went to this year's meeting and I thought it was a good turn-out based on the number of Black children.	971	
	972	
	973	
	974	
Rita..About how many Black children?	976	
Mrs. D6...About 20, yeah..I thought that was pretty good.	978	
	979	
Rita...Uh..huh...	981	
Mrs. D6...Because I have been to meetings like that before and ..uh..you know 5 or 6 show-up.	983	
	984	
	985	
Rita...Uh..huh...	987	

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

Mrs. D6...And we talked about having	989	
more contact with other parents so other	990	
parents could come and join us but that	991	
never happen.	992	
Rita..Uh..O.K. You have shared a lot of	994	
#-BAR-RI		
feelings about the school. Last year	995	-#
you experienced a barrier which you said	996	
was about "race relations". You	997	
observed several situations that led you	998	
to feel this way..what about other	999	
minorities in that classroom?	1000	-#
Mrs. D6...In Candice's classroom	1002	
toward the end of last year, there were	1003	
3 Blacks and about 45% were of other	1004	
racess.	1005	
Rita...In a class of how many students?	1007	
Mrs. D6...I think it was about 23.	1009	
Rita..Uh..huh...	1011	
Mrs. D6...23 because she has a big	1013	
classroom. Very active..uh...it was a	1014	
lot of children. The majority of those	1015	
children were of different	1016	
nationalities.	1017	
Rita...So as far as you could tell, were	1019	
the children treated the same?	1020	
Mrs. D6...No..no they were given	1022	
special privileges. I should not say	1023	
special privileges. They uh..in	1024	
references to getting them into programs	1025	
like speech or whatever, these kids are	1026	
the first on the role. I think there is	1027	
more concern about taking care of those	1028	
children and our children are losing.	1029	
Rita...Based on what criteria, you	1031	
think?	1032	
Mrs. D6...Based on my observation and	1034	
on finding and asking to get in certain	1035	
programs and finding that there were	1036	
children in the same classroom getting	1037	
into programs.	1038	
Rita...Uh..huh...	1040	

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

Mrs. D6...I find that when Candice 1042
went to speech they didn't want to put 1043
her into speech because they felt like 1044
she didn't have a speech problem but she 1045
did. She had problem sounding her 1046
"s"...you know. She just could not make 1047
the "s" sound and she had a problem 1048
cutting off her endings. 1049

Rita...Uh..huh... 1051

Mrs. D6...And I didn't have the 1053
professional expertise as the teacher 1054
but I could observe what was going on 1055
and so when I went forward and requested 1056
it, they felt that..uh..that she was not 1057
eligible. 1058

Rita...Uh..huh... 1060

Mrs. D6..But ..you know...that were 1062
other kids and I wanted to find out how 1063
many kids were in the other classroom 1064
that was getting that privilege. 1065

Rita..Uh..huh... 1067

Mrs. D6...And these kids were of 1069
another nationalities. 1070

Rita...O.K....now let's look at the 1072
other Black students in the class. 1073
Uh..were they also denied opportunity 1074
for any programs or services. 1075

Mrs. D6....I don't know... 1077

Rita...O.K....because that would also be 1079
vital information to know. 1080

Mrs. D6...Now I have talked to the 1082
parents but the majority of the parents 1083
go to my church and their children go to 1084
the school. And I had a lot of 1085
opportunity when Candice was there to 1086
talk to those parents and they were 1087
really disappointed. 1088

Rita...Uh..huh... 1090

Mrs. D6...They felt that the teachers 1092
were not putting their best foot forward 1093
for the Black children but you 1094
know..they were very quick to discipline 1095
the Black children. 1096

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

#-PI-M

Rita...How were you aware of the other 1098 -#
 minorities being included in the various 1099
 programs? 1100

Mrs. D6...Because I checked, I 1102
 checked by going to the school and 1103
 speaking to the speech therapist and 1104
 talking. I wanted to have Candice put 1105 -#
 into a reading improvement program and 1106
 they said that it was a back log and I 1107
 went to school to see how many children 1108
 were on the list. 1109

Rita...Uh..huh... 1111

Mrs. D6...They said basically most of 1113
 those children were of other 1114
 nationalities. You know...that's one 1115
 way I found out by asking so uh..just 1116
 checking, checking in the school. 1117

Rita...so this year, do you still have a 1119
 negative view of the school or has it 1120
 changed somewhat? 1121

Mrs. D6...I think it had changed 1123
 since the principal left. I'm not blami 1124
 it on the principal..O.K. but I understa 1125
 some of the teachers that were there las 1126
 year, some things have changed and 1127
 um...I met with Candice's teacher last 1128
 week. She explained the technique 1129
 and I asked her about the integrated 1130
 program, which was good. When I asked 1131
 that same question in reference to my 1132
 other daughter, I got the response of we 1133
 are using an integrated program..you 1134
 know. I had my feelings about the 1135
 integrated program but her response was 1136
 not very good either. They are not 1137
 using the integrated program. They use 1138
 to use it but if you get that kind of 1139
 response, you really don't want to talk 1140
 to the teacher anymore. 1141

Rita...Uh..huh... 1143

#-SCH-SI

Mrs. D6...But I met Candice's teacher 1145 -#
 and I was very impressed and I met with 1146
 Crissie's teacher. They are very 1147
 enthusiastic teachers and they will show 1148
 you their program and they will show you 1149

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

what they are doing, how they kids are	1150	
doing and what they are doing to improve	1151	
their skills and we talked about	1152	
things to get Crissie involved in	1153	
projects and what would be her next	1154	
project that Crissie would be working on	1155	
and the Science. We talked about	1156	
Crissie's science program and this was	1157	
more than I got last year. I like	1158	-#
that...I like that a lot.	1159	
Rita...Uh..huh...when you think about	1161	
participation and involvement, what do	1162	
they mean to you?	1163	
Mrs. D6...Participation and	1165	
involvement....	1166	
Rita...Yes, do they mean the same to	1168	
you?	1169	
Mrs. D6...No...	1171	
Rita...What's the difference?	1173	
Mrs. D6...O.K...participation	1175	
..well..to me let me stop and think	1176	
about this...	1177	
Rita...Alright...	1179	
#-SCH-POA		
Mrs. D6...Participation seems to me	1181	-#
..this is something that I am doing at	1182	
the school ..you know...I'm actually	1183	
participating in a program or whatever	1184	
is going on in Candice's classroom or	1185	-#
#-PI-T		
whatever activity they are having.	1186	-#
\$-SCH-POA		
Involving is more like a task to me.	1187	-#-\$
That's the way I see it. Participating	1188	
is kinda an overall thing like whenever	1189	
they have a Fair and they have the	1190	
Book Fair and maybe when they need	1191	
someone to go on a trip as a chaperon	1192	
with the children or when they need	1193	
someone to be at the field activities	1194	
and to hand-out awards or whatever they	1195	-#
need.	1196	-\$
Rita...Uh..huh...	1198	
Mrs. D6...That is actually what I am	1200	
doing in the school.	1201	

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

Rita...And involvement....	1203	
#-PI-SW		
Mrs. D6...And involvement to me this	1205	-#
might not make sense to you. My	1206	
involvement with Candice and the	1207	
teacher, it's a three-fold thing and how	1208	
she is progressing in school. Her	1209	
academics, helping her with her work and	1210	
her involvement in the school. What she	1211	-#
is actually doing in the classroom.	1212	
Rita..Uh..huh...	1214	
Mrs. D6...That's what it means to me.	1216	
Rita...And your involvement as well...	1218	
#-PI-SW		
Mrs. D6...Yeah, my involvement,	1220	-#
that's why I call it a three-fold thing.	1221	
It's Candice, the teacher and me. You	1222	
know...working on how to improve	1223	-#
whatever Candice needs to learn.	1224	
Rita...Uh..huh...	1226	
Mrs. D6...Or you know...how to keep	1228	
her focus or whatever. I'm not saying	1229	
that she needs these things but you	1230	
know.	1231	
Rita...And that kinda relates to at home	1233	
too...	1234	
Mrs. D6...Yeah....	1236	
Rita...In reference to involvement with	1238	
her homework.....	1239	
#-PI-SW		
Mrs. D6...Yeah that's what I mean and	1241	-#
so I can know exactly what I need to do	1242	
when she is at home with homework. Like	1243	
the teacher has a certain technique, she	1244	
said why don't you try the word bank	1245	
technique on Candice. She said when you	1246	
are reading through one of her little	1247	
library books...I said Candice can you	1248	
pick any of the words out on this page	1249	-#
that are on your word bank at school.	1250	
Rita..Uh..huh...	1252	
#-PI-SW		
		-#

CODED VERSION OF MRSD61

Mrs. D6...Some of the techniques that	1254	
the teacher used in phonics. and she	1255	
was showing me how the teacher helped	1256	
her make her sounds and help her make	1257	-#
certain words.	1258	
Rita...Well it sounds like something she	1260	
really benefits from doing. I think	1261	
that is all we need to talk about for	1262	
today. I sure do appreciate your time.	1263	
Mrs. D6...Thanks for helping me with	1265	
the job search and looking at these	1266	
papers. "You can call me any time.	1267	
This was the end of the third interview.	1269	

VITA

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Developed Transition Support Resource Program for high-risk adolescents with Fairfax County Public Schools and Alexandria City Schools.

Assisted with the establishment of the Career Development Center for Virginia Tech's Northern Virginia Graduate Center.

Designed for Fairfax County Public Schools a Peer Relations course curriculum. Peer observed teachers, taught and counseled high-risk students. Advised and academically placed community college students and conducted support groups.

Extensive volunteer experience with various community service organizations and serves as a mentor to teenage adolescent mothers.

SKILLS SUMMARY

COUNSELING

Academic, career, placement and mental health counseling with individuals and groups; experienced with diverse populations including high-risk adolescents, unemployed adults and those in transition. Knowledge and use of various substance abuse, psychological, academic, career and crisis-intervention assessment methods.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Demonstrated ability in supervision and evaluation of professional teachers; collaborated and provided input with hiring and procedures; developed treatment plans, policies, and services; budget management for materials and supplies, academic operation expenditures, attention to detail in all phases of program accountability and evaluation.

TRAINING AND TEACHING

Extensive experience in curriculum design; developing and implementing workshops, teaching middle and high school students within an alternative education center, career support groups and workshops; formal public speaking presentations with a wide range of group sizes.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

- 1994 - Present Fairfax County Public Schools
Transition Support Resource Center
Alexandria, Virginia
Program Director
- 1992 - Present Virginia Tech, Northern Va. Graduate Center
Doctoral Student and Director of the Career
Development Center (evening)
- 1983 - 1994 Fairfax County Public Schools
Fairfax House (residential treatment center)
Annandale, Virginia
Head Teacher
- 1989 - 1993 Northern Virginia Community College
Annandale, Virginia
Career and Academic Counseling (part-time)
- 1991 - 1992 George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia
Career Counseling (part-time)
- 1979 - 1983 Jeannie Dean Middle School
Manassas, Virginia
Special Education Teacher, ED & LD students

EDUCATION

Virginia Tech, Northern Virginia Graduate Center
Doctoral Studies in Counselor Education
August 1992 - May 1995

Virginia Tech, Northern Virginia Graduate
Master of Arts - December 1990
Major: Counseling Education

College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
Master of Science - May 1978
Major: Special Education, Emotional Disorders

Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia
Bachelor of Science - May 1976
Major: Communication Disorders