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Janice Elich Monroe  
*Old Dominion University*

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CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES AND HOME ENVIRONMENTS  
THAT FACILITATE THE SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION OF  
CHILDREN INTO A FORMAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

by

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M.S. August 1981, University of Illinois

B.S. May 1976, University of Southern Colorado

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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May 1991

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine what characteristics of families are most likely to enhance the development of social capital in young urban school children and to determine which of these characteristics or combination of characteristics contribute to a child's ability to adapt positively to a formal school environment. This purpose was accomplished through the design and implementation of an ex post facto study utilizing qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The sample for this study included 33 second grade students from four target schools in the Norfolk Public School System who were identified as disadvantaged and as either having adapted well or not having adapted well to the school milieu. The students then were assessed on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales: Classroom Edition which enabled the empirical placement of the students into two distinct groups, those who had adapted well and those who had not. Six students and their families then were selected from each of these groups with scores on the Vineland Scales between one and two standard deviations from the mean.

In-depth interviews were conducted with these children individually and with the family to determine the

characteristics of the family and home environment that have contributed to the child's level of adaptation. The HOME Inventory for Families of Elementary Aged Children (HOME) and the Family Functioning Style Scale (FFSS) were utilized during the family interview process to insure consistency in data collection. The Kinetic Drawing System for Family and School was utilized to initiate and to structure the child's interview. The process of inductive analysis indicated that there were differences in the family characteristics and home environments between those children who have and those who have not adapted well to school.

T-tests for independent samples were completed to determine if there was a significant difference between the well adapted and poorly adapted children on the HOME and FFSS variables. This analysis resulted in a significant difference at the .05 level on the HOME. This finding suggests that there are identifiable differences in the family characteristics and home environments of well adapted and poorly adapted urban school children. There was no significant difference found between the two groups on the FFSS variables. This finding suggests that the well adapted and poorly adapted children and their families are similar in regard to family strengths characteristics.

To My Family  
Burt, Lauren and Amanda  
Without Whose Love and Support  
This Task Would Not Have Been Completed  
"V Slogi Je Moč"  
In Unity There is Strength

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A project of this size takes an incredible amount of time, effort, and energy and although, at times, it feels as though you are alone in attempting to complete the task, this is not so. Many people have contributed to this study and have given graciously of their personal time. I would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions to this project:

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A special note of thanks is extended to the families who agreed to be part of this study and allowed me to visit their homes and ask many questions. Without their cooperation, this study would not have been possible.



## Preface

Four years ago, as I looked upon the expired body of my father I became flooded with emotion. Not the sadness that is generally associated with the loss of a loved one, but with a sense of direction. My father had spent his life sharing love with everyone that he met, but most importantly, with his family. I knew at that moment it was up to me to carry out this legacy of love and of commitment to family and friends.

I was raised in the most ideal of settings. We lived with my grandfather in a house attached to the family run store, Elich Market. The store provided an excellent opportunity to develop what Coleman (1987) calls social capital. I interacted with extended family and the public on a daily basis. I had access to both of my parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles who included the children in just about everything they did. The store provided an excellent learning environment for interacting with others, exploration, and fun. My family believed in committing time, effort, and energy to their children. I always felt wanted, needed and appreciated. I was encouraged at all times to do the best that I could do and was given the emotional support to accomplish almost any task.

I believe that this type of childhood is most likely to facilitate positive the growth and development of young children. Children must have the opportunity to interact and to play with their parents and other adults, to learn values, and to learn their role in society. I also believe that this type of environment is no longer encouraged by our society and that our children may suffer from this neglect. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to focus my studies on the family system. With my research, I hope to keep alive the legacy that my father left me and to help others become aware that a child's family is their greatest resource.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Although urban children have demonstrated difficulty adapting to a formal school environment, there are many cases in which these children are successful in this endeavor. The success of these children encourages one to ask why this is so and to attempt to identify contributing factors to these children's successful adaptation. The suggestion has been made that families and home environments of urban children may have a significant impact on the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment. The purpose of this chapter will provide an overview of the importance of and need to study the relationship between families and their children's adaptability to formal school environments. In addition the chapter will delineate the process through which this study has been planned, implemented, and the data analyzed.

#### **Need for the Study**

Technological and economic changes over the past two decades have had a significant impact on contemporary society. Perhaps the most significant of these changes has

taken place within the family. The move of the mother from the household to the workforce has created many changes in the composition of the family system and its related ideals and values (Coleman, 1987). These changes have been identified by Coleman (1987) and include: a change in the focus of dependency from the family to social welfare institutions, a reduction in incentives for parental responsibility, an increasing demand for year round institutionalization of children in the form of day-care, and the delegation of an increasing amount of socialization activities to the schools (p. 32). These changes also have removed the central focus of support from the family to less intimate social institutions and have resulted in a decrease in the amount of home and neighborhood bound activities for children under the supervision of adults. Children who do not have this time to interact with adults have less opportunity to develop the ideals and values once associated with family membership. Children also are expected to grow up sooner and achieve autonomy from parental authority at increasingly earlier ages (p. 33).

Coleman (1987) also states that the preceding factors have rendered the family ill-equipped to provide the setting that schools are designed to complement in preparing the next generation. He argues that formal institutions can provide children with certain inputs into the socialization process. These inputs include opportunities, demands and

rewards. A second class of inputs must be provided by a child's closer, more intimate and more persisting environment. These inputs, attitudes, efforts and conceptions of self traditionally are provided by the family system (p. 33-34). Many parents now lack the time, educational and/or economic resources to provide this second set of inputs. This lack of parental input is believed to render children ill-equipped to function adequately in our society. They are lacking in what Coleman describes as social capital which can be defined as attitudes, efforts and conceptions of self that result from relationships with adults through which children learn about the norms and social networks that enable their smooth transition into adulthood (p. 36).

The problem that Coleman describes is accentuated in an urban milieu where the structure of the social welfare system reduces the incentive for families to utilize informal resources, such as the extended family and reinforces dependence on the social institutions (Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1988, p. 5-8). To complicate matters further, a division of labor has taken place in which a significant amount of our nation's income has moved from homes with families to homes with no children. Preston (1984) reports that between 1970 and 1980 children under five and female heads of households have become the two groups in the population with the highest percentage of

poverty. During this ten year period, the percentage of poverty for this population rose from sixteen to twenty-four percent. This rapid increase of poverty for children and female head of households along with the dependence focused structure of social welfare institutions has depleted the amount of social capital available to the children of this population. As a result of these trends an increased responsibility for the development of social capital is being placed on the school systems. At the same time, schools often are forced to function with a poverty depleted tax base rendering them unable to meet these needs (Coleman, 1987, p. 23).

Today's standard of living also has forced increased dependence on social institutions. To maintain an acceptable standard of living both parents often must enter the work force. In the case of single parent families, the parent must work two or more jobs to maintain their desired lifestyle. When both parents are involved in the workforce they find that they have limited time to spend with their children. In addition, these children often are viewed by parents as status symbols representing their success in the workforce (Sterne, 1989, p. 50-55). These parents are usually goal oriented and value their children's achievements as much as they do their child. Quality time with their children is structured and the child is enrolled in various academic and activity oriented courses to enhance

his ability to achieve. Sterne describes this perspective as the "superbaby myth." He contends that this approach can lead to stress symptoms in the young child and argues that young children need to participate in activities with their parents in order to develop a sense of trust. He also suggests that children need the opportunity to explore their environment at their own pace, to be listened to and to have their questions answered in ways that they understand (Sterne, 1989, p. 54). Hammond (in Gibbs, 1989) states that,

Making an appointment is one way to relate to your child, but it's desiccated. You've got to hang around with your kids. Yet hanging around time is the first to go. The very culture of children, of freedom and fantasy and kids teaching kids to play jacks is collapsing under the weight of hectic family schedules. (p. 63)

Gibbs also quotes Ziegler who states, "Kids understand that they are being cheated out of childhood (p. 63-64) and Carlson who states, "If parents see parenting as an investment of their precious time, they may end up viewing children as objects to be improved rather than individuals to be nurtured at their own pace (p. 64). These underlying assumptions also are held by Piaget (in Wadsworth, 1971), Erikson (1950), and Elkind (1987).

This societal move toward relinquishing the care and

education of children to impersonal social institutions may have a grave effect on the growth and development of today's children. Comer (1980) states that, "Tight-knit social networks of approving and disapproving people are more effective determinants of a child's behavior than laws, policemen, security, and surveillance equipment. Eventually the attitudes, values, and behavior of the adult authority figures become a part of a child's character" (p. 10). He further contends that, "Power also accrues to those who meet the spiritual, psychological, and social needs of people... a sense of belonging, value, purpose, direction, and emotional comfort (p. 64). A similar position is held by Erikson (1950), Provence, Naylor, and Patterson (1977), and Kessler (1966). They contend that from childhood through young adulthood parents and teachers are critical mentors for young children and that without them children would fail to survive and to grow.

Comer (1980) also argues that, "Power accrues to those who provide individuals with useful skills and information that enable them to earn a living and find a niche in the world... parents, teachers, friends and mentors of one kind or another" (p. 8). This power enables parents and teachers the ability to guide and direct young children to live positive and productive lives. It enables them to influence children and help them to make the right decisions when they are pressured by peers to involve themselves in illegal and

harmful behaviors.

The authority that was once given to teachers as an extension of parental authority is being questioned and has decreased the degree that schools can influence children. This problem is accentuated in families where the parents are unemployed or who are headed by females who are under educated and receiving welfare. In these circumstances the parent or parents view themselves as being unable to meet the basic survival needs of their children. This, in turn, decreases their personal sense of adequacy, belonging, and worth (Comer, 1980, p. 12). These parents find themselves unable to provide for their children the input that they need to adapt to a school environment; a positive attitude, the desire to put out effort and positive self esteem. These parents are unable to teach the skills that many of today's children often lack to perform a job or even to complete a ninth grade education. Necessary skills include frustration tolerance, personal discipline, organization, management and interpersonal skills (Comer, 1980, p. 17). Parents cannot give to their children the skills that they themselves are lacking. In addition, this problem is accentuated further by the fact that governmental leaders have made little effort to help families and communities keep pace with scientific and technological development; demonstrated most obviously by the fact that there is no national policy on family and community development (Comer,

1980, p. 13). Families are functioning under economic and social stress and they are not being provided with external resources that encourage them to develop their personal resources to the point where they can feel they are important contributors to society.

It has been demonstrated that children need opportunities to interact with parents to develop the social capital to adapt well to a formal school environment. Many families of underprivileged children often lack the necessary resources to provide this input. Yet, children from these families sometimes adapt well to school. The question arises as to what makes the differences in these children and their families. Have some of the families developed ways through which they can develop the social capital of their children? This study will attempt to determine the characteristics of a child's family and home environment which enables him to adapt to a formal school environment.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine what characteristics of families are most likely to enhance the development of social capital in young urban school children and to determine which of these characteristics or combination of characteristics contribute to the child's



ability to adapt positively to a formal school environment. There is evidence in the literature that young children must enter the school system equipped with certain attributes and characteristics in order to adapt well to the formal school environment. Coleman identifies these factors as attitudes, effort, and conception of self or 'social capital' (Coleman, 1987, 23). These behaviors and attributes typically are developed through the child's more intimate relationships and interactions with adults within the home environment.

The impact of home environment and family characteristics on a child's growth and development is a common theme in the early childhood education and the child development literature. Child development specialists agree that it is during the first five years of a child's life that the foundation for future learning and social development is set (Wadsworth, 1971). Piaget identifies four critical variables in child development. Two of these variables, maturation and equilibrium, are not considered to be subject to external control. The remaining two variables, experience and social interaction, however, can be structured in order that children can act upon things and interact with other individuals to enhance their learning capabilities (Wadsworth, 1971, p. 118). Similarly, Erikson contends that the attributes of autonomy, initiative and industry can be influenced by a child's parents or significant others, through the provision of an environment

conducive to exploration and learning and through patient and playful interaction with adults (Erikson in Elkind, 1970, p. 23-24).

The literature supports the contention that a child's environment and family relationships play a significant role in the child's growth and development. The choices made by parents, on their child's behalf can effect the child's attitude toward learning as well as his social adjustment. Also, it has been demonstrated that the amount of family interaction has decreased over the past two centuries and will, in all probability, continue to decrease (Coleman, 1987; Gibbs, 1989; & Sterne, 1989). With these two factors in mind, determining what effect these trends have on the social development of our children and their adjustment to a formal school environment appears to be paramount.

### Research Design

The variables under scrutiny in this study, adaptation to a formal school environment, family characteristics and the home environment, are highly complex. Due to the complexity of these variables an ex post facto study with qualitative and quantitative research methodologies has been chosen to explore the relationships among these variables. The child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment is the dependent variable and the characteristics of the

family and the home environment the independent variables.

The complexity of the variables related to family characteristics and home environments and how these variables impact on a child's adaptation to the school environment does not lend itself to traditional quantitative research methodologies. This is due, in part, to the number of variables associated with family functioning. Research concerning traits associated with "strong families" suggest that there are at least twelve major, non-mutually exclusive qualities inherent in strong families. Dunst, Trivette and Deal (1988) list these twelve qualities or variables as commitment toward family members, appreciation of family strengths, concentrated effort to spend time together in both formal and informal activities, a sense of purpose, a sense of consequence in meeting family needs, the ability to communicate a clear set of family rules, values, and beliefs, coping strategies, problem solving abilities, the ability to remain positive, flexibility and adaptability and a balance in the use of internal and external resources (pp. 25-26). As these characteristics are considered to be interdependent, there is difficulty in identifying key variables for quantification while eliminating others. However, qualitative research methodologies allow the researcher to address multiple realities which are constructed socially through individual and collective definition of the situation. Qualitative methodologies also

allow the researcher to immerse herself in the situation adding "richness" to the data that quantification would not allow (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 24). Qualitative research designs delineate a process through which human behavior can be studied in terms of how it relates to education. This approach is based on a naturalistic-phenomenological philosophy of human behavior that seeks to understand people's constructions as they occur in a natural context (p. 386).

The emergent design associated with qualitative research methodologies enables the researcher to delineate questions for inquiry during the research process. These research questions then can be reformulated during the research process as the data unfolds. Emergent designs allow the researcher to explore the intricacies of the data and add richness and depth to the analysis process.

The primary research question addressed in this study is: What characteristics of a child's family and home environment facilitate his successful adaptation to a formal school environment? Related questions that are explored in this study include:

1. Is there a difference between the family behaviors of well adapted verses poorly adapted students?
2. What types of behaviors or family interactions contribute to a child's adjustment to a formal school environment?

3. Is there a relationship between social capital variables (as defined by family strengths literature) and the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment?

## Methodology

### Sampling Procedure

Qualitative research designs focus on developing an understanding of the social cultural phenomena of a particular population or group with an attempt to understand the perspectives of the group members within the contextual framework in which they are living (Stainback & Stainback, 1988, pp. 17-18). The group to be examined in this study is the family and home environment of children in the second grade classes in target schools of the Norfolk Public School System. The sample for the study was comprised of thirty three second grade students from the four target schools that agreed to participate in the study. These elementary schools include Jaycox, Roberts Park, Tidewater Park, and Young Park. The teachers of these 33 students were asked to complete the Classroom Edition of The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS) on their respective students. This resulted in a sample comprised of six students who were rated as being well adapted and six students who were rated as being poorly adapted. These two groups were utilized to make comparisons related to family characteristics.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection took place in three separate stages. Prior to data collection, permission for completing the study was secured from the human subjects committee the principals and teachers of the participating schools, and the parents of the children selected to be in the sample.

In Stage one, parents of the subjects were contacted in an attempt to explain the study and to establish a convenient time during which the home interview could take place. Stage two involved an in-depth interview with the family. This interview was structured around two data collection tools, the HOME Inventory for Families of Elementary Children (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984) and the Family Functioning Scale (Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1988).

Stage three involved an interview with the child. During this interview the child was asked to complete a kinetic family and school drawing (Knoff & Prout, 1985). This technique was utilized to initiate interaction with the child and to attempt to determine how the child viewed himself within the family and school context.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to analyze the data in this study. Quantitative analysis was utilized to separate the subjects into extreme groups. This process was completed through teacher nomination and through

an analysis of the students scores on the Classroom Edition of the Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scales.

The qualitative data collected from the family interviews and the child interviews first was summarized and presented in a case study format. These case studies then were analyzed through the process of inductive analysis.

The data gathered by the three instruments, the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS), the HOME Inventory for Elementary Children (HOME), and the Family Functioning Styles Scales (FFSS) are quantifiable, resulting in a summary score from several subsets of data. To determine if there was a significant difference between the two subgroups for this study a one way analysis of variance was completed on the composite scores of the VABS. T-tests for independent samples were utilized to determine if there was a significant difference between the two study groups on the HOME and FFSS.

The kinetic family and school drawings were utilized primarily to establish a relationship with the children and as a means of enabling them pictorially to depict their feelings. The information acquired during this interview process was compared to parental perceptions of the child to determine if there was any similarity between the way the children and their parents perceive their family situation.

The final stage of data analysis was to corroborate the data through triangulation of the multiple data sources in

an attempt to enhance the reliability and validity of the data and to add richness and depth to the analyses. Findings of the analyses were reported in a narrative and tabular format in chapter four of this study.

### Limitations

1. The Qualitative Research Design selected for this study does not enable the generalization of results to other populations. The intent of this study, however, is not to generalize, but to develop theory that can be utilized as the foundation of future research.

2. Consent of the school district, principals, teachers and subjects was required for research of this nature. Securing consent forms from multiple sources can lead to threats to external validity due to volunteerism. The fact that the individuals, particularly the parents, involved in this study agreed to participate, may differentiate them from others in the selected population.

3. The duration of the home visits was from forty-five minutes to one hour in length. Family characteristics demonstrated during this short time frame may not be a true representation of the day to day interactions of the family.

4. The interviewer did not have the opportunity to develop a long term relationship with the families involved in the study. As a result the parents may have not fully



trusted this individual and therefore may have been selective in the information that they were willing to share. This bias was decreased somewhat by the multiple data sources and the fact that some of the data collected was based on observations of the environment and interactions between family members, and not entirely based on the responses from the parents.

5. Data collection instruments primarily resulted in self report data. This type of data may be biased due to the fact the many subjects are prone to tell the interviewer what they feel is desirable and because it enables them to mask information that they feel may be harmful to them if they are honest.

### Definition of Terms

Social Capital: The norms, the social networks, and the relationships between adults and children that are of value for the child's growing up. Social Capital leads to the development of the child's attitude, efforts, and conceptions of self that are useful to the child's adaptation and independent functioning within school and society. These skills, attitudes, efforts and conceptions of self are necessary to enable the child to take advantage of the opportunities, demands and rewards offered by schools and other social institutions (Coleman, 1987, p. 36).

Adaptation: The child's ability to adjust to and perform well in an academic setting. Adaptation includes the child's level of social competence, motivation and attitude toward school, their self-concept and their willingness to put out the necessary effort to achieve.

Well Adapted: Includes those children who's score on the Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scales fell one or more standard deviations above the mean .

Poorly Adapted: Includes those children who's scores on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale fell one or more standard deviations below the mean.

At-Risk: At-risk youths are children who are not likely to finish high school or who are apt to graduate considerably below potential. At-risk factors include chemical dependency, teenage pregnancy, poverty, disaffection with school and society, high-mobility families, emotional and physical abuse, physical and emotional disabilities, and learning disabilities that do not qualify for special education but nevertheless impede their progress (Minga, 1988, p. 14).

Families: For the purposes of this paper, family will be defined as a social construction which is highly variable and flexible. Families are not synonyms for "blood relatives" but those individuals that provide support for a group of individuals in a complex network of social relationships ( Gittis, 1985, pp. 65-66).

The remaining chapters in this study will provide an in depth examination of the adaptation of urban children and the factors that can contribute to their successful adaptation to a formal school environment. Chapter two will provide an analysis of the related literature. In Chapter three the research procedure will be delineated. Chapter four will include written case studies and data analysis. In Chapter five conclusions of the study and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The parental role in enabling a child to develop the social capital necessary to adapt well to school is a predominant theme in the child development literature. The purpose of this literature review is to explore the parameters of social capital, particularly as it relates to urban black children and the role of the family in developing the attitudes, efforts and conceptions of self that are essential to the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment. Today's families go beyond the traditional definition of nuclear families to include the formal and informal support networks utilized by families to meet their individual and group needs.

Central to this study is the role of parents in the development of young children. This role will be discussed from the perspective of child development specialists, early childhood educators, psychoanalytic theorists, and recreation and leisure professionals. Parental involvement during early childhood enables the child to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities that they will need to adapt successfully to a formal school environment. Coleman (1987) defines the attributes of knowledge, skills, and

abilities as social capital. Frequently family involvement in recreation and leisure activities can provide opportunities for social capital to be developed. This chapter will discuss social capital and how it relates to the development of strong families. The focus of this review then will address the specific characteristics of families of at-risk urban black children and their home environments. Particular attention will be given to how these characteristics relate to the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment.

#### Parental Role in the Development of Young Children

The literature addressing the role of parents in the education, the growth and the development of their young children can be traced back to the works of Plato. He wrote that a child's education should be guided and directed by adults and should be as playlike as possible. He argued that unbounded or unstructured play and education experiences (those that are completely free, without guidance or inspiration) were dangerous and misleading (Hunnicutt, 1989). Plato viewed the role of the parents to be one of guidance and that of providing direction through the context of playful experiences. In 1762, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote that during a child's early years parents must simply allow the child to unfold as a flower, they should... "exercise his body, his limbs, his senses, his

strength, but keep his mind idle as long as you can" (Rousseau in Kessen, 1965, p. 80-81). Rousseau implies that introducing formal education to a child before adolescence can have negative effects. From Rousseau's point of view, the role of parents is to provide structure and nourishment and to allow the child to grow naturally.

In this century, Gessel identified the role of parents as that of "benevolent guardians" or "great observers of the child's development." He reassures parents that a child will go through stages, thus there is no need to become overly concerned over disruptive behaviors (Gessell, 1954). Freud, on the other hand, held families responsible for the mental health and well being of their children. He contended that the role of parents was to, "... amply breast feed, gently toilet train, and to help the child to decisively resolve the Oedipal conflict in favor of the same sexed parent rather than rival for the affections of the opposite sexed parent" (Freud in Sterling, 1982, p. 334). Freud felt that if these steps were taken during the first six years of a child's life it would insure a good beginning for the child (Sterling, 1982).

These same themes can be identified in the works of modern early childhood specialists such as Piaget, Erikson, and most recently, Elkind. Piaget emphasized that two of the four critical variables in child development, experience and social interaction can be influenced by parents through

the provision of the right experience at the right time (Wadsworth, 1971, p. 22). Piaget contends that children have a need for positive, rich, manageable and varied transactions with toys, objects, as well as with adults in social relationships. Sterling summarizes Piaget's position by stating that, "Encounters with environmental events and with people in judicious doses and supportive settings can promote 'equilibration' ... the ongoing process of assimilation and accommodation" (Sterling, 1982, pp. 336-337).

Erikson's philosophy reflects that the child's ability to develop a sense of autonomy, initiative and industry could be influenced significantly by the parents' responses to the child and through the opportunities and experiences that they provide for their child (Elkind, 1970, pp. 23-24). Elkind supports this theme by encouraging parents to interact positively with their child while providing a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities in which the child can participate (Elkind, 1988). These theorists also address the argument that children's behaviors are influenced by the perceptions their teachers and parents have regarding their intelligence and learning abilities. Children typically perform better when they are presented with reasonable, but challenging, expectations (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968, p. 133).

### Recreation and Leisure

Supportive materials for the importance of appropriate parent/child interactions also can be found in the psychoanalytic study of children and recreation and leisure studies literature. The Psychoanalytic theory suggests that early behavior, the attitudes of children to their family, and the enduring interactions of family life, particularly the parent-child interactions are crucial to the formation of behavior patterns, habits, modes of adjustment, and values and attitudes of children (Delhees, Cattell, & Sweeney, 1970, p. 231). Recreation and leisure studies literature contends that activities provide opportunities for parents and children to interact in a positive and enjoyable environment. Numerous studies (Stinnett, Sanders, Defrain & Parkhurst, 1982; Curran, 1983; Hawkins & Walters, 1957) have demonstrated that leisure activities can enhance family cohesion and interaction and frequently are considered essential components in "happy families." Through interactions of this nature, parents can provide developmentally appropriate activities and environments through which their children can learn about their world. These interactions can aid in the development of social capital in that they allow the child to explore relationships, locus of control and societal values, norms and expectations in structured, yet enjoyable, recreational activities. Although these factors have been demonstrated



to aid in the development of social capital, the extent to which social capital variables influence the child's adjustment to a formal school environment has not yet been determined.

Play also has been identified as a factor that enables the child to develop social capital as well as enhance his educational skills. Daiute (1990) completed a study in which she compared writing samples of thirty fifth grade low income urban students before and after a period of collaboration on a number of stories between group members. After the group collaboration the children were asked to write individual stories. In addition to finding an increase in the number of utterances she found that 35% of the time the children collaborated was spent in play. This playful interaction led to more adjectives, embellished characters and an increased use of new vocabulary and concepts. She states that ... "play allows students to explore unfamiliar ground and engage in otherwise risky experimentation" (Daiute, 1990, p. 37). Play also gives them the opportunity to test their knowledge of other subject matter while increasing the use of imagery and generating new alternatives .

### Social Capital

Coleman (1987) argues that in order to maximize a child's development there must be a strong relationship

among the family, the school and the community. He feels that families can provide students with certain skills such and attitudes, efforts and conceptions of self. These skills are developed through the establishment of norms, social networks and relationships with adults. Children must be equipped with these basic skills if they are to be able to take advantage of the opportunities, demands and rewards that the school provides for them.

To adapt successfully to a formal school environment children must come equipped with certain skills that are typically and traditionally learned within the home environment. Children learn such skills as following directions, problem solving, positive interactions with others, frustration tolerance, delay of gratification and locus of control through interaction within the family system. The home is also where the child begins to develop their self concept. Children learn, through messages received from their parents, siblings and significant others about their value and worth as human beings and their competence and ability in day to day activities. From family members they also learn about acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. They learn that there are consequences for behaviors and that they have a choice in how they respond to certain situations. These skills can ensure a child's successful adaption to a formal school environment.

Comer (1980) substantiates this position by stating that, "Children who grow up in stimulating, emotionally supportive, highly verbal, and protective environments where the caretaker teaches and models skill development are usually ready for school" (p. 33). Comer (1980) further states that failure in school is influenced typically by poor child rearing practices, the negative influences of peers who are anti-school oriented, and poor neighborhood conditions (p. 35). Comer (1980) also stresses that:

The need for parental involvement is greatest in low income and minority communities or wherever parents feel a sense of exclusion, low self-esteem and/or hopelessness. Parents are the first and most important models and teachers of their children. If parents feel excluded, of little value and hopeless, they will be likely to transmit these attitudes to their children. (p. 126)

This transmittal of negative attitudes toward school can result in the establishment of behaviors that are opposite to those needed to adapt well to school settings. Parental resistance can evolve from various factors or influences. For example, parents may feel that the system is not going to do anything to help them. They also are taking a risk with their peers when they get involved. If they do not get what is expected, they may be faced with a negative response from friends and family. In addition,

parents rarely are called into schools if their children are doing well. Teachers typically request parent conferences only when there is a problem. Therefore, parents fear that they are being brought in to discuss their child's failure which, in turn, reflects as their personal inability to prepare their child adequately to do well in school (Comer, 1980, p. 127).

Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1982) completed a two year study in which they observed the differences in the drop out rate of sophomores from public, private and Catholic schools. They found that the dropout rate for Catholic school children was considerably lower than that of either public or private schools. The Catholic schools had a dropout rate of 3.4%, public schools had a dropout rate of 14.3% and other private schools had a dropout rate of 11.9% (Coleman, 1987, 36). Coleman attributes this difference to the relationship between the school and the parental community. Coleman (1987) states that, "In effect, this school and church community, with its social networks and its norms about what teenagers should and should not do, constituted social capital beyond the family that aided both family and school in the education of the family's children" (p. 36). He further states that, "... this social capital outside the family was of greatest value for the children without extensive social capital in the home. For example, in the public schools, coming from the single parent

household increased greatly a child's chance of dropping out of school: but in Catholic schools, a child from a single parent family was no more likely to drop out than was a child from a two-parent family" (Coleman, 1987, p. 37). This study suggests that positive influences on children extend beyond the family into the community. If children or youth have strong family systems and social networks, they are more likely to adapt to the school environment and successfully complete secondary education.

Coles and Genevie (1990) completed a study on the moral life of America's school children. The sample consisted of 5,000 students in grades four through twelve in public, private and parochial schools in both cities and suburbs. In their study they found that as a whole society has become self-centered. According to these authors, this self-centeredness has resulted in the attenuation and weakening of civic responsibility and that only 38% of the subjects relied on traditional religion and/or social authority for the basis of their moral development. The rest of the sample bases their judgement on either what feels good or what works for them, or on what would be best for everyone involved (p. 45-46). Traditional sources of authority are no longer taken seriously. Coles and Genevie (1990) also state:

As children grow older and this form of moral reasoning becomes more and more common, their reliance

on social and religious authority declines and, not surprisingly, most children begin to turn away from adults as the primary source of advice on moral issues. Increasingly, adult advice takes a back seat to peer influence, so that by high school, the majority (58%) rely mainly on their peers for moral guidance. Of course younger children, more directly dependent on adults, seek out the advice of parents, teachers and other responsible adults more often. (p. 44)

This study further substantiates the importance of parental and community involvement in the early establishment of social capital in young children. Those who have been raised to understand the value of societal norms, who have been linked into a strong social support network and who have learned to have strong and trusting relationships with adults most likely will be less predisposed to fall prey to peer pressure, to become involved with drugs, criminal activity, and other socially deviant behavior. If parents, schools and the community make an investment in the development of social capital for their children their efforts may result in a decrease in the drop out rate and other deviant activities and manifest an increase in youth's ability to delay gratification and work toward developing themselves into positive contributors to society. As the amount of parental involvement with their

children is lessening, one must question where children will learn these essential skills and whether or not they will, in fact, be prepared to enter social institutions such as schools, as positive contributors or as social burdens.

### Family Strengths

The literature regarding family strengths appears to have two driving forces. The first force is to develop an understanding of specific attributes that contribute to the development of strong families and the second force is to determine how this information can be utilized to strengthen family functioning. The primary interest in this arena arose with the passage of Public 94-142 the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This act requires that parents of handicapped children be involved in the development of a child's Individual Education Plan. The recent (1989) revision of this legislation resulted in Public Law 99-457 Early Intervention Program which requires programs to assess infant/toddler and family needs and family strengths related to meeting these needs (House of Representatives Report 99-860). Previous attempts at family intervention were focused on the weaknesses and/or deficits of family functioning. This orientation made it difficult to engage families due to the fact that professionals were forever prescribing how to fix the family without attention to how the family could contribute to fixing themselves.

This intervention strategy frequently was ineffective because recipients of services were asked to do things that they did not understand or that they had no predisposition to do. Often families felt insignificant, uninvolved and uneducated and frequently become consumers who were forever dependent on professionals to solve their problems and to tell them how to improve things. The move to focus on family strengths changes this dependency orientation to one in which the family strengths are identified and their use maximized. Interventions are developed around these strengths. This approach empowers the families and enables them to gain confidence in their own ability to solve problems and make positive contributions to meeting the needs of family members.

Dunst et al. (1988) suggest that there needs to be a paradigmatic shift toward a more positive perspective of families. Essential components to this shift include the recognition of the following factors.

1. All families have strengths and that these strengths are unique depending on the beliefs, cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, socioeconomic backgrounds, etc. of the family.

2. We must not view the failure of a family to display competence as a deficit of the family system but rather as the failure of social systems and institutions to create opportunities for competence to be learned.



3. We must approach families in ways that focus and build on positive aspects of functioning rather than see families as "broken" and "needing to be fixed."

4. We must shift away from the use of either treatment or prevention models toward the adoption of promotion and enhancement models. (p. 7).

Trivette, Dunst, Deal, Hamer and Propst, (1988) define family strengths as, "... the competencies and capabilities of both individual family members and the family unit that are used in response to crises and stress; to meet needs; and to promote, enhance and strengthen the functioning of family system" (p. 3). As stated previously, research concerning traits associated with "strong families" suggest that there are at least twelve major, non-mutually exclusive qualities inherent in strong families including commitment toward family members, appreciation of family strengths, concentrated effort to spend time together in both formal and informal activities, a sense of purpose, a sense of consequence in meeting family needs, the ability to communicate a clear set of family rules, values, and beliefs, coping strategies, problem solving abilities, the ability to remain positive, flexibility and adaptability, and a balance in the use of internal and external resources (Dunst, Trivette, and Deal, 1988). These qualities are non-mutually exclusive and all strong families are not characterized by all twelve of these characteristics.

Dunst, et al. (1988) suggest that, "A combination of qualities appears to define strong families, with certain combinations defining unique family functioning styles" (p. 3). Otto (1962) earlier noted that "strengths are not isolated variables, but clusters and constellations which are dynamic, fluid, interrelate, and interacting" (p. 80).

In his research on black family strengths, Hill (cited in Hale-Bensen, 1986) identified the following characteristics that are considered to be specific to black families; strong kinship bonds, strong achievement orientation, strong work orientation, adaptability of family roles and strong religious orientation. He argues that these bonds extend beyond the culture of slavery and find their roots in the African culture (pp. 47-48). These identified strengths show similarities to the strong family characteristics as identified by Dunst, Trivette, and Deal (1988) in that they both focus on dependence on family and community members for support, clear identification of family roles and the adaptability of family roles. They differ in that black family strengths have a greater focus on achievement, work, and religious orientations. The development of social capital is however, an important factor in either case. Both perspectives encourage strong relationships with adults, norms and the development of meaningful social networks.

### Families of At-Risk Black Children

At-risk youths are children who are not likely to finish high school or who are apt to graduate considerably below potential. At-risk factors include chemical dependency, teenage pregnancy, poverty, disaffection with school and society, high-mobility families, emotional and physical abuse, physical and emotional disabilities, and learning disabilities that do not qualify for special education but nevertheless impede a child's progress. Poverty and its associated environmental deprivation, often is found among the black population, particularly in urban environments (Minga, 1988, p. 14).

Poverty and its associated environmental deprivation can impact a child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment (Scanzoni cited in McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985; Meindl & Getty cited in Getty & Humphreys, 1981; and Bradley, Caldwell, Rock, Hamerick & Harris, 1988). Economic hardship makes it difficult for family members to provide for basic substance needs of their children. Frequently, individuals with low incomes are forced to live neighborhoods with inadequate housing, high crime rates, open use of drugs and other health hazards such as crowded conditions and improper plumbing. Strong and nurturing environments are difficult to establish under these conditions. In addition, social welfare systems reward recipients for having children out of wedlock by providing welfare benefits and housing to them

(Meindal & Getty in Getty & Humphreys, 1981, p. 58).

### Public Housing

Norfolk, Virginia (the urban center in which this study was conducted) has been identified as a trend setter in the public housing movement. In 1940 the City Council of Norfolk voted to create the Housing Authority of Norfolk for the purpose of replacing slums with modern low rent housing. One of the first projects of the newly established housing authority was a research project culminating in a report entitled, "This is It" (Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, 1946). In this report the slums of Norfolk were reported to consist of one percent of the cities area, but housed fourteen percent of the population. In addition, 49% of the tuberculosis cases, 34% of the arrests for homicide, 66% of the rapes, 37% of the robberies, 50% of the assaults, 33% of the larcenies, 22% of the burglaries, 44% of immorality and 17% of the cost of policing were attributable to the slum areas (p. 4).

The Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority set out to remedy this problem in a systematic manner. In 1941 they built 500 homes (Merrimack Park) to house the increase of military men transferred to this area during the war. In February of 1942 they built Roberts Park. This housing project provided 3,462 homes for families and single workers (p. 9). In 1946 they began a three year program that

converted low rent status to 1,030 permanent dwellings. These homes were to be considered temporary housing in which rent was based on a sliding scale (1/5 of income unless there were over three children in which case rent was 1/6 of the family income). The housing authority established a Negro Advisory Council to aid them in the successful implementation of this three year plan. This Negro Advisory council aided the housing authority in setting policies for the projects, naming them, and in solving zoning problems. Great care was taken during the planning of these projects to ensure that there would be neighborhood schools and recreation centers, active civic leagues and plenty of space and equipment for the individuals who would reside in these residences (p. 16-18).

The Housing Authority is continuing to monitor the housing projects and are making special attempts to ensure the safety and well being of the individuals that live there. In 1988 they established the following policies to help to make the housing communities a safe place to live. To be eligible for public housing the applicant must be 1) a resident or employee of the city of Norfolk, 2) a family or a single individual with a handicap or disability, elderly or expecting a child, and 3) meet specific income limits based on the number of individuals in the family. (No one pays more than 30% of their income for rent). If the applicant meets these criteria they are screened further and

can be denied placement base on the following criteria: police records, rent paying ability, reputation as good tenants, character references, and house keeping habits. These criteria are investigated through contact with previous landlords and home visits in current housing. Individuals then are ranked according to federal preferences such as: 1) being forced to move out of no fault of their own (such as fire); 2) living in substandard conditions and paying in excess of 50% of their income; 3) living in substandard housing or being homeless; 4) standard housing but paying in excess of 50% of their income for rent (Norfolk Housing Authority, 1991). Although the intent of public housing is to provide transitional dwelling for individuals who are facing economic difficulties, many of the residents are multigenerational. Table 1 provides an overview of current demographic data for the public housing developments in Norfolk.

The housing authority has, developed programs that enable successful transition into the private housing market. These programs include financial counseling and transitional programs to home ownership in which the authority holds back 30% of the individuals rent to put toward home ownership.

Crime, however is still a factor in some of the communities. The open use of drugs, residential burglary, individual robbery, aggravated assault, auto larceny and

vandalism continue to plague the communities. Table 2 provides an overview of public housing crime statistics for the three neighborhoods included in this study and for all public housing projects in Norfolk. Living within neighborhoods with high crime rates can inhibit the child's ability to adjust to a school environment. The peer pressure to become involved in criminal activities and to devalue the importance of school place many urban black children at significant risk.

Although poverty and its associated environmental deprivation can place urban children at risk, researchers have found that parental attitudes and the home environment may have more influence on a child's ability to adapt to school than their socioeconomic status (Bensen, 1986; Isaacs in Getty, 1981; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985; Scanzoni, 1985).

#### Home Environment and Adaptation to School

The literature on family strengths supports the argument that the family and home environment can have a significant impact on a child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment. Clark (1983) states:

Although no nationwide study has ever centered principally on the role of American parents in children's school performance, there is a substantial body of evidence that children's chances of school success throughout their educational career are

Table 1

Public Housing Demographic Data

	All Pub. Hous.	Tidewater	Roberts	Young
Number of:				
Households	3,658	625	551	751
Residents	10,668	1,784	1,621	1,865
House. Rec. ADC	2,043	360	345	375
Child under 17	5,207	840	816	828
Senior Citizens				
62 & Over	985	190	124	261
65 & Over	800	150	97	230
<u>Family Make-Up:</u>				
Size:				
1	895	160	131	251
2	845	148	124	185
3	766	135	124	142
4	567	91	88	95
5	286	49	37	45
Over 5	299	42	47	33
<u>Head of House:</u>				
Single	3,450	589	520	709
Married	208	36	31	42
Male	459	71	59	123
Female	3,199	554	492	628
<u>Age Spread:</u>				
0-20	6,001	970	939	939
21-30	1,291	205	196	225
31-40	1,034	180	159	173
41-50	647	105	100	129
51-60	655	124	93	125
Over 60	1,039	200	134	274



Table 2

Crime Statistics for July through November 1990

Offense	Tidewater	Roberts	Young	All Public Housing
Homicide	1	1	2	9
Forcible Rape	0	1	1	5
Robbery Individual	9	2	8	47
Aggravated assault	6	11	10	74
Burg/Resid	8	6	5	43
Burg/Comm	0	0	4	5
Larceny	10	5	7	54
" Auto	1	2	3	8
" Auto Pts	4	1	6	25
Stolen Auto	17	5	7	51
Vandalism	19	14	14	103
Indecent Exposure	1	0	0	1
Fondling	1	0	0	2
Tampering Vehicle	0	1	0	4
Total	79	49	65	433

significantly increased by a supportive home environment and, conversely, are significantly decreased by a "neutral" or non-supportive family context. (p. 5)

Clark (1983) further states:

Most people would have no trouble agreeing that experiences in the home significantly shape their interpersonal competence (as indicated by their academic and interactive responses) in classroom settings and other out-of-home environments. Afterall, the home-community setting is where students first develop, or fail to develop, their social abilities to express themselves maturely and intelligently, be attentive, concentrate, volunteer, comply, engage in constructive self-directed activity, initiate work interactions, enjoy orderly social interaction, accept responsibility, carry through and complete tasks, hold positive concepts of "learning", manifest leadership skills, exercise self-control, show sensitivity to the needs of others, and enjoy a sense of accomplishment about goals achieved. It is these social "survival Skills" that are basic to high quality student performance in learning classrooms. The mechanism for transmitting these skills are the preparatory tasks that take up the family members' use of time in the home (p. 5).

The parental role in developing the skills of survival that enable a child's adaption to school and community settings cannot be discovered through traditional family research techniques. Much of the traditional research that has been

done on family and home characteristics focuses on the sociodemographic aspects of a child's home environment. Researchers focus on the composition of the family unit, the level of education acquired by the parents, the number of siblings, economic status, ethnic origin, and the work patterns of the parents. These studies do demonstrate that there are significant relationships between family background and school achievement (p.6). Clark (1983), however, argues that this is not enough, that these sociodemographic factors only scratch the surface of the dynamics of family and home environments that affect children. He emphatically states that, "psychological processes and social communication patterns of family life come the closest to capturing the essence of human learning experiences in homes" (p.3). This information cannot be derived from analysis of demographic data but must be collected through direct observation of the families interactions and indepth interviews revolving around family values, routines, rules, aspirations, and behavioral patterns. There have been several research studies that have focused on the personal and interactional aspects of families and home environments. These studies now will be discussed.

Clark (1983) conducted an exploratory case study in which he compared the family characteristics and home environment of ten seniors in urban high schools. Five of

the high school seniors were considered to be markedly more successful in school than the remaining five students. Clark spent approximately forty-eight hours with each of ten families, following them around through their daily routines in and outside of the home. His data collection consisted of taped semi-structured interviews, participant observation, an attitudinal questionnaire and process oriented data. The researcher did not sleep at the family home as it was viewed that this would be too great of an imposition based on the cramped living quarters. The data collection took place over a period of six months (pp. 18-21). He found that the success producing patterns in the home of high achievers included the following: frequent contact with schools initiated by parents; the child having some stimulating, supportive school teachers; parents who are psychologically and emotionally calm with the child; students are psychologically and emotionally calm with the parents; parents who expect to play a major role in the child's schooling; parents expect child to play a major role in their schooling; parents expect their child to get post secondary training; parents have explicit achievement-centered rules and norms; students show long-term acceptance of norms as legitimate; parents establish clear, specific role boundaries and status structures with parents as dominant authority; siblings interact as organized subgroup; conflict between family members is infrequent; parents

frequently engage in deliberate achievement-training activities; parents exercise firm, consistent monitoring and rule enforcement; parents provide liberal nurturance and support; and parents defer to child's knowledge in intellectual matters (p.200). Parents of low achieving students tended not to demonstrate these behaviors and frequently held opposing positions on these critical behaviors and interactions.

Swan and Starvos (1973) completed an observation study of highly motivated children from low income black families in New Orleans and found that these children had parents who reported a strong positive enjoyment of their children, read frequently, had animated dinner conversations, respected the ability and unique interests of each child, were confident and competent in child rearing practices, had a father present in the home, required chores to be part of the daily routine, and treated each child as an integral, helpful and important member of the family.

### **Cultural Differences**

Black youth are forced to function in a bicultural environment in which they are required to adapt their cultural differences with the prevailing social practices of the culture in which they are living. The extent to which they are able to accomplish this task successfully determines the degree to which their cultural differences

will place them at-risk within the school environment. Cultural differences have been found among black youth that make it difficult for them to adapt well to the predominately white middle class standards that are adhered to within school systems. Isaacs (in Getty and Humphreys, 1981) states, "While the family may be the primary vehicle for carrying out the socialization practices, it is the culture that decrees the content of those practices and the direction they take" (p.31). In a study of low to middle income blacks, nine to ten years of age, Boykin and Toms (cited in McAdoo and MaAdoo, 1985) identified nine inter-related but distinct dimensions of Afro-American Culture. These dimensions include the following characteristics:

1. Spirituality: conducting one's life as though its essence were vitalistic rather than mechanistic and as though transcending forces that significantly governs the lives of people
2. Harmony: placing a premium on versatility and placing an emphasis on wholeness rather than on discreteness
3. Movement: approaching life rhythmically, particularly as expressed through the patterned interwoven mosaic of music, movement, and percussiveness
4. Verve: psychological affinity for variability and intensity of stimulation, particularly stimulation emanating from the movement mosaic complex
5. Affect: a premium placed on emotional

sensibilities and expressiveness

6. Communalism: sensitivity to the interdependence of people and the notion that group concerns transcend individual striving

7. Expressive individualism: a premium attached to the cultivation of distinctiveness, spontaneity, and uniqueness of self-expression

8. Orality: a special emphasis on oral and aural modes of communication, especially the use of the spoken word to convey deep textual meanings not possible through the spoken word

9. Social time perspective: a commitment to time as a social phenomenon much more than a concoction objectively drawn through clocks, calendars, and other inanimate markers (p.41).

As stated previously, these cultural influences also are addressed in Piagetian Theory. Cole (in Hale-Bensen, 1986, p.23) identifies four factors that Piaget felt influenced the development of cognitive functioning. These were delineated as biological, equilibrium, general socialization and social factors. The social factors are described as those which differ from one society to another and include particularly those factors of education and cultural transmission.

**Summary**

Social capital has been demonstrated to be an essential ingredient contributing to a child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment. The literature on parental role in the development of young children, recreation and leisure, social capital, family strengths, families of at-risk black children, public housing, home environment and adaptation to school, and culture all support the fact that children who come from home environments that have supportive family and community networks are better adjusted. These supportive home environments provide opportunities for children to interact with adults and enables the child to learn about norms, values and socially appropriate behaviors.



### Chapter 3

#### Research Design

The variables addressed in this study, adaptation to a formal school environment, family characteristics, and the home environment are highly complex. It is for these reasons that an ex post facto study utilizing qualitative and quantitative research methodologies has been chosen to explore the relationships among these variables. For quantitative purposes, the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment is the dependent variable and the characteristics of the family and the home environment the independent variables.

The complexity of the variables related to family characteristics and home environments and how these variables impact on a child's adaptation to the school environment does not lend itself to traditional quantitative research methodologies. As cited earlier, research concerning traits associated with "strong families" suggest that there are at least twelve major, non-mutually exclusive qualities inherent in strong families (Dunst, Trivette and Deal, 1988). In his research on black family strengths, Hill (cited in Hale-Bensen, 1986) identified the following characteristics that are considered to be specific to black

families: strong kinship bonds, strong achievement orientation, strong work orientation, adaptability of family roles and strong religious orientation. As these characteristics are considered to be interdependent, identifying key variables for quantification while eliminating others is difficult. Qualitative research methodologies, however, allow the researcher to address multiple realities which are constructed socially through individual and collective definition of the situation. Qualitative methodologies also allow the researcher to become immersed in the situation adding "richness" to the data that quantification would not allow (McMillian & Schumacher, 1989, p. 24). Qualitative research designs delineate a process through which human behavior can be studied in terms of how it relates to education. This approach is based on a naturalistic-phenomenological philosophy of human behavior that seeks to understand people's constructions as they occur in a natural context (p. 386).

Comer (1980) strongly recommends the utilization of qualitative methods in the study of urban children. He states that, "...single designs ignore the fact that human problems are the result of multi-determined interrelated factors" (p. 23). He argues that single designs suggest simplistic solutions to complex problems; which are influenced by a multiplicity of extraneous variables that

significantly can impact the interpretation of the research data. Comer further states that the movement toward outcome focused research in education, which began after World War II, "...slowed the growth and obscured the significance of comprehensive system analysis, the study of the interactions and impact of people, programs and procedures among and upon each other" (p. 23). He suggests that there needs to be a move toward the design and implementation of qualitative research methodologies in congruence with quantitative methodologies (p. 24).

Akbar (in McAdoo, 1985) reinforces this needs for naturalistic inquiry. He states that this approach will enable us to describe what we see happening in our lives, communities, and with our children. He suggests returning to the observational approaches that were utilized by Piaget. He writes that, "We must accept that there is much in human experience that is like astronomy, in which manipulations are not possible, but the science becomes precise and thorough through observation and description" (p. 30).

Qualitative research involves an in-depth analytical description of an intact group. The researcher makes no attempt to develop and to state specific hypotheses. The procedure involves developing a broad theoretical framework which provides guidelines for the observations of the study. Research questions are stated and are reformulated during

the research process. The research questions are extracted from the researcher's observations of a social situation or through a thorough examination of the literature.

The primary research question addressed in this study is: What characteristics of a child's family and home environment facilitate his successful adaptation to a formal school environment? Related questions that are explored in this study include:

1. Is there a difference between the family behaviors of well adapted versus poorly adapted students?
2. What types of behaviors or family interactions contribute to a child's adjustment to a formal school environment?
3. Is there a relationship between social capital variables (as defined by family strengths literature) and the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment?

### Methodology

#### Instrumentation

Three instruments were utilized to collect data in this study. The instruments include the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition (VABS), the HOME Inventory for Elementary Aged Children (HOME), and The Family Strengths Inventory (FFSS). These instruments will now be described with regard to reliability and validity issues.

**Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition**

The Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scale Classroom Edition (VABS) is a norm referenced test that has demonstrated reliability and validity. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was utilized to establish the test's reliability. For the age range 7-0 to 7-11 the coefficients were as follows: communication domain, .93; daily living skills domain, .95; socialization domain, .94; and adaptive behavior composite, .97 (Harrison, 1985, p. 26). The construct validity of the VABS has been tested through factor analysis. A principle components analysis was conducted with the domain subscores to confirm the underlying structure of the Classroom Edition and to determine the percentage of variance accounted for by the first principle component. The analysis was conducted for age groups 3 (years)-0 (months)-0 (days) through 5-11-30 (N= 588), 6-0-6 through 7-11-30 (N=721), 8-0-0 through 9-11-30 (N=790), and 10-0-0 through 12-11-30 (N=885). For each age group the analysis produced one significant factor, using the "eigenvalue equal to or greater than 1.0" criterion, which for the four age groups accounted for 66.6 to 79.5 percent of the variance in domain standard scores (Harrison, 1985, p. 30).

### Home Inventory for Elementary Children

The Home Inventory for Families of Elementary Children (HOME) for ages 6-10 (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984) addresses information on trips outside the home, toys that are available to the child, the way the family arranges their daily routine, and discipline. The HOME results in a family profile that includes scores in the following areas: emotional and verbal responsivity, encouragement of maturity, emotional climate, growth fostering materials and experiences, provision of active stimulation, family participation in developmentally stimulating experiences, paternal involvement, and aspects of the physical environment.

The reliability and validity of the Home Inventory for Elementary Aged Children was determined through several studies based on a sample of 124 Little Rock, Arkansas public school children and their families. The mean age of the sample was eight years old. Forty-nine percent of the population was white and 75% was black. The population consisted of 22% lower class, 51% working class, and 51% middle-upper class families (Bradley, Caldwell, Rock, Hamrick, & Harris, 1988, p. 65). Internal consistency estimates were made for the total scale and each subscale utilizing the alpha coefficient formula. The coefficients ranged from .52 to .80 on the subscales and was .90 for the

total scale (p. 66). Inter-observer agreement was 93% when calculated for four research assistants utilizing forty cases. A kappa coefficient of .88 was accomplished after ten visits with a trained interviewer (p. 66).

Validity included correlations with demographic variables, academic achievement and classroom behavior. The correlation studies on demographic variables included mother's and father's occupation and education and socioeconomic status. The majority of the correlation coefficients were in the expected direction and ranged between .2 and .5 (Bradley, Caldwell, Rock, Hamrick, & Harris, 1988, p. 66).

Children's scores on the Science Research Associates achievement battery were utilized to determine the correlations between achievement and the Elementary Home. These tests were administered each year to all students in the Little Rock public school system. Although the correlations were low, significant relationships were found. The most significant relationships were between the responsitivity of the caregiver, aspects of the physical environment, provision of growth-fostering materials and experiences, and provision for active stimulation (Bradley, Caldwell, Rock, Hamrick, & Harris, 1988, p. 66).

#### Family Functioning Style Scale

The Family Functioning Style Scale (FFSS) measures the

family functioning style in the following areas: commitment, appreciation, time, sense of purpose, congruence, communication, role expectations, coping, problem solving, positivism, flexibility and balance. Psychometric properties of the FFSS were determined through the study of 105 parents of preschool aged children. The sample consisted of 64 parents of nonhandicapped children and 41 parents of mentally retarded, disabled, and developmentally delayed children participating in an early intervention program. Eighty of the 105 parents were mothers and 25 were fathers. Eighty-two parents completed the scale independently and 23 were completed together by both mothers and fathers (Dunst & Trivette, 1988). Results of an analysis of variance showed that there was almost no covariation between item scores and group membership (below two percent for each comparison). The sample was therefore considered to be homogenous for conducting reliability and validity analysis (Trivette et al., unpublished manuscript, p. 11).

Construct validity was determined through a principle components factor analysis using oblique rotation. Oblique rotation was utilized because the different qualities of strong families are interrelated. This analysis produced a five-facet solution accounting for 60% of the variance. These factors were identified as commitment to the family, family cohesion, communication among family members, family



competence, family coping strategies. Trivette et al. (unpublished manuscript) found that of the total amount of variance accounted for by the factor analysis, the variance accounted for by the individual factors was distributed almost equally and therefore, that the different strengths categories are measuring separate and equally important aspects of family functioning style (p. 12).

Internal consistency was tested utilizing both coefficient alpha and split-half reliability coefficients. These tests resulted in coefficients of .92. Coefficient alpha for the subscale items in each factor solution was .84 for commitment, .85 for cohesion, .79 for communication, .79 for competence, and .77 for coping (p. 12).

Criterion validity for the scale was measured by using the Family Hardiness Index (FHI; McCubbin et al. 1987) as the criterion measure. A canonical correlation was completed between the five FFSS factor score and the four FHI subscale scores. The resulting correlation coefficient was .74,  $p < .0001$ , indicating that both scales are measuring similar qualities of family functioning (p. 13).

Predictive validity of FFSS was examined in terms of its relationship to the personal and familial well-being of the respondents in the study. The Psychological Well-Being Index (PWI; Bradburn, 1969; Bradburn and Caplovitz, 1965) was used as the outcome measure of personal wellbeing. The Mastery of Health Scale subscale of the Family Inventory of

Resources and Management (FIRM; McCubbin, Comeau, & Hawkins, 1981) was used as the outcome measure of familial well-being. Trivette et al. report that, "the canonical correlation between the five FFSS subscale scores and the PWI positive and negative affect measures and FIRM mastery and health scores was  $R = .64$ ,  $p < .0001$ , indicating that family strengths are an important part of the well-being and health of the family unit and individual family members" (p. 14).

### Sampling Procedure

Qualitative research designs focus on developing an understanding of the social cultural phenomena of a particular population or group with an attempt to understand the perspectives of the group members within the contextual framework in which they are living (Stainback & Stainback, 1988, pp. 17-18). The group to be examined in this study is the children in the second grade classes in the target schools of the Norfolk Public School System. This population was chosen as the focus of the study for two primary reasons. The literature supports the idea that preschool does aid in the adaptation to formal school environments (Elkind, 1988). As this variable, the preschool experience, is the most confounding to the study it must be controlled. The literature suggests that by second grade most influences attributable to the preschool

experience have been washed out (Darlington & Horn, 1981, pp. 1145-1146). The second reason this population was chosen is because the Norfolk Public System is in an urban setting and serves a high percentage of low income, disadvantaged students. This population is likely to have limited family and community based resources to reinforce their adaptation skills due, in part, to the lack of parental education and income that forces dependence on social institutions for family well being. This dependence frequently leads to feelings of inadequacy and low self worth of family members (Coleman, 1987, pp. 33-34).

The population is comprised of second grade students from the ten target schools where by definition there is a high concentration of disadvantaged students. Students were selected in the following manner. Principals at each of the target schools were contacted to determine if they would be interested in taking part in the study. The elementary schools that were contacted included: Diggs Park, St. Helena, Chesterfield, Bowling Park, Lindenwood, Tucker, Tidewater Park, Jaycox, Young Park, and Roberts Park. Table 3 describes the target schools identified for inclusion in the study, the number of second grade classes at each school, and the reasons that the school personal chose not to become involved in the study.

After a series of meetings with the principals and second grade teachers, four schools, Jaycox, Tidewater Park,

Table 3

Target Schools Contacted for Inclusion in Study Who Choose Not to Participate

<u>School</u>	<u>#Classes</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Diggs	3	daytime drugs, hesitant to make home visits - ok if visits done at school
St. Helena	2	declined
Chester-field		cannot commit - model school
Bowling Park	3	Teachers indicated that they didn't feel comfortable with visiting families - neighborhoods are drug infested and there have been many shootings. They have difficulty getting in themselves. People act like they're not home. Do not feel safe myself or for you.
Linden-wood	5	Principal indicated that I might have difficulty getting accurate information from parents - that they are private people, especially as it relates to income.
Tucker	2	Too busy -- would not listen more than five minutes -- principal did not inform them of visit.
Total: Six Schools		15 second grade classes, approximately 20 students per class

Roberts Park and Young Park agreed to participate in the study. Jaycox Elementary has five second grade teachers of which four choose to participate in the study. Two students were selected for the final sample from this school.

Tidewater Park has two second grade teachers and one spiral (combined second and third grade classes) grade teacher. One second grade teacher and the spiral teacher choose to participate in the study. One student was selected from the regular class and two students were selected from the spiral class for the study. Roberts Park has two second grade teachers who both choose to be involved in the study. Three students were selected from their classes. Two of the three second grade teachers from Young Park agreed to be involved in the study. A total of four students were selected from this school.

In order to obtain the study participants, the second grade teachers from these schools were asked to make a list identifying three students, from their classes, that they felt have adapted well to school and three students that they felt have not adapted well to the school environment. The students that were identified all were eligible for the school lunch program. The teacher then sent home permission slips to the parents of the children asking them if they would be interested in participating in the study. (See Appendix A for a copy of the consent form). The subjects for the sample were selected from the pool of signed consent forms with emphasis on having an equal number of students identified as being well adapted as those being not well adapted by teacher informants. This sampling procedure resulted in a sample pool of 33 students.

The teachers of these 33 students then were asked to complete the Classroom Edition of The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS) on their respective students. Students were rank ordered based on their scores. The students who fell one standard deviation above or below the mean were included in the final sample. This resulted in a sample comprised of six students who were rated as being well adapted and six students who were rated as being poorly adapted. Table 4 delineates the number of students selected from each cooperating school, their sex, and their respective levels of adaptation.

The purpose of this sampling procedure was to accentuate the differences in the two focus groups, those who have adapted well and those who have not, enabling the researcher to acquire a better understanding of the differences between the groups.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection occurred in three separate stages. Prior to data collection, permission for completing the study was secured from the human subjects committee, the principals and second grade teachers from the participating schools, and the parents of each child.

### **Stage 1**

Parents whose children were identified as subjects for

Table 4

Number of Students Selected From Participating Schools

Key: M = Male

F = Female

	Well Adapted	Poorly Adapted	Total Selected
Jaycox	1M	1M	2
Roberts Park	2F	1F	3
Tidewater Park	0	3M	3
Young Park	2M	1F	
	1F		4
Total:	6	6	12

the study were sent a letter describing the purpose of the study and informing them that they would be contacted by the researcher during the month of October. Parents then were contacted by phone by the researcher to explain the study and to request their participation in the project. Those who did not have phones were contacted by personal notes from the teacher and/or researcher and/or through the Parent Activity Leader or Parent Technician from each school. Participation in the study required that the researcher be allowed to interview the child and be allowed to come into

the home for a family interview. An interview was scheduled during the months of November, December, and January at the family's convenience. The purpose of this interview was to collect data on the family system and home environment.

## Stage 2

Stage two involved an in-depth interview with the child and his family. The purpose of this interview was to observe the family in a natural context in an attempt to identify the characteristics and behaviors of the family system. Items for the interview were selected to reflect the functioning style of the family system, the environment in which they lived, and the formal and informal resources that they utilized. Two instruments were utilized to accomplish this task, The Home Inventory for Families of Elementary Children (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984) and the Family Functioning Style Scale (Dunst, Trivette & Deal, 1988, pp. 177-184). The structured interview began with a broad based question followed by more specific probe questions to expand on the acquired information.

These instruments were utilized to structure the interview and to insure consistency in data collection. The researcher did not, however, limit the data collection only to the information addressed by the tools. The purpose of the in-depth interview is to learn about individuals perceptions, feelings, and attitudes toward certain



variables. The interviewer explored, in-depth, the family factors, recording all observances, nuances and responses made by the interviewees.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher as recommended by MacMillan and Schumacher (1989, p. 15). This enabled the researcher to become immersed in the data and to pursue the intricacies of the home environment and family relationships. An interview schedule (See Appendix B for a copy of the interview schedule) has been developed from the HOME Administration Manual and the Family Functioning Style Scales. Additional questions concerning relationships with peers and family values have been added to add depth to the data and to include questions related to family strengths literature and the concept of social capital. The researcher recorded interview data on audio tape and through extensive field notes.

Qualitative research methodologies emphasize that the researcher be knowledgeable in the subject field under study. The researcher for this study has had over four years of clinical experience working with families in leisure based programs. In addition, she has published articles in regional, national and international journals and has presented at numerous state and national conferences on the topic of family relationships and ways through which leisure activities can be utilized to enhance family relations and academic skills.

### Stage 3

Stage three included an interview with the child by himself. This interview also was conducted by the researcher at the child's school during normal school hours and within two weeks of the family interview. The included a series of questions directly reflecting the questions asked in the family interview. In addition, the child was asked to do a kinetic family drawing (Knoff & Prout, 1985). This procedure, which is described by Knoff and Prout, asks the child to draw a picture of himself and all the family members doing something. The student also was asked to draw a picture of himself in the classroom or school setting. This procedure was utilized to stimulate the child's involvement in the interview process and provided additional information about how the child views himself within the family system and within the school setting. Knoff and Prout (1985) state that the Kinetic Family Drawing provides, "...greater potential to uncover children's perceptions and attitudes toward individual and conjoint family members. Children's positive and negative relationships with family members, and their self-concepts, are identified more easily in the KFD's by their physical and psychological positions relative to other family members" (p. 53). This process gives children the permission to represent pictorially the past, current, or future status of the family from the child's perspective" (p. 53). The same observations can be

made for the kinetic school drawings.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to analyze the data in this study. Quantitative analysis was utilized to separate the subjects into extreme groups. This process was completed through teacher nomination and through an one way analysis of variance on the students scores on the Classroom Edition of the Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scales as discussed previously.

The qualitative data collected from the family interviews and the child interviews were summarized and presented in a case study format. These case studies then were analyzed through the process of inductive analysis. In inductive analysis, the patterns, themes, and categories of responses emerge from the data rather than being imposed upon them. McMillan and Schumacher (1989) identify five stages to this form of analysis. These five stages include: discovery analysis in the field; preliminary analysis of data; categorization and ordering data to identify emerging patterns and themes; descriptive-analytical synthesis; and the ability to extend analysis to integrate major findings to propose grounded concepts and mini-theories (p. 415-416).

The data gathered by the three instruments, the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS), the HOME Inventory for Elementary Children (HOME), and the Family Functioning

Styles Scales (FFSS) are quantifiable, resulting in a summary score from several sets of subset data. T-tests for independent samples were completed to determine the degree of differences between the two subgroups on the HOME and FFSS measurement scales.

The kinetic family and school drawings were utilized primarily to establish a relationship with the children and as a means depict their feelings pictorially. The information acquired during this interview process was compared to parental perceptions of the child to determine the degree of congruence between the way the children and their parents perceive their family situation.

The final stage of data analysis was to corroborate the data through triangulation of the multiple data sources in an attempt to enhance the reliability and validity of the data and to add richness and depth to the analysis. Stainback and Stainback (1988) state that, "...the purpose of corroboration is not to confirm whether people's perceptions are accurate or 'true' reflections of a situation but rather to help ensure that the research findings accurately reflect people's perceptions, whatever they may be" (p. 70). Two triangulation techniques were utilized to corroborate the data in this study. The first method of triangulation that was utilized is the convergence of multiple data sources. For this procedure, data was collected from a variety of participants (parents, children,

Apublic service agencies) in a variety of settings (homes, schools and neighborhoods), and under a variety of conditions (in school or at home, formally and informally) (Stainbak & Stainback, 1988, p. 71). In addition, methodological triangulation was used. For this second procedure, the data from multiple data collection procedures was converged. Through these techniques the researcher was able to build upon the strengths of each of the data collection methods while minimizing the weakness in any single approach (Patton, 1980, p. 158). Findings of the analysis are reported in a narrative and tabular format.

This chapter has provided the reader an overview of research methodology. Specifically, the research design, instrumentation, sampling procedure, stages of data collection, and data analysis procedures were discussed. The results of these procedures will be discussed in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this study was to determine what characteristics of families are most likely to enhance the development of social capital in young urban school children and to determine which of these characteristics or combination of characteristics contribute to the child's ability to adapt positively to a formal school environment. Qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to make this determination. Qualitative analysis was utilized to separate the subjects into extreme groups. Determining extreme groups was accomplished through teacher nomination and through an analysis of the student scores on the Classroom Edition of the Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scales. The qualitative data collected from the family and child interviews was summarized and presented in a case study format. These case studies then were analyzed through the process of inductive analysis. The quantitative data gathered through the two instruments, the HOME Inventory for Elementary Children (HOME), and the Family Functioning Styles Scales (FFSS) was analyzed utilizing a Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance. This procedure enabled the researcher to determine if there was any significant difference between

the two study groups on the measurement variables. The final stage of the data analysis was to corroborate the data through triangulation of the multiple data sources. The purpose of this chapter is to describe, in detail, these data analysis techniques and to delineate the results generated from the data collection procedures.

### Determining Extreme Groups

Extreme groups were selected through teacher nomination and through the student scores on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Classroom Edition (VABS). The teachers who agreed to participate in the study were asked to nominate six students, three who they felt adapted well and three that they felt did not adapt well to the classroom setting. The teachers then were asked to complete the VABS on the students who they selected and who returned a signed consent form from their parents. This procedure resulted in a sample of thirty-three students. These students were rank ordered based on their composite scores on the VABS.

Descriptive statistics then were utilized to determine the mean and standard deviation of this sample. The mean for the sample was 99.97 and the standard deviation was 20.44. Students' composite scores ranged from 60 to 143. The students who fell one or standard deviations above or below the mean were selected for inclusion in the study.

Composite scores for those students, one or more standard deviations above the mean, ranged between 120 and 143. Composite scores for those students falling one or more standard deviations below the mean ranged from 60 to 80. Table 5 provides a listing of the students scores and where they fell within the normal distribution.

Table 5

Composite Scores of Students on the Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scale Classroom Edition

Standard Deviation = 20.44

Mean = 99.96

Standard Deviation	Scores
One or more above the mean	143
	142
	137
	127
	121
	120
One or more below the mean	80
	80
	78
	78
	73
	60

An one-way analysis of variance was completed to determine if there was a significant difference between the students who had high adaptation scores and those who had low adaptation scores on the VABS. The group variable for this analysis was the students' level of adaptation being either high (group a) or low (group b). The dependent



variable was the students composite score on the instrument. This analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups at the .0001 level. The results of analysis appear in Table 6.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance of VABS Composite Scores Statistics

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Variance Estimate	F-Ratio	Prob. F
Among	62785.33	1	62785.33	103.3901	.0001
Within	6072.67	10	607.27		
Total	68858.00	11			

The results of this analysis verify that the sampling procedure utilized in this study was effective in maximizing the diversity between the two groups selected as the focus of this study.

Preliminary Contacts and Data Collection

During the preliminary stages of this study the researcher had contact with many principals, teachers and other school personnel. The information secured during these contacts provided useful data in understanding the environment in which the study was conducted. The purpose

of this section is to discuss the content of the discussions held with these individuals and to share observations made while visiting the individual schools and neighborhoods.

When contacting the target schools to secure their permission for participation in the study the researcher had the opportunity to talk with the principals as well as the second grade teachers. The personnel at several of the schools were very reluctant to become involved in the study. They were very concerned about their safety and felt strongly that it was not wise to visit the homes of their students. Many of the teachers indicated that the researcher would be at even greater risk because she was not a person of color. Table 5 in Chapter 3, page 63, lists comments made by the school personnel from the schools that chose not to participate in the study.

The teachers at the cooperating schools also were reluctant to visit the homes of their students. Those who agreed to accompany the researcher on the visits said that they would only do so if we could go during daylight hours. They were concerned not only about their personal well being but also about the security of their cars. It was not always possible to visit the home during daylight hours so the researcher made all but one of the visits unaccompanied. There were no problems during these visits.

The principals of the participating schools were very interested in the project. The principal at one of the

schools was very interested in finding out how the children who live in such deprived and crime ridden neighborhoods manage to succeed in school. The principal at the second school was very concerned about the males in her school. She has observed that they begin to have problems as they enter the third grade. The principal speculates that this may have something to do with the lack of male role models in the elementary schools. Another point of concern for this principal is that much of the stability in the families serviced by her school comes from the grandmother. She wonders what will happen when the grandmothers die.

A counselor at the third school observed that the children in her school frequently are unaware of traditional social mores. The example she gave involved a program she has implemented for the boys in the school. It is a program where she invites successful black males to come into the school and talk with the boys about their professions and how they achieved what they did. On one occasion, after the guest's presentation, one of the boys noticed that he was wearing a wedding ring. The boy asked him what it was. The man replied that it was a wedding ring. The counselor reported that the boys appeared very surprised that a black man would be married.

The schools were locked except when the children were arriving or leaving. To enter during regular school hours you had to ring a bell or knock. One of the schools had a

security guard at the front entrance and in the parking lot. Teachers were apprehensive about being in the building after hours and about leaving valuables unattended.

### Case Studies

The parents of the twelve students selected to be in the sample were contacted to arrange a time for a home visit. This process took much longer than anticipated due to the fact that many of the parents did not have phones, some of them worked, and many were busy due to the upcoming holiday season. Home visits took place during the months of November, December and January.

Nine of the twelve families allowed the researcher to complete the interview. The remaining three families chose not to participate in the home interview even though they had signed the consent form. Since these three families did not have a telephone, they were contacted through notes sent home by the teacher and the researcher and through at-home contact by the parent technician or parent activity leader at their respective schools. After several unsuccessful attempts at arranging home visits it was decided to eliminate these students from this aspect of the study. The students were, however, interviewed at the school along with the other nine students involved in the study.

The home interviews took place in the child's home at a prearranged time that was convenient for the family and when

the child was present. Most of the interviews took place between 3:30 and 6:00 p.m. The duration of the interviews ranged between 1 hour and 1 1/2 hours. The students and their siblings were allowed to select a gift from a basket of activity books, coloring books, toys, and games that the researcher carried to each home.

Student interviews took place at each child's respective school. The interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. The information secured from the student interview will follow each respective family case study. The following section will include case studies of the nine families who participated in the study and twelve student interview reports.

The case studies are based on the information acquired through home visit interviews and the student interviews are based on information gathered during an interview with the child at his school. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to insure that the information presented is an accurate reflection of the families perceptions about themselves and their children. The cases are presented according to the child's level of adaptation. The case studies of the well adapted children will be presented first. To insure confidentiality of the information presented in the case studies the names of the subjects and their families are not included. Each family has been assigned a case number. To facilitate the flow of the case

studies the children were assigned fictitious names.

### Case Study One - Well Adapted

This is a single parent family with four children living in the home. The oldest is an 11-year-old girl followed by three boys aged 4, 7, and 2. The 7-year-old, Tom, is the focus of this study. The children's mother is thirty years old. She graduated from high school and spent two years at Norfolk Commonwealth College learning to be a secretary. She currently is unemployed so that she can take care of the children. She does volunteer work with the school including being the pre-K Chapter One Parent Volunteer. She walks the children to school every morning and has breakfast with them. She frequently goes on field trips with the children's classes.

Mother indicated that she came from a family of seven. Her mother began having children at a young age and had them in quick succession. This resulted in a less than ideal home atmosphere. She remembers being told, "...sit down and be quiet, rush, rush, rush." She indicated that this was not good and that you need to take a lot of time with your kids. She said, "You have to spend time."

Mother has never been married. The children have different fathers. The father of the three oldest children, including Tom, is also a high school graduate who is now unemployed and in school studying computers. Although he

does not live in the home he makes a point of seeing the children regularly. He has them every weekend and frequently visits the school to check on their academic progress. When he has the children on weekends he takes them to basketball games, the beach, and takes them with him when he plays pool. They also play Nintendo together. The father also has coached Tom in little league football and baseball for the past three years.

The mother speaks very highly of Tom's father. She indicated that she learned about showing affection to the children from him. She said, "He's from a comfortable family. I'm from a month to month, paycheck to paycheck family. So I really learned that from their father." The youngest child's father is the mother's current boyfriend. He was not discussed during the interview.

The family lives in Young Park in a three bedroom unit. They have lived there for the past three years. The mother feels comfortable living in the housing project. She believes that the part of the neighborhood that they live in is not all that bad. She will not allow the children to play at the neighborhood playground equipment because there is broken glass from the dumpsters around it. The apartment was clean and nicely appointed with one bedroom downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs. The boys share one room and the sister has the other room. The household was quite hectic at the time of the interview. The daughter had two older

friends over and there was an extra toddler running around.

Mother has established a set routine for the family, including eating meals together, and is quite comfortable in setting down the rules and responsibilities for family members. She was responsive to her children during the interview, introducing them as they entered the room and intervening when there were problems. The children have assigned responsibilities such as keeping their room clean and other tasks such as emptying the garbage. House rules included, "doing homework after school, being a person of your own, being in front of the door by dark, and reading something extra everyday." She indicated that she would physically punish the children if it was called for, but that generally she would take away television time or make the children stay in the house. The mother feels that verbal abuse is as bad as physical abuse. She does not allow temper tantrums. The mother said that she tries to teach the children to share, to respect one another, and to look out for one another.

Mother was very adamant about reading and other educational activities. She provides the children with books and helps them with their homework if they need it. She tells the children, "The better and the more education you receive the better off you'll be. I tell them to try to absorb the information, to always try their hardest, and most importantly not to do it to get it over with but put



their mind to it." She mentioned that she was proud of Tom because of, "his good behavior, excellent work in spelling and math, for being on the B+ Honor Roll, and for learning to tell time." She holds a celebration for the children when they do well in school. To enhance learning skills the children are involved in a tutoring program held at the Norfolk Public Library.

Family activities are focused around the house and involve games and watching television. The mother does not have transportation and therefore does not leave home frequently. The children do however, go places with their father. They have been on car trips to South Carolina, South of the Border, Maryland, and Washington DC.

Mother identified her family strengths as, "having respect for each other and we look after each other." Mother indicated that, "Being a parent is fun, but hard. Your going to have your happy time and your hard times. It's okay. I wouldn't trade mine."

#### **Student's Interview**

Tom did not include himself, his brother and his father in his kinetic family drawing. Tom indicated that his father lives some where else, but that he sees him often. When he sees him on weekends they play ball and nintendo together. The individuals in the picture were, "running to the house to eat the food that mother was cooking." Tom was

able to identify positive attributes about the family members. He reported that he and his siblings fought frequently. When asked what the family members wished for he said, "my mom and my sister wish for clothes and I wish for "fifteen dollars so I could buy a car."

In his School drawing Tom said, "I'm looking all cool" when asked what he was doing. He also said that the teacher in his drawing was "fussing at me because I was bad." He did not know what it was that he did wrong. He identified his favorite subject as science and said he that wants to be a doctor. What he enjoyed most about school was working together with other students. When asked what his family did to help him do well in school, he said, "Help me with my homework and tell me it's important to be good in school so I can get a job and an education."

He has good verbal skills and is very interested in sports, particularly, baseball, soccer and football. He plays on teams in each of these sports. His favorite toys are Ninja Turtles and he likes to play outside on playground equipment.

#### **Case Study Two - Well Adapted**

Steven (age 9) comes from a family of four. He has two sisters aged 4 and 13 months. They live with their mother in Young Park. His mother has a high school diploma and two years of college at Norfolk State University. She also

attended the Adult Learning Center where she received training to be a nursing assistant. In addition, attended Barkley's but was unable to finish due to problems with increasing tuition and financial aid. She currently is unemployed because she finds child care to be too expensive. She indicated that she would prefer to work. Steven's father is employed as a roofer. His level of education is not known. Attempting to determine how much time the father spends in the home was difficult. The student deferred this question to his mother who answered, "he sees him more than once a week". When asked what kind of things he did with father, he said, "nothing... watch him".

The family lives in a neighborhood where people fire guns almost every night and where there is frequently trouble with drug dealing. The mother and son are very nervous about the shooting, particularly since it is often right outside their window. The children are not allowed outside without her. Steven, is however, allowed to go grocery shopping for the mother. He enjoys doing this because it is one of the few times that the mother lets him out by himself. He does not have to walk through the dangerous part of the neighborhood to get to the grocery store.

The home is well kept but had very little furniture downstairs and the walls were sparsely decorated. The family had just moved into the house and the mother said

that she had not gotten a chance to get all the furniture yet. Steven indicated that sometimes the father would take a mattress downstairs into the living room for the parents to sleep.

The family has a regular schedule in which they wake up very early, watch cartoons, go to school, come home and do homework, maybe go to the store, play games such as monopoly, watch the Cosby's Show at five-thirty and eat dinner together at six. Mother indicated that she has no difficulty getting Steven to be responsible. She said that he likes to help out and that he is even interested in learning how to cook. He also enjoys playing with his youngest sister and watching over her. He reported having some difficulty getting along with the older sister and indicated that he would like to have a baby brother. Mother said, "they squabble a lot but that they look out for each other."

Mother is very responsive to her children and treats them respectfully. Family rules are to be in bed by nine, to do homework after school, and to not fight with each other. She uses restriction of TV/VCR as a means of punishment because she feels that "the little licks I can get in hurt me more than they do him and he really likes watching TV and the VCR." She gets annoyed when she has to tell him to do the same thing over and over again. She does not allow him to be disrespectful with her. The children

are allowed to share their feelings with their mother but she keeps her feelings to herself. When asked if she shares her feelings with the children she said, "I usually do it by myself. I do have those moments. I don't try to make them feel like it was their fault. I work on a puzzle or something and tell them to let me alone. I won't really let them see it."

Mother encourages reading at home. She has bought Tom Dr. Seuss books and tells him to read, draw, or write a story on days when he cannot go outside. She helps him with his homework and stresses the importance of education. She said, "I always tell him to listen at school, to stay in school and to get the most out of it. I tell him that there's nothing out there (points outside) but trouble. I ask him if he wants to be like them. I always tell him to go and get a good education and to go to college. You definitely need an education." She states that she hopes that she can keep him in school.

She indicated that when they were in New York Steven was having trouble in school (pre-K) fighting all the time. He went to a counselor there and was able to work out the problem. He apparently was having difficulty because he was in a bilingual school and he was unable to understand what the people were saying.

The family participates in recreational activities together. They like to take walks to the downtown plaza and

to Waterside to watch fireworks, go out to eat at places like McDonald's, go shopping at the mall, go to the playground, and to visit relatives in town and in New York. They also have taken outings to the beach. At home they play games, watch TV and VCR programs together. Mother says that she enjoys playing with the children and will sometimes throw the football with Steven.

Mother rarely gets off by herself because the cost of a baby sitter is too expensive. She indicated that, "everyone wants ten dollars a child or thirty dollars". She is very appreciative when she does get away and her mother usually keeps the children. She said that most of the time, when the family gets together, the children are right along with them. Their most important family tradition is to put up the Christmas tree on December 15 and to have the whole family over on Christmas Eve for dinner, popcorn and eggnog.

Steven usually plays alone or with his sisters. Mother is afraid to let him out of the house because of the trouble in the neighborhood. He likes to play monopoly, football, with army men or other small things. He doesn't seem interested in a bike and has a scooter that he doesn't use.

### Student Interview

The student was interested in being interviewed but was rather concerned about what the other children would be thinking. He said, "I am going to have a lot of explaining

to do when I get back." Steven was always very polite. He thanked me for the stuff that I let him have from my basket during the home interview and said that he and his sister were still playing with the paint with water book. He is a very pleasant child with very good verbal skills and personal insight.

His family drawing included all members of his family including his father. Steven was upstairs in the bath tub and the rest of the family was downstairs. He indicated that all the members of his family were happy except for his dad who "...was real mad because he did not receive his bonus from work." When asked what the family does together he said that they do many things together such as go to the park and go to his grandmother's house.

His school drawing included two boy friends, one girl friend, and his teacher. He said that he liked the girl in the picture but that he could not say so because he was shy. He did not know what he could do to let her know he liked her because everything he did was wrong. The smallest boy in his drawing is his best friend. Steven gets to help him with his school work all the time and this makes him feel real good. One of the boys in the picture is the one with which he fights. He was concerned about fighting but said, "it all starts when the kids tease me and tell stories on me and it makes me mad, then I fight." On the day the researcher visited his class, Steven got into a fight with

one of his peers. When the teacher broke up the fight Steven was near tears. He frequently goes to the office for fighting and gets suspension notices. The school officials do not call his mom because she doesn't have a phone. He said, "I want to grow up so that I won't have to do what people want me to do... except for my wife. She'll make me go to the store and stuff." He is also very concerned about how he'll be able to play football and still get an education. He really wants to play football badly, at all levels, yet his mother keeps telling him that he also needs to get an education. "But my mom said, if all I ever study is football, then if my legs get broke, I wouldn't be able to find a job," he stated. He said that his mom helps him do well in school by helping him with his homework. He said that his dad also will help him out sometimes too. He was also interested in knowing whether or not they gave grades in college. He stated, "I don't know if I'll like it in higher grades." He said he was confused about grades now because he gets A's but is never on the honor roll.

He likes to play with tennis balls, football and with teenage ninja mutant turtles. The only playmate he could identify was his uncle who was his same age. He said that his uncle would come over and play with him but that he was always bothering his mother to take him home because he did not want to stay.

Steven's favorite memory of his family was when they



would go to Waterside and take the ferry to Portside. "That was when we lived in Tidewater Park which was closer. Now that we live in Young Park we don't go any more because mom can't walk that far. He said that he couldn't walk through Tidewater Park any more because, "they don't like Young Parkers. They like to beat up young guys like me." He said that it walking through Young Park makes him scared.

### Case Study Three - Well Adapted

Seven year old Linda lives with her mother, brother (age 2), and brother's father in Roberts Park. She is a very well dressed girl who takes pride in her appearance. Mother indicated that she cannot dress Linda in jeans or casual clothing, "she likes to be dressed up." The home was clean with good furniture and nicely decorated walls. The mother has an eleventh grade education and a certificate in nursing that allows her to work as a nurses aide. She currently is not working because she wants to toilet train the two year old before returning to the workforce. The son's father has a 12th grade education and lives with them "sometimes." He works in supply at the Naval Base. The family has a set daily routine everyday. Mother said that morning was the roughest because Linda did not like to get out of bed. After that things go well. Linda does her homework after school and then watches TV or movies on the VCR. The family eats their meals together. She has a

television in her own room that she watches. Mother said that she uses the television as punishment if she needs to and that she rarely spansks Linda. She indicated that she does not have many disciplinary problems with her except fighting with her little brother. She said, "She is selfish with her brother. She was here five years by herself ... plenty of time to get selfish." Usually all she has to do is raise voice to get the daughter's attention. If they have a problem that needs to be discussed they talk in private because the boys father always sticks up for Linda. The mother refereed to the 2-year-old as "the devil in the house." She said, "having a two year old is all new to me again and it is a real test."

The children have been assigned certain household responsibilities. The daughter needs to keep her room clean, sweep the stairs every Thursday, make up her bed, and take care of her clothing. She will restrict television watching if these chores are not done.

The family is involved in a variety of recreation and community based activities. The girl sings with the church tabernacle and has done performances at the Chrysler Museum. They also go out every other week to some place like Peter Piper Pizza, Walt Disney Productions, or to a museum. Linda also attends Sunday school on a regular basis. She likes to sing, skate, dance, and play with doll babies in her free time. She also enjoys playing with her friends on the

neighborhood playground equipment.

The family likes to color and play card games when they are at home together. Mother states, " I think it's important to spend time together." The family also has traveled by car to Canada and Detroit to visit family members. The mother has a brother in Nashville. The family seems to have a strong network of friends and relatives in the area. The interview was interrupted several times by phone calls from different people. The children see their grandmother frequently and have two aunts that live in the neighborhood.

Mother seems very involved with her daughter's education and encourages reading. She helps her with her homework and checks to see if it is done properly. She said, "there are times when I try to tell her a different way to do things but she refuses and insists on doing it the way the teacher said to do it." Mom values education. She tells her daughter, "I didn't finish but I want you to finish. Not everyone is college material, but you are. I would love you to go to college." She said that she would not, however, force her to go. "I was forced and pushed until I dropped out of school," she said. She had her daughter to get out of school. The school is encouraging her to send Linda to Ghent Elementary because they feel she would get a better and more challenging education. Mother is thinking that option over. Linda wants to be a lawyer

and sing when she grows up.

### Student Interview

Linda was very pleasant during the interview. She is very soft spoken and has good verbal skills. In her family drawing she drew all the family members doing some type of physical activity. She was jumping rope, her brother was bouncing a ball, her mother was stirring macaroni and cheese and her daddy was playing with a paddle ball. She feels that the family gets along well together, shares with one another and gives to other people. If she could change anything about her family it would be the way her brother acts. Sometimes he gets her into trouble like when they bathe together.

Her favorite school activity is journal writing. In her journal she gets to write about weekends, school work and how she is feeling. When asked how she felt about school, she stated, "I feel about school... that school is a place where people learn not to be out in the streets." She enjoys being in school and her favorite subject is math.

At home she usually plays by herself with her doll babies. "I have friends but they don't come to my house because they break my doll babies," she said. She does play outside with her friends on the playground equipment. She likes to swing real high and get dizzy and to go down the sliding board. They had a playhouse on the playground but

it was replaced with a parking lot. Linda was very disappointed about the removal of the playhouse. She also enjoys skating and swimming, and singing in the church choir. She is afraid to ride her bike because she is afraid she will fall. Linda has also been involved with school and church plays.

When asked what her parents do to help her do well in school, she said that they tell her to do the best she can and that they are there to help her if she has trouble with her homework.

#### Case Study Four - Well Adapted

Seven year old Peter lives with his mother, an 8-year-old sister, a 5-year-old brother and mother's boyfriend. They live in a rather rough section of Tidewater Park. Mother indicated that this was the first time that she lived in the projects and that at times she was terrified about living there but that at least she knew that they would have heat during the winter months. She said, "just because you live out there, you don't have to live in." She doesn't let the kids play outside or on the playground equipment because, "drug dealers hang out there. Sometimes I feel sorry for the cops because it's hard to say anything without your name getting involved. If people find out you've talked with the cops you get it too. I try and stay out of it." She tells her kids, "other kids disobey but we have

rules and we follow the rules until you get grown enough to do what you like. But I hope that it is within reason and the law. When Tom first started school I had to go to a crack house. I was enraged because my son is not violent and he doesn't hurt anyone and I don't send him to school to be picked on and touched. I told her to tell your son don't touch my son. I had to get that straight I don't care what goes on there even if it is dangerous, just don't touch my children."

Mother currently is not employed because she feels that it is important to be with her children. She has worked as a clerk in the past. She indicated that she will return to school or work after the youngest enters school. The mother has had a rather difficult life. She raised her sisters and brother. "My mother was there but it was like she wasn't there. Every one in the household was like a child. I did everything in the house but be my fathers wife. It's the truth. When I had my oldest my father took her from me and it hurt me very deeply. For six months of her life I didn't know anything about her. My father was nothing. When I was pregnant with Peter I was going through so much. My friends kept saying get rid of him. I couldn't do that because I had done that before, it left a scar on me. It was because I was afraid of my father. When I had Peter I didn't want to see him. I didn't know what to do because I couldn't take care of him. I didn't have a place

of my own. I was going to give him up for adoption but they brought him in by mistake and I'll never forget how he held my little finger and he had this look on his face. I left the hospital and left him there. I called there every day, on the hour, until I went back and got him. I said this is my child. I can't do this. There was something special about him. He was very pleasant. At first he was a cry baby but always smart. I was working and I couldn't take care of him so I gave him up to social services for four months. I got him back just in time because someone wanted to keep him. He would have been living in Canada today. I was scared. It's overwhelming sometimes and I look at myself and I just cry." The two oldest children also lived with her mother for a year. But then she went and got them. She said, "I wanted to raise my children. They are my responsibility."

Mother has difficulty showing affection to her children. "I used to not be able to stand people telling me that they loved me, because people that loved me hurt me. I never could understand that. But with the Lord's influence I'm learning because my kids need me more than ever." She feels that her boyfriend is helping her with this. She has learned to hug them and tell them she is very proud of them when they bring good grades home for school. She said, "Then I say to myself, there is something that I'm doing right."

Her boy friend is like a father to the children. He goes to the park and talks with them. They also go riding and grocery shopping together. The two oldest children don't know anything about their father. "I don't want to tell them right now because I don't want to disrupt the positive energy. One of these days we're (her boyfriend) getting married and he'll adopt them so there's no need to bother them about the other one. Peter loves him and really looks up to him. He goes with me to school if there's problem. I'm very lucky, its good. I try to keep things positive for them because I had it rough. My childhood was hard and I don't want that for them. I didn't get that much love and I try to give them enough."

Mother expresses concern about disciplining her children. She tries to talk with the children first before spanking them. She said, "If I have to spank them I cry." She doesn't like spanking and said, "it's very rare that I have to do that. I'm scared to death that I will turn out to be an abusive parent like my father. We go over everything, step by step, and talk things out before I punish my kids. I want to talk to them about it because they could have a good reason and I could be wrong. When I was young I thought I had a good reason that something was right for me."

The family has a strong network of relatives, four sisters and two brothers, but most of them do not live



nearby. She has a sister and grandparents in Philadelphia and a brother on the Saratoga. He keeps in touch with them through the mail. The kids look up to him because he's a sergeant. They write letters to him. The children's paternal grandma lives nearby and is involved actively with the children. She is very involved in the church and shares her religious beliefs with the children.

When speaking of values the mother states, "I want them to learn that life is not handed to you on a silver platter. You have to earn everything that you get and sometimes it's hard. Some people get stuff easy and some don't. Easy things are not always good for you." There are no family traditions at this time. She said, "I'm the one who's going to have to do that. It's good for families to be together. Even if they're wrong, let them know that you love them. I won't be able to protect my kids when they grow up because they select their own friends." She feels she must do what she can to help them learn values when they are young. When speaking about her children, she states, "They're wonderful to me and I thank God for them. When I watch them smile, I am so happy for their special time in childhood. More-or-less, I wish that I had a man figure that cared about me like a father."

She has strong feelings about prejudice. "I wasn't brought up prejudiced. I don't teach my kids that because I feel like this, I have white cousins and once they came in

my neighborhood and I had to turn on my friends. Then I thought these aren't my friends because this is my family. I don't like that, we're not like that. I wish that my kids went to a school where there were there were more whites because they don't see white kids. Just because you see white people in school, does it mean that all white people are teachers? No, there are other white people in the world. I cry tears and say we're all human we're all made of the same blood. We live in the dark. The time in the world is so short we should learn to love each other."

Mother doesn't let the children watch scary movies because, "when they go to bed they take it to heart. Then I have to go in there and sit up with them and talk with them and basically tell them to pray, God is watching over you and will send the evil away. Then they go back to sleep."

The family doesn't go to church every Sunday but they pray and bless their food before they eat. Mother stated that she believes in the Lord and that, "I'm so thankful that we're in a house with heat and I don't have to worry about that. I keep plenty of food around."

Mother related that she had thought about her involvement in this study. She said, "you have a right to do this because we have so many dropouts and we need to find out why. I was one by force, when I got pregnant with my daughter I wasn't allowed to go to school because it was embarrassing to my father and it hurt me so bad because I

was good in school. I was president of the drama club. I enjoyed it. I tell my kids that school is boring to you because you don't get involved in any activities. But first you have to have the grades." She stated that she felt good about being selected as a participant in the study and that she must be doing something right.

Mother feels that the reason some low socio-economic-status children do well and some don't is because of the parents. She also feels that what is happening in the home is very important. "I feel so sorry for some of the kids and I cry. The kids give their teachers what they get at home. But sometimes it is not the parents, it is the kid himself." She has had the opportunity to observe these behaviors because she does volunteer work at the children's school.

The family is on a limited income and does not get the opportunity to go to the movies or theater. They go on trips to visit family in Philadelphia or go to McDonalds. They have cable hook up so that the children can watch movies. The children spend a fair amount of time watching TV and they keep it on very loud (during the interview it was very distracting). Peter received a Nintendo for Christmas. Mother said that the Nintendo was something that he had wanted for a long time but she had told him that she would have to save up her money to get it. She feels that from this experience Peter has learned that he must wait for

some of the things that he wants in life.

### **Student's Interview**

Peter is 7-years-old. He is a very polite child who is well liked by his teacher. He related well to the researcher and was eager to draw the pictures. His family picture involved the family members putting up their Christmas tree. He was very proud of the tree and said that the whole family was happy to see it up. He had the responsibility of putting the top on the tree. He said that he was scared because his younger brother was holding the ladder and he got distracted when their sister brought the drinks into the room. Peter said his brother was very thirsty and drank up all the punch before the rest of the family could get any. Peter's younger brother is considered hyperactive and very unlike the other children. Mother is unsure of what to do with him and became angered at him several times during the family interview. Peter said, "my brother is little but that he sure can fight. He can take care of himself."

Peter spoke very highly of his dad (not real father, but mother's boyfriend and fiancé) and kept saying, "he is very tall. He would be a good football player." Peter indicated that he did not get to spend much time with his dad because he worked while the children were at home. In describing his sister's role in the picture he said, "she is

thinking about being a maid. She is watching us decorate the tree so that she could make her own tree for her own children".

In his school picture he drew himself and his teacher. He said, "The teacher feels great because everyone is being quiet and not making a sound while doing their work." He depicts himself as doing his spelling and says that he feels happy. "I think I might want to be an artist or a science teacher because I like dinosaurs. I would like to work with children," he stated when asked what he would like to do when he gets older. There were no friends in the pictures and he said that was because they were all still in the bathroom. He happened to get back to class first. When asked what he thought was good about himself, he said, "What's inside me. I like to learn the best... instead of playing around. I like to learn about how to do things like science. I've been studying about science a long time. Then I can pass my grade and be what I want." He said that his mother reinforces this feeling. She says, "School is very important. If you don't go to school you won't pass your grade, if you don't learn you won't pass your grade, if you drop out then you'll never be the thing you want to be." He said that she also helps him with his homework.

When asked what kind of things he did with his family he said, "stay with them, help them. I don't complain about helping. When he's (dad) home he's very tired so I help

him." He likes to play Nintendo and his brother's learning games (these are both items that the children received for Christmas).

The researcher drove Peter home from the interview with his family. He seemed a little nervous when the teacher's car would not start and we decided to go without her. He showed me the way to their house. His mother was waiting for us at the door.

#### **Case Study Five - Well Adapted**

Bev (age 7) and her 26-year-old mother live in Young Park with Bev's grandmother. Mother has an 11th grade education and currently works, part time, at the Little Creek Amphibious Base in the galley in food service. Bev's grandmother also works but is there to meet her every day after school since her mother works during that time. The mother is expecting another baby in May. Bev's father lives in the neighborhood and sees her on the way home from school. Her mother states, "He tries to be involved, but he's not." Bev said that she sees her father everyday after school. She said, "When I come home from school, he's there."

Their apartment is very nicely decorated with high quality furniture and an extensive wall unit entertainment center. The house is located in the section of the neighborhood that is considered to be nice with minimal

problems. Their apartment has a little flower garden with a white picket fence out front. The family is obviously concerned about the appearance of the home, both inside and out.

The grandmother seems to be the binding force in the family. The mother described her mother as, "the family strength. Everyone depends on her for her supportive advise. She holds the family together." The grandmother raised five children. She said, "Raising children for me was easier. We did not live in a project." She was a very pleasant and well dressed woman. The mother said that her mother talked her into participating in the study.

The family has a set routine. The mother is responsible for getting Linda out of bed and ready for school. She walks her to school everyday and has breakfast with her. After school the grandma gets her started on her homework. When her homework is done she can go out to play or watch television. She likes to watch Channel 13 and shows like A-Man, 22-7, and cartoons. She is allowed to watch them as much as she wants. She goes to bed between 8:30 and 9:00 p.m.

Bev is responsible for cleaning up the areas that she messes up and taking care of her clothes. She does not have any other household responsibilities. Mother said, "Bev annoys me everyday but that it might be because of the situation the I am in. It makes me real irritable." She

said that she looses her temper real easy and that Bev has had a spanking within the last month. Mother refers to spankings as, "getting her butt ate up a little bit." If Linda is disrespectful she, "gets a little hiny." Mother will also take away television if Bev does the wrong thing. The family members share feelings with one another and will joke around with each other and hug to show affection.

Mother is proud of the fact that Bev made the B Honor Roll. She said that she has never had problems with Bev in school and that, "She is kinda good at that." The family encourages her to read. They have bought her Sesame Street books and she frequently reads to grandmother and sometimes mom (when she is not too tired). She has her own dictionary and receives help on her homework. Mother said, "I try to tell her to go to school and then to college and become a lawyer or whatever she wants."

Mother tries to teach Bev values. The thing that she focusses on most is not to fight. She said, "I told her don't be a fighter because you can talk your way through a lot. She does have problems with children wanting to fight her. I tell her if they hit you, go tell your teacher. If they hit you again, go tell your teacher again. If they hit you a third time, hit them back. There's a lot of kids in her class that are jealous of her. I don't know why. The teacher says it is because of the way she dresses. She says that there's some parents that don't take the time out with



their children. Children are here and parents are somewhere else. I tell her not to mess with them. Don't mess with anyone on drugs. I tell her, you see people on the way to school that are on drugs and it can really hurt you."

Bev plays in the front yard. She enjoys playing with her friends. They like to jump rope, play hide-n-seek, play with playdough, and just walk around the block. She is not allowed to go down to the play ground equipment because there is broken glass around it. The play ground is located right next to the dumpsters. Bev also likes to color, cut paper and paste, do art work and play with her doll babies. Mother said that they sometimes play with the doll babies together. Bev is encouraged to take up hobbies but there are no identifiable family hobbies. Bev was in the Girl Scouts for awhile but mother said, "it got messy and half of the time they wanted to take them somewhere and never sent home notes. I think they stopped because they couldn't keep the space in the center." Mother currently is looking into signing Bev up for Norfolk Inner State. Norfolk Inner State is a program in which they teach tap dance, singing, piano, music, and chorus. The cost of the program is \$96.00 for a 3 months of lessons 2 days a week.

The family also travels. Bev has been to Maryland and Puerto Rico to visit her aunt. The family goes on shopping trips together and sees relatives frequently. They watch television together but do not attend live musical or

theatrical performances.

### Student Interview

Bev is a well dressed girl with very good verbal skills. She was eager to come to the interview and enjoyed drawing the pictures. Her family drawing included her mom, dad, grandma, cousin, aunt and herself. The women in the picture were all in the kitchen cooking and the children were outside playing. Bev was able to identify positive qualities for all her family members. She said, "Mom is nice, she gets me things for Christmas and Easter, clothes, shoes and always fixes my hair nice." She said that she sees her daddy when she comes home from school and that, "He gives me things and takes me places like the store and mall. He wishes that he had new shoes." Grandma was described as a person who goes to work and fixes up the house nice. Bev said, "I help her to keep the house clean. Her wish is to see me grow up to be a grown women." When asked how she feels about her family, she says, "I feel loved and cared for and I love everyone in my family. I would not make any changes."

Bev's school drawing included herself and her teacher. There were no other children in the picture but she said that she has school friends there but that they do not get a chance to play while they are in school. She said that she likes school and that she wishes for a good education. She

does what the teacher tells her to do. Her favorite school activity is art. She said that in school, "I can learn what I want to be when I grow up." She wants to be a lawyer. She said that her mother tells her, "to respect her teacher and to do all the things she tells me to do." She also said that her family helps her with her homework and makes her read at home before she can go out and play.

She can identify several friends with whom she plays. Her favorite games are jump rope and hide-n-seek. She is allowed to have children come inside the house. When the children play inside the house they usually play with her Barbie dolls. She said that she has many clothes for them.

#### **Case Study Six - Well Adapted**

The researcher was unable to contact this family for an interview. The family does not have a telephone so notes were sent home notes with the teacher three times and the researcher stopped by the house two times to see if a visit could be arranged. Sue indicated that her mother said that the researcher could visit their home after school on a particular day. However, when the researcher went to the house at the designated time no one answered the door.

#### **Student Interview**

Sue reports having two brothers age 5 and 7 months and a 1-year-old sister. The children live with their mother

and her current boyfriend. He is the father of the two younger children. The oldest boy and Sue have different fathers. Their fathers live with their respective grandmothers. The two children get to visit their fathers on weekends and will stay with them during the summer months. Sue lived with father and grandmother for one school year.

Sue said that the family members got along very well. Mother does not work at this time because she does not have anyone to watch the children. She was going to school and had a baby sitter but she kept getting mad and decided not to watch the children anymore. Mother sometimes lets Sue stay home and watch the children while she goes off to the store. When asked her if she knew what to do if there was an emergency she said, "yes, I watch them real good...I know what to do if there's a problem."

In her family drawing she drew her and her oldest brother swinging. Her two younger siblings were on a sliding board and her mother and real dad were jumping rope. She said that the family gets along real well. She said that her mother gives them what they want if it is safe and that all four children get the same amount. Sue said that she likes to play with the younger children and comb their hair. The siblings play games like connect four and bingo together. The family goes to places like Show Biz Pizza. The family appears to have an extended family in the area

with whom they interact. The family typically eats meals together. Sue said, "People don't get angry in the house." They are able to share feelings with each other. The family attends church. She is able to identify several friends who live in her neighborhood with whom she plays. She said that it is safe to play outside.

Sue stated that her parents do not help her with her homework. She said, "I can do it myself. It is very easy." She does it in her room, at the kitchen table, or in the living room. She said that her mother will buy her a desk to do her homework on when she gets enough money. Sue enjoys being in school because, "I like to learn new things and meet new friends and write a lot." She likes all the subjects that she studies in school and indicated that she wants to be a teacher when she grows up.

#### Analysis of Case Studies - Well Adapted

Although the families and home environments of the well adapted students are diverse and complex there are certain characteristics that appear to be common to all the family units. First, and foremost, the families provided home environments that were conducive to the development of social capital. As defined earlier, social capital includes the norms, social networks and relationships with adults that enable the child's successful transition into a formal

school environment. The families of the well adapted students were able to help their children develop the attitudes, efforts and conceptions of self that they need to take advantage of the opportunities, demands, and rewards that school provides. The following section will delineate what these specific social capital variables are and provide examples of how they were manifested in the families of the well adapted students. Table 7 delineates the characteristics of the family and home environments used to analyze this data.

Family demographics did not appear to be a determining factor in the child's ability to adapt to school. The families in this study varied in amount of education, number of children, presence of father, and birth order of the child. Parents had education levels that ranged from eleventh grade to two years of college. Two mothers had professional preparation as nurse aides and one attended two years at Norfolk Commonwealth College in the secretarial preparation program. Three of the father's completed high school and currently are working as laborers for the city or federal government. One father currently is attending computer school.

All of these students live in public housing. Two of the six families feel that their neighborhood is unsafe and will not allow their children to go outside unattended. The rest of the families feel that the children can play in

their yards without much concern. The children are, however, expected to be home by dark and are encouraged by their parents to be their own person and to keep away from the people who use drugs or who are trouble makers.

Of the six families interviewed, five had mothers who did not work outside of the home. The mothers reported that they felt that it was important for them to be at home with the children at least until they entered school or could be toilet trained. The one mother that worked, is employed part time. While she is at work her mother, who lives with her, takes care of the child.

Each of these families was able to describe a set and predictable routine that included having meals together and spending time together in educational and recreational activities. In all cases, the child had some household responsibilities such as keeping their room clean, making beds, and helping mom with other chores like sweeping the steps. The children were well aware of what was expected of them and also knew the consequences if they did not uphold their responsibilities.

Family rules were established in each of the households. These rules included being home by dark, treating siblings with respect, looking out for one another, doing their homework right after school, and doing what their parents asked of them. Consequences for rule violations were typically room restrictions, removal of a

Table 7

Characteristics of Family and Home Environments Analysis

Key: X = Demonstrates Beh.      XX = Beh. Encouraged  
 P = Poor      L = Limited Invol.  
 ? = Insufficient Information  
 Blank = Behavior not observed

Behavior Charact.	Well Adapted Case Number						Poorly Adapted Case Number					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Pos. Attit. Education	X	X	X	X	X	X		L	L	L		?
Reg. Routine	X	X	X	X	X	?	X		X	L	?	?
Fam. Rules	X	L	X	X	X	?		L	L	X	?	?
Limit Set.		X	X	X	X	?	L		L	X	?	?
Male Role Model	X	?	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	?
Learning Materials	X	L	X	L	X	?		L	L	L	?	
Encourage Reading	XX	X	X	X	X	?	L		L		?	L
Parental Invol. Sch.	XX			XX	L			L	L	L	?	
Home Based Recreation	L	X	X	X	X	X	L	L	L	L	?	L
Recreation Outings	X	X	XX	X	X	X		L	L	X	?	
Scheduling of TV/VCR	X	L				?					?	
Help with Homework	X	X	X	X	X	X		L	X	L	X	L
Support Net	X	X	X	X	X	X	L		X	X	?	?
Verbal Skills	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	? X	LP	PP	XL	LP	?P	? P
Aspirations	XX	X	X	X	X	?	L	L	L	L	?	?
Values Orientation	X	X	X	X	X	?	L	L	X	L	?	?



privilege such as watching television, and on rare occasions a spanking. The parents of the well adapted children felt it was their responsibility to set limits and to try to teach their children the right way to act. Some mothers indicated that they knew that they would not be able to control their children's behavior forever, but that while the child was in their home they would follow family rules. The mothers also expressed the hope that the children would learn the right way to act and carry that behavior through life.

Education was a primary focus with the well adapted families. Parents (especially the mother) encouraged the child to do well in school. The parents discussed the importance of education openly with their children and provided them with the learning materials and resources that they would need to do well in school. Homework times were well established in these homes and parents were involved actively in helping the children with their homework and checking to make sure it was done properly. These parents also encourage the children to do more than just their homework. One parent required that each of her children read something extra every day before they could go out and play. Another would encourage her son to read or write something on rainy days when he could not go out and play. Another family indicated that they sat down and let the child read to them and they would then ask her questions

about what she read.

None of these families went to the library together. They depended on the school to provide that service. The children are allowed to check out one book per week from the school library. Another parent utilized the tutoring service provide by the Norfolk Public Library to help enhance her children's learning.

Parents of the well adapted children have high aspirations for them. They recognize the importance of not only a high school, but also, a college education to be successful in today's society. They encourage their children to do the best that they can in school so that they can be what they want to be. They encourage their children, but do not push them. Several of the parents said that they were pushed by their parents and that as a result they dropped out of school. These parents stated that it is better to encourage the child and let them know that they can get an education, then hope for the best.

The well adapted children also seem to have high aspirations for themselves. Two of the children want to grow up to be lawyers, one a doctor, and two want to be teachers. They are aware of the importance of getting a good education in order to be what they want. One boy was very concerned because what he wanted to do most in life was to be a football player. He wanted to know what he could do so that he could get a good education and also play

football. His mother has made it clear to him that he cannot play football all his life, that he may be injured, and that he needs a good education as a backup. The children stated that they like to learn and find school to be fun.

Some of these parents demonstrate their investment in their children's education through volunteer work with the school. One parent is the Chapter I Parent Representative for the Pre-K program at the school. She does volunteer work with the school including attending field trips. Another parent is at school weekly to assist her children's teacher in the classroom. Another mother walks her daughter to school everyday and has breakfast with her. The other parents play a more subtle role in their children's education in the home by providing educational stimulus in any way that they can.

Families of well adapted children play together. In house activities include everything from playing Monopoly to playing with doll babies. The parents stated that they liked to be with their children and that being together was very important. These families also go on outings together to parks, to shopping malls, to the zoo, or to visit family members. Parents take an active role in their children's free time activities and provide them with opportunities to develop leisure skills. One boy plays in little league and has his father as his coach. One of the girls is involved

actively in the church choir and sings in public performances. Others have been involved with girl scouts or boy scouts. The well adapted children have access to opportunities to expand their personal awareness of themselves and the encouragement of their parents to do so.

Television is a focal activity for many of the well adapted children. One of the girls even has a television of her own in her room. Only one parent had a rule about the amount of television that the children could watch. The rest indicated that homework needed to be done first and then the children could watch as much television as they wanted. Most of the children were interested in cartoons. Three of the six families had a VCR and one had cable hookup. The mother with cable said that she wanted it so that the children could watch shows like Bambi. Parents said that they watched many of these programs together and talked with their children about the shows when they were over.

All of the families of well adapted children had strong relationships with their families or friends. They spend time regularly with family members and in most cases are attempting to establish some family traditions. They feel that they can go to family members if they need help and are willing to help those that come to them. Family activities seem to revolve around the holidays and weekends. In some cases the grandmother has assumed the responsibility of

taking the children to church and providing them with a religious orientation.

Values are important to the families with well adapted children. These parents were able to verbalize quite specifically the attitudes and beliefs that they wanted their children to grow up having. They value education very highly. They encourage their children to be their own person and to make their own decisions particularly related to their choice of friends and involvement with drugs. They encourage them not to fight or to hang around with trouble makers. One parent was adamant about raising her children not to grow up prejudiced, but to judge people on who they were, not on their color. They talk to their children about values and allow the children to discuss personal concerns with them.

Parents of the well adapted children were also in touch with their own values. They showed a significant amount of insight into their personal parenting style and how their background has affected them. They recognize that parenting is a hard job and realize that being an effective parent is difficult. They have been able to recognize their weaknesses and develop support networks through which they can grow as individuals and become more effective parents.

In all cases the verbal skills of these families, parent and child alike, were very good. The children were able to express themselves in complete sentences utilizing

proper English. They had good vocabularies and were able to be creative in describing their pictures and their family situations. The children were able to think ahead, of their future and have a sense of control in their personal well being. They know that if they work hard they can be what they want to be.

In summary, the well adapted children come from homes that encourage the development of social capital. They are provided with the opportunity to interact with adults and to learn values and social norms. These children have developed the attitudes, efforts, and conceptions of self that enable them to adapt well to a formal school environment.

### Case Studies - Poorly Adapted Students

#### Case Study Seven - Poorly Adapted

Jim is one of three children. He is 9-years-old, his older brother is 12, and his little sister is 6. They live in Tidewater Park. When asked if she liked living in the neighborhood, mother said, "It's alright. I don't hardly go outside. The children know everyone." The oldest boy said that he did not like living there, "It's to ruthless." The home is rather dark but uncluttered. The furniture was old but neatly arranged.

Mother has a high school degree and also has attended

Anne's Beauty Academy. She currently is employed at Hardee's as a cashier and as a mover with her brother's moving company. Mother looked very tired during the interview. She had been sick for approximately two weeks. She did not speak much and frequently deferred the questions to her children. When she did speak she used short answers and incomplete sentences. She did not offer any information that was not specifically requested until after the interview was over.

The interview needed to be scheduled twice. The first time, she was not home when the researcher arrived. The family does not have a phone so contact with the mother was through notes from the teacher and through the child's grandmother. The researcher spoke with the grandmother on two occasions. She was very helpful and indicated that she would encourage her daughter to arrange an interview. She was aware that Jim had difficulties in school and felt like the family needed to do what they could to help him. Grandmother seems to support Jim's family and help them out if they need it. Mother said that they spend time with the grandmother on weekends. Grandmother takes the children on outings to the store. Mother does not like to have them with her when she shops.

The family has a regular routine. The children wake up and go to school in the morning. After school the bus picks them up and takes them to the YMCA for the after school

program. They do their homework at the YMCA. Mother works at night and leaves the oldest boy in charge of the children. She does not have a car but uses her mother's when she needs one. The children eat their meals together. The mother said that she can't eat around them because, "They eat nasty." There does not seem to be a consistent male role model in the family. The boys mentioned an uncle who they see now and then. The children said that they look out for one another and help out if anyone gets into a fight.

The children have some responsibilities. Jim has to keep his room clean, put away dirty clothes, and sometimes take the trash out. Mother says that she hollers to get things done. She said, "They are hard headed and stubborn, but it gets done." Mother was unable to name any family rules but said that if they do not obey, "I just beat them or punish them." She said that Jim's whining is the behavior that annoys her the most and that she beats him everyday.

Mother said that she was proud of Jim because he improved his grades last semester. She said that he likes to read to his sister at home. His sister said that she didn't like him to read to her because he spits too much. Mother said that most of the time he reads to himself and comes to her if there is a problem. She said that she didn't help him with his homework because he does it at the



YMCA. When asked how she felt about school, she said that she felt strongly about it, "because I had to go through it... they're the ones that have to make it...they're the ones that have to get to the 12th grade... because they are not staying at my house. I already told them. I'm going to put them all in the military."

The family does not seem to do many activities together. The children play together. The older brother helped Jim learn to ride a bike. They can watch television anytime that they want. Jim likes to ride his bike, play games like hide-n-seek and freeze tag. At home the children like to play Monopoly, bingo, and Nintendo, and to listen to the walkman. Sometimes the mother plays bingo with them. Jim was involved with Cub Scouts but the mother said that the troop quit having meetings. The children will sometimes go to church, but the mother doesn't. The children depend on grandmother and the school for special outings and trips.

#### Student Interview

Jim was very quiet during the interview. He did not offer any information on his own and answered questions in short statements. He did not use complete sentences and it was very difficult to understand what he was saying. On several occasions the researcher had to ask him to repeat what he was saying. Jim's family drawing depicts his mother, brother and sister going shopping. He did not

include himself in the picture. When asked where he was, he said that he was at grandma's house. He said that she bought him something from the store. When asked what she bought him and he said "cookies and potato chips." Jim said that if he could change the picture he would make it so that he could go shopping and have his brother stay at home.

Jim's school picture included his teacher, a friend and himself. He said that the teacher makes him happy. The people in the picture were all doing their math. He said if he could change the picture he would put his table by the teacher so that he could be near his friend. He enjoys doing math and working on projects when he is in school. He says that he goes to school so that he can learn. He was unable to identify ways in which his family helped him to learn better. The only non-school activities that he could identify was playing tag.

#### **Case Study Eight - Poorly Adapted**

Mark is 7-years-old and lives with his mother, her boyfriend and two brothers who are 2-years-old and 11-years-old. The family recently moved into a two bedroom four-plex apartment. The home was being unpacked at the time of the interview. There were boxes everywhere and stacks of things that still needed to be put away. Mother was doing laundry when the teacher and the researcher arrived for the interview. She was very eager to see what was in the basket

of goodies which was brought to share with the children. She took almost all of the items out of the basket even though they were instructed to each choose a single item. Mother was even placing crayons under the cushion of the couch.

The interview was disorganized with many interruptions. At one point the mother stopped in mid-sentence and asked Mark to get his homework. She proceeded to copy his math problems onto a piece of paper for him and sent him in the room to work them. She told him to get his computer to help him. Mark had forgotten to take the pencil when mother sent him out of the room to do his homework. To get his attention, mother made a grunting noise, then handed him the pencil. There was no verbal exchange. After Mark had finished the work he brought it back into the room and his mother corrected it for him, actually changing the wrong answers for him. She did not discuss the fact that they were wrong.

Mother indicated that she had three years of college studying clothing technology and that she quit when she had the oldest son. Her verbal skills were very poor and she had a great deal of difficulty forming her ideas and expressing them. The researcher had to ask her to repeat herself on several occasions and would repeat back to her what was heard to be sure that accurate information was secured. Mother currently works as a cook/cashier at the

First Street Hospital. She is unhappy because she has been passed over for promotion and/or pay raises. She said, "I'm disgusted because I am not making enough money, that I'd like to make. I've been there seven years and can't advance. I'd like more education."

The youngest boys father lives with them. He works in construction. Mother said that he plays ball with the boys. The older boys have no contact with their father although his brother apparently lives in the neighborhood.

There does not seem to be a regular routine established in the family. They eat meals together sometimes and sometimes the children are responsible for chores such as the dishes. Family rules are also minimal. The children have a set bedtime, they are not allowed to call each other names like stupid or retarded, and they are not allowed to cuss. When I asked the mother if she ever lost her temper she just laughed. If the boys break the family rules she spansks them. She said that there was more than one incident of spanking during the past month. Sometimes the boys fight with each other, for this offense she places them in separate rooms. Mother lost her temper with the children a couple times during the interview. She did not treat the children with respect. The tone of her voice was irritable and she ordered the children around. She said that she usually tries to keep her feelings to herself or shares them with her boyfriend. The 11-year-old son takes care of the

boys when the mother is at work.

The boys claimed that they did not have any new friends in their new neighborhood. They like to play football and tag outside. The family goes on some outings to Waterside or to the movies. They have also been on a plane trip to New York where mother's family lives. The children have playground equipment within walking distance. They are not involved in any organized lessons or sports.

Mother said she was proud of Mark because he got a certificate for the "Raisin Up Club" at school. The Raisin Up Club is an academic incentive program conducted at Mark's school. Students receive a certificate if they can bring one of their grades up. Mother does not help Mark with his reading because she works at nights and sleeps during the daytime. She said, "I have plenty of books around here. They do pick them up sometimes. The youngest, he likes to read. The newspapers, television, everything...he doesn't read but he likes to look at pictures." She believes education is important. She said, "I tell them that its important to go to school and to go to college because nowadays you need a college education." Mother takes advantage of support systems provided by the school to enhance her children's learning abilities. The oldest boy goes to the guidance counselor and tutors. Mark is in LD classes.

When asked about values the mother indicated that she

tries to get the children to go to church. She said, "I go each Sunday but they don't always go along. I tell them to act properly when they go to school. Their teachers have no regrets about how they act." Mark, however, was placed on suspension the day the researcher went to interview him because he was having difficulty with one of his teachers. His regular classroom teacher said that mother does not seem in touch with the problems that the boys are having. Mother insists that the boys do not have any problems when they obviously do.

The family had a nice Christmas tree up with several presents under it. The gifts were wrapped in comic paper. The youngest boy followed the teacher and researcher out the door and to the car. He cried when his mother picked him up and told him he could not go with us.

### Student Interview

Mark was sitting in the principal's office waiting for a suspension notice to be written when the researcher arrived at his school to interview him. He would not be returning to this school because the family had moved and he was being transferred after the three day suspension. The child has very poor verbal skills and answered all questions with incomplete sentences. He had a bad cold and cough during the interview and looked rather uncomfortable. He did not seem concerned about his suspension.

His school drawing included him and his teacher. He was writing words and the teacher was checking homework. He said that his teacher made him feel happy and that he makes her feel happy also. He said that he did not have any friends at school. The picture that he drew of his teacher had no arms or legs.

His family drawing included all family members including mother's boyfriend. The family members were all taking out the trash in his picture. He was able to identify a positive trait about all family members but himself and his oldest brother. He said, "Mom works, her boy friend helps my mom and plays with us, and the 2-year-old likes to play." He could not identify anything bad about any of the family members and would not change anything in the picture if he could.

#### **Case Study Nine - Poorly Adapted**

Eight-year-old Tim is one of two children. He has an older sister who is 15. They live with their mother in a rather rough section of Tidewater Park. There was some difficulty making arrangements to meet with this family because mother works and wasn't ever home during daylight hours. Finally, a time was set and to insure the protection of the researcher Tim's mother met her on the street and escorted her to their apartment. There were many people hanging out on the street. During the interview, gunshots

were heard. The mother reassured the researcher by saying, "it's okay, it's okay." Because of previous cancellations the family did not think the researcher would ever visit their home. They were making bets about it. They felt that she would be too afraid. When the interview was over the family friend walked the researcher out to the car. He informed her that the children's real father died a year ago and that since that time he has tried to help the family out. He knows that Tim is having trouble in school and feels that Tim could benefit from having a male role model around the house. He also said, "a family who prays together stays together".

Their apartment was very nicely decorated. Because of its small size it seemed very crowded but clean and neat. There was a family friend present at the time of the interview. He stays with the family some of the time. He has a daughter of his own that lives in the Young Park. He was very proud to note that she is an honor student. He cooks for the family and is responsible for getting the kids off to school in the morning. Tim's teacher noted that he also comes to the school for teacher conferences and seems to be invested in the child.

Mother has a 12th grade education and one year of business school. She did not indicate why she did not complete the business school. She currently is employed as a bus driver. The children's father, now deceased, worked



for Addington and Beaman Door Shop. The cause of the father's death is not known.

The family seems to have a regular routine. The male friend seems to have the majority of the child care responsibilities and helps Tim with his homework. He said that Tim is very energetic in the morning and complains frequently about having a stomach ache. But they send him off to school anyway. Mother believes that you go to school no matter what. She said, "If you're that bad they can call me. You have to get an education."

Tim needs encouragement to read at home. He said that they did not have any books in the house but there were some on the bookshelf. He complained that they were old. He does his homework right after school as encouraged by his teacher.

Family rules are limited except that homework needs to be done right after school. When asked if Tim annoyed them, the family friend said, "first of all, show me a child that doesn't annoy adults." If he does annoy them he is sent to his room and is restricted from playing Nintendo for awhile. The mother will discuss feelings with the children if it involves family matters and if she feels that the children will understand the situation.

Tim likes to skateboard, although he does not have a skateboard of his own. The family friend said that if Tim got a skateboard he would need pads and a helmet to go with

it. He was well aware of the danger associated with skateboarding. During the interview, Tim complained, "I don't have any toys mom." They then went down the list of toys that he does have. Mom said, " You don't have any toys? Then put the cars, the bikes, the Nintendo, the scooter all on the trash. He has plenty of toys. Do you have two bikes, a scooter, cars, tapes and Nintendo? I thought I just tripped over a red car." Tim responded, "I have one car." Mom replied, "He says that because every year around Christmas time I clean up and throw toys away because we don't have a lot of space. But when it comes to toys he wants lots and lots of them."

Tim has friends and cousins that he can play with in the neighborhood. He enjoys coloring and listening to music. The family friend teaches him new skills such as gymnastics. The family watches television together but does not admit to doing any other activities together. Mother and her male friend get away infrequently, mostly to go to church. When they go somewhere the older sister takes care of Tim. Tim says that she's mean to him but mother says, "Tim thinks he's the daddy."

### **Student Interview**

Student was very quiet during the interview. It was very difficult getting information out of him due to his poor verbal skills. His family drawing included all family

members including the family friend. He had his sister going to school, the family friend going to the store and his mom going to work. He had himself picking a flower. He indicated that the family got along fine. He said that he likes to play Nintendo, to watch television, and to play outside. He does not play on neighborhood playground because there is too much glass. He said, "Someone got shot over here last night." When asked if he knew the person, he did not respond.

His school drawing included himself and his teacher. In this picture Tim was taking his homework to his teacher and was feeling happy because of the things that he got for Christmas. The teacher also was described as being happy because she doesn't have to go to the dentist any more. Tom said that he liked school because it was fun. When asked what he like best, he replied, "the work."

#### Case Ten - Poorly Adapted

Burt (age 7) is one of three children. He has an older sister aged 11 and a brother aged 20. Burt and his sister were present during the interview. Mother did not indicate whether the older brother still lives with the family. They live in Tidewater Park in a section that they feel is safe because it is on a busy street. The biggest problem they have is auto theft. Arranging a meeting with this family was very difficult. The first two meetings were arranged at

mother's convenience. When the researcher got there for the first meeting the daughter met her at the door and said that her mother had to go pick up her pay check. The researcher called before the second meeting and a man answered the phone. He said that the mother was not there but that she was expecting a visitor. He felt that she would be there for the interview. No one answered the door when the researcher arrived. Mother was home on the third attempt.

The children's mother has a high school degree and works at Della Wholesale making submarine sandwiches. The children's father works for the City of Norfolk. Mother thinks that he has had a seventh to eighth grade education (she had to discuss this question with her friend). Mother says that the children see him daily but that he did not live with them.

The home was clean but cluttered with furniture and statues of animals. The walls were covered with pictures of all kinds. The mother and a female friend were watching soap operas on television when I arrived. The friend stayed during the interview but did not say anything. She continued to watch television and at one point even fell asleep.

Mother appeared comfortable during the interview. She had a good sense of humor and laughed frequently. She had limited verbal skills answering questions with short answers and spoke Black English. When she completed the Family

Strengths Inventory she appeared to have difficulty understanding and/or reading some of the words. This was particularly evident when she needed to write in an answer regarding what she considered her family's strengths. She began looking over the document and appeared to be thinking real hard. When asked her if she understood the question, she said no. The question was explained it to her by the researcher. Her response to the question was, "We love and stand by each other." The family members appear to treat each other with respect.

The family seems to have a somewhat regular routine. Mother works in the afternoon and sister takes care of Burt while she is working. They eat meals together. There does not seem to be a scheduled time for homework and reading in the home is not encouraged. Mother feels that he gets enough of that at school. She has, however, purchased books with tapes for Burt. He remembered having them. Burt has access to two record players and is exposed to musical instruments at school. Burt has friends in the neighborhood to play with (one visited during the interview but was told to wait). There is also playground equipment that he can play on at the YMCA that he attends.

The children have household responsibilities. Burt takes out the trash, keeps the video tapes in order, makes his bed, and takes care of his clothes. He is also responsible for keeping his play areas clean. Mother sets

limits for the children. She sends Burt to his room when she gets annoyed at him. He said that when she does this he goes to her room and watches television. She said that she will use physical punishment sometimes, but not much, because it makes her feel sorry after she does it. She said that if he says disrespectful things to her he does it behind her back and she is not aware of it.

Burt is very interested in playing football and basketball at the YMCA. He is especially proud that his mother comes to watch him play his games. Mother reported being proud of his involvement in this area. Burt spends much of his free time watching television. This was the only identified activity that he does with his father. They like to watch football together. He said that his father sleeps much of the time. The family watches of television and video movies together. They like to eat popcorn while watching the movies. They have close to a hundred video tapes stacked under the television stand. They do not have any other hobbies that they participate in together. They do, however, enjoy going to the park and zoo during the summer months. The family has been on car trips to North Carolina to visit other family members. The daughter has had the opportunity to go to the Salvation Army summer camp. Burt is now old enough so he will attend the camp this summer. Burt told the story of how his mom helped him learn how to ride a bike without training wheels.

The family receives regular home visits from families and friends. Mother will take the children on business outings with her sometimes. She said, "It all depends on how they pluck my nerves before I leave." She gets the opportunity to leave home frequently. She depends on her daughter to take care of Tom while she is away.

Mother is attempting to instill a value for family traditions in her children. She mentioned having black eyed peas for New Year's to bring good luck and that after midnight on New Year's Day a man had to enter the house first or the family would have bad luck.

Other values that mother advocated for her children are education and being drug free. When asked if she is trying to instill any values in her children she said, "Yes, a lot. The way the world is these days, you know. Stay away from drugs. Get an education. This world is something this day." Mother said that she helps Burt do well in school by making sure his homework is done and by going to school as much as she can.

#### **Student Interview**

Burt was cooperative during the interview but was very difficult to understand. On several occasions he did not answer the question that he was asked. It was difficult to discern whether he was unable to hear the questioner whether he just did not understand. His family drawing depicted his

mother sitting in her chair doing a word puzzle thinking about cooking dinner. He was particularly interested with the easy chair where his mother sits. He drew it with great detail and said that sometimes he sits in the chair beside his mother. He also said that he would like a chair like that someday. His sister was running to the store to see if they had some bread. His father, who according to Burt lives with them, was watching football and thinking about the same thing. He drew himself playing with drum sticks.

Burt feels that the people in his family get along well. He said that he plays games with his sister. His morning routine includes watching cartoons, at 8:15 a.m. he leaves home to pick up a friend who walks to school with him. After school he plays outside and at the YMCA. At home he watches football and plays Numberland. He said that sometimes mother leaves him home alone. He said that he keeps the door locked and if someone knocks, he peeks to see who it is. If there is a problem he would run out the door to his neighbor's house.

His school drawing shows him doing his work. He is writing his name. The teacher, who is not in the picture, is standing in front of class telling them what to do. He feels "fine" about school. His favorite subjects are coloring, drawing, math, and English. He said, "I use other books that I paid for but I can not remember the subjects".

Burt said that mom helps him with his homework. He



said, "She helps me with one of them so I'll know what to do." When I asked him what his room looked like he answered, "not that bad" and that he had a drum set, velcro darts, and a walkman in it. He also indicated that he received a bike for Christmas. His favorite toy was his bike and the velcro darts (he did not know what to call these so he described them to me).

#### **Case Study Eleven - Poorly Adapted**

The researcher was unable to make contact with this family. They do not have a telephone. The parent technician from the school felt that it was best not to press the issue if the mother did not respond to the notes that had been sent home. Three notes had been set to the home.

#### **Student Interview**

This student was very excited about being interviewed. She started drawing a picture before she was given any directions. She constantly was moving around and was unkempt. Her hair was tied in a rubber band on top her head and her hands were covered with white paint or chalk. She was easily distracted, but did follow the directions I gave her. She answered questions in short statements and seemed very happy.

Her family drawing included six children, her mom, and

her dad. There are four girls aged 5, 6, 8, and 9, and two boys aged 11 and 12. The 9-year-old sister and 12-year-old brother do not live with the family. They live with their grandmother. All family members were described as being happy and getting along well. In the drawing, the children were thinking about toys and mom and dad were thinking about what they would get the children for Christmas. Kay said that she received three toys, "a telephone, mittens, teddy bear and a doll baby." In the picture all the children were "going outside."

Kay said that mother doesn't work. That she likes to have company and that they have company over often. Father works but she does not know where. She said that he lives with them. Grandmother is described as having a VCR and a Nintendo. They like to watch Freddy Kroger, Robo Cop, and Pippi Longstocking movies on Grandmother's VCR. The family does not eat together. Kay said that mom eats in her room. She also said that mom encourages her to do well in school and tells her to "be good to the teacher so that she doesn't have to stand in the corner like the other children." Mom helps her with her homework at the kitchen table.

Kay said that she has friends that she plays with but that she can't remember their names. They like to play hide-n-seek, cards, pitty pat, and with the family cat and dog. Her favorite toys are her doll baby and her glow doll. She said that she would really like to have a bike. She

kept asking me if the researcher was going to give her something. She wanted to be given a bike.

Her school picture included herself and the teacher. She said that the teacher teaches all the girls and boys. She said that she was going to school in the picture. Her favorite subjects were learning and journal writing. She also likes to read her library books. She said that she reads them at home. She was very excited that she could go to the library every Friday and pick out any book that she wanted.

The student thinks in the present. When asked what she wants to do when she grows up she said, "finish my whole grade." After pursuing the question a bit further she indicated that she would like to be a teacher. She said that she likes to play school at home with her sisters. When they play school together she gets to be the teacher.

After the interview the school counselor approached the researcher and asked her what she did to engage the student in conversation. She said that she has been trying to talk with Kay for months but was unable get her to say anything. She was very interested in knowing the researcher's technique.

#### **Case Study Twelve - Poorly Adapted**

The researcher was unable to reach this student's family to set up an interview. The family has a phone but

it was out of order for the past three months. Notes were sent home with the teacher, the teacher try to make contact with the mother, and the parent technician also attempted to contact her. No one was able to make arrangements for an interview over a three month period.

### Student Interview

This 9 1/2 old girl lives with her mother, two brothers and two sisters in Young Park. She does not like living in this neighborhood because it is not safe. She said, "There's shooting out there." May has very poor language skills. She had a great deal of difficulty expressing herself answering most questions with one word. She was always moving during the interview. She was dressed nicely and had a clean and neat appearance.

Her family drawing included her mother and herself. They were setting a table for dinner. They were expecting her grandma, aunt, and uncle over for a family dinner. She said that she enjoyed helping her mom prepare for guests. She said that her family gets along fine and that she behaves pretty well. I asked May what her mom does if she does not behave, she answered, "beat me, and that makes me feel sad." She said that her sister helps her with her homework and that sometimes her "mama does to." May said that her mother tells her, "don't be bad in school." May wants to grow up to be a nurse.

May enjoys playing with her Barbies and her doll babies. Her favorite doll baby is Suzi Scribble which she got for Christmas. She said, "It's a \$150.00 doll. I told my mom that I'd be good at school." She said that she plays mostly with herself or with her sisters and that the family does not play games together. She also said that the playgrounds in her neighborhood are too dangerous for her to play there.

Her school drawing included the teacher, a friend and herself. The teacher was helping other students with their work. When asked what she like about her teacher, she said, "I like the way she dress." In the drawing, May and her friend were painting pictures of their mama. They were able to draw because they had been good. She said that the good thing about herself is, "I do my work and am quiet at my desk." When asked what she liked about school she said, "I like my friends. I like my teacher. I like reading plus I like the other teachers." When asked her if she had any questions, she said, "I like your shirt."

#### **Analysis of Case Studies - Poorly Adapted**

These families appeared to have limited opportunities to interact with each other. The parents were involved in trying to make a living and seemed to have some degree of difficulty organizing their own lives and establishing a

routine for their family. The following section will expand upon the characteristics of these families.

Demographic characteristics do not appear to be a predominate force in determining the parents ability to provide the ingredients for successful school adaptation. Parents of these children are diverse in their level of education, type of employment, presence of father in the home and birth order of the children. Of the four families interviewed all the mothers reported at least a high school education. One mother had one year of business school, another went to beauty college, and the third stated that she had three years of college in the area of clothing technology. All of these parents quit their education when they started building a family. The education of only one father was identified in the study. He completed eight grade and currently works for the city of Norfolk. One of the fathers died last year. The rest of the males living with the families were not the actual parents of the students involved in the study.

Of the four families interviewed three lived in public housing and one family just moved to a private four-plex apartment. Two of the families felt that their neighborhood was real bad and did not allow the children outside, except in their own yards under supervision. The other two families felt that their neighborhood was relatively safe. One mother indicated that neighborhood was okay, but that

she did not go out into it often. She said that the kids knew everyone. Her oldest son reported that he felt the neighborhood was "ruthless."

All four of these mothers work at least part time. Mothers are frequently not home when the children are. In two families, an older sibling is charged with the responsibility of caring for the children when mother is at work. One family depends on the after school program at the YMCA for child care and the forth family has a male friend who takes the responsibility of getting the boy to school everyday and meeting him when he comes home. Meals are eaten together in two of the households. In two of the others the mother eats alone in a different room. In the remaining two homes, mother is at work during evening meal time.

Family rules were limited in these households and limit setting was enforced sporadically. When the children broke rules or did the wrong thing they were either restricted from something they liked, sent to their room or "beat". These parents reported losing their temper with the children frequently.

Mothers seemed overwhelmed with their work involvements and did not seem to have much time to share with their children. Family interactions revolved mostly around television, VRC movies, and games such as bingo. Community outings also were limited. Community outings that were

mentioned included going to the park or to the zoo. One child was involved in sports and the mother attended games to watch him play. He was very proud of this. In another family, the male friend made it a point to work with the boy to teach him physical skills and to help him out academically. These families utilize community resources such as the YMCA and Salvation Army summer camp program to provide recreational opportunities for their children.

With the exception of two families, the children were on their own or dependent on the YMCA staff for help with their homework. In all but one household, extra homework work or reading was not encouraged. Most parents felt that the children got enough of it in school or that they did not have time. The parents said that they checked to see if their children's homework was done properly.

Parental aspirations for these children are limited. The parents would be happy if the student finished high school. Only one parent mentioned the possibility of college for their children. College was only mentioned by one student, but his mother quickly indicated that she was going to put all her children in the military. The children do not have a clear image of what they want to be when they are adults. In fact, they have difficulty seeing that far into the future. They are focused on trying to finish the grade in which they are enrolled. These parents tell their children that education is important and encourage them to



do well but, again, the message is generally limited to a high school degree.

The parents of these children are not involved positively with the schools. Their involvement is limited to solving the educational problems of their children through teacher conferences and the utilization of support services such as learning disability specialists and school counselors. Of the four families interviewed, only one parent goes to the school as often as she can as a means of helping her child do well. She did not indicate how often she was able to get there.

There was little to no scheduling of the television or VCR movies in these homes. In most of the homes television was the primary source of in home entertainment. One family identified watching television or movies (on the VCR) while eating popcorn as their family hobby. One of the families had a Nintendo which the son enjoyed playing. Watching television, particularly sports, with father was identified by one of boys as their favorite activity to do with dad. The children enjoyed watching cartoons and movies such as Ninja turtles, Robo Cop, Pippi Longstockings and cartoons.

All but one of the families spend time with relatives and friends. They celebrate holidays with family members and get together with them primarily on weekends. The families seem to be close. They all said that they look out for one another. Family strengths were hard for them to

identify or to verbalize, however, one mother stated that, "We love and stand by each other."

The verbal skills of these families appeared limited. One of the mothers deferred most of my questions to the children. When she spoke she was difficult to understand and spoke in incomplete sentences. Another mother spoke very fast and had difficulty finding the words that she needed to express herself. She was also very difficult to understand. All but one family spoke in incomplete sentences. These verbal patterns also were apparent in the children. These children did not speak much in their interviews. They answered questions with one word or a short phrase. During the interviews, the researcher had to ask them to repeat themselves frequently. They lacked creativity in describing their drawings and focused on structural detail such as the shape of the people's heads. Two of the boys asked if they had to draw round heads. They said that they hated to draw round heads.

The value orientations of these parents also was limited. They wanted their children to get a good education, to stay off drugs and to stay out of trouble. These messages were conveyed to the children more as threats than as values, focusing on the harm that could come their way if they don't comply, verses focusing on the benefit of adapting the values. One mother particularly was interested in not having her children call each other names like

retarded or stupid or cussing.

In summary, these families have limited verbal interactions with each other and spend little time together doing family oriented activities. This is due in part to parental work schedules. The aspirations of both the parents and children are limited and grounded in the present verses future orientation. Family rules are not clearly delineated, yet consequences for not following rules often consists of physical punishment. These parents do not seem to have much patience with their children and admit to yelling frequently and becoming easily irritated. In all but one case, the children were viewed as having problems, being wild, or unruly.

### Quantitative Analysis of Data

The data gathered by the HOME Inventory for Elementary Children (HOME) and the Family Functioning Styles Scales (FFSS) was quantifiable. Each of these instruments provided summary scores from several subsets of data. The summary scores from each of these data collection instruments were analyzed through a t-test for independent samples. This analysis indicated whether there were significant differences between the two treatment groups, well adapted or poorly adapted children, on the measurement variables. The results of this analysis indicated that there was a

significant difference between the two groups on the HOME variables at the .05 level. There was no significant difference on the FFSS variables. Table 8 depicts the specific statistics of the t-test analysis on the HOME variable. Table 9 provides the results of the t-test analysis on the family functioning style variable.

### **Corroboration of Research Data**

The data collected from the data collection instruments, the in-depth interviews with the family, and the child interviews were corroborated through the method of triangulation of multiple data sources. The results of the inductive analysis of the case study information demonstrated that there were several differences between the family characteristics and home environments of the well and poorly adapted children. The differences on the HOME variables were substantiated through the quantitative analysis. There is no significant difference between the

Table 8

T-test for Independent Samples: HOME Variables

Item	Group A	Group B
Sample Size	5	4
Mean	44.00	35.25
Standard Deviation	4.30	9.18
t-Value	-1.9092	
Probability One-Tailed	0.0489	

Table 9

T-test for Independent Samples: FFSS Variables

Item	Group A	Group B
Sample Size	5	4
Mean	86.20	87.00
Standard Deviation	11.84	3.65
t-Value	0.1287	
Probability One-Tailed	0.4506	

well and poorly adapted children on the FFSS variables.

### Summary

In this chapter the analyses of both qualitative and quantitative data were presented. Characteristics of the family and home environments of well adapted and poorly adapted students were delineated from a qualitative as well as a quantitative perspective. From these analyses it can be surmised that there are significant differences between the two groups of students. The specifics of these differences will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The purpose of this study was to determine what characteristics of families are most likely to enhance the development of social capital in young urban school children and to determine which of the characteristics or combination of characteristics contribute to the child's ability to adapt positively to a formal school environment. The primary research question that was addressed was: What characteristics of a child's family and home environment facilitate his successful adaptation into a formal school environment? This question was answered incrementally by focusing first on a sub-set of questions. The related questions explored in this study include:

1. Is there a difference between the family behaviors of well adapted versus poorly adapted students?
2. What types of behaviors or family interactions contribute to a child's adjustment to a formal school environment?
3. Is there a relationship between social capital variables and the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment?

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the

aforementioned questions based on the data analyses as discussed in Chapter Four. Each of the questions will be answered individually and documented with supportive research data. In the final section, recommendations for future research and program implementation will be discussed.

### Discussion of Results

#### Research Question One: Is there a difference between the family behaviors of well adapted verses poorly adapted students?

This first research question addresses if there is a difference between the family behaviors of well adapted and poorly adapted students. The qualitative data suggest that there are differences between these two groups. These findings were substantiated only partially through the quantitative analysis. There was a significant difference at the .05 level between the well and poorly adapted students on the HOME variables. No significant differences were discovered on the FFSS variables. These differences will be discussed under subheadings that describe the behaviors which were found to be different.

#### Aspirations

Perhaps the most remarkable difference between the well



adapted and poorly adapted children is in the level of aspirations held by the parents and children in the well adapted group. Parents of these children see them securing a college education and becoming involved in the professional world. Their discussions with their children related to education focus not only on getting an education, but also on the importance of doing the best that they can do and on getting the most out of their learning experiences. These parents not only talk about the importance of a good education, they also provide their children with books and other learning materials. They spend time with the children on learning activities such as reading and homework assignments. Most of the family members interviewed took pride in their children's academic achievements and would celebrate them by throwing special parties, celebrating holidays longer, or buying the child something special.

The well adapted children also had higher aspirations for themselves. One wanted to be a lawyer, one a singer and a lawyer, two wanted to become teachers and one boy thought he might like to be a scientist. One boy wanted to be a football player but was concerned, as was his mother, about how he would be able to do that and still get an education. His mother has told him that he could not just depend on football, that he might break a leg or something. The children knew that they had to work hard in school in order

that they could "become the thing they wanted to be."

Families of the poorly adapted children also wanted their children to get a good education. But their aspirations were limited. They did not think beyond high school. They just know that you need to get through high school if you want to get a job. The messages that they gave to their children placed the responsibility for education on the children's shoulders. They made comments like, "You have to get an education. You aren't staying with me." Some of these parents helped their children with their homework, but did not encourage additional reading or educational activity. One parent depends on the YMCA to make sure her son's homework is done. The poorly adapted children did not talk much about what they wanted to be when they grew up. They were more oriented to the present moment or just passing their grade. They generally liked school and felt it was important, but were not able to verbalize why.

#### Parental Involvement In Education

Parents of the well adapted children were more involved in their children's education and with the school. Parents of these children visit the school more often to assist the teacher in the classroom and to monitor their children's progress. These parents were more involved in parent support groups and on school committees. They were informed

and knowledgeable about their children's level of ability and their educational needs.

The families of the poorly adapted children were involved with the school from a more problem based orientation. They went to the school in response to a teacher's request or to resolve a problem their child may have. These parents take advantage of the support systems that are provided by the school system such as counselors and learning specialists. Although this utilization of support systems can be positive, it also fosters a dependence on social institutions, relinquishing parental responsibility for the education of their children to the schools.

#### Regular Routine

The families of the well adapted children seemed to have a regular routine that included an established homework and bed time, eating meals together, opportunities for play and television viewing. The mothers of these children did not work or only worked part time while grandmother took care of the child. These mothers appeared invested in their children, liked to be around them, and showed a genuine interest in them. They spoke positively about the children even though they admitted to having some discipline problems with them.

The family routines of the poorly adapted children were

not as well established. Mothers of these children worked and had to depend on older children, social institutions such as the YMCA, or friends to care for their children while they were at work. They did not appear as involved with the children and in some cases seemed overwhelmed or irritated by them. They seemed to prefer sending the children away so that they would not be bothered. They described their children as being wild and unruly. Meals were rarely eaten together. Two of the mothers do not eat with the children. One said, "I can't eat with them. They eat nasty."

#### Family Rules and Limit Setting

Rules and consequences for unacceptable behavior were well established in the homes of the well adapted children. Parents seemed to be in control of their children and were able to set limits effectively. Some parents felt that all they had to do was raise their voice at the children to get their attention. Others utilized room restrictions or taking away an activity that the child liked to enforce the family rules. Parents indicated that they would spank the child if they felt it was necessary.

There was a lack of clarity regarding rules in most of the homes of the poorly adapted children. Consequences for negative behaviors seemed to be erratic and more severe, or at least the language used to describe it was more severe.

Some parents and children reported beatings.

### **Verbal Skills**

There was a notable difference between verbal skills of the well and poorly adapted children and their parents. Parents of the well adapted children spoke in complete sentences and engaged in a give and take conversation with the interviewer. They were able to express themselves quite well. The parents of the poorly adapted children ranged in verbal ability from answering the questions in short statements to having much difficulty in forming their ideas and expressing them. They were not as articulate as the well adapted group. They answered questions with short sentences or simple yes or no answers. They did not initiate conversation and some had a great deal of difficulty forming their ideas and expressing themselves. Most of these parents spoke Black English.

### **Recreation and Leisure Involvement**

The families of the well adapted children reported spending more time together doing activities such as playing games, watching television, going shopping, traveling, going to the park and zoo, and going out to dinner together. They also were involved in clubs and organizations. They provided their children with stimulating toys and games and were willing to play those games with them. They reported

participating in activities both at home and in the community.

The families of the poorly adapted children reported less recreation and leisure involvement. The activities in which they took part usually happened within the home. Many of the families spent a fair amount of time watching television or VCR movies. Parents were less involved with the children in these activities. Both groups spent a generous amount of time with extended family and friends particularly around the holidays.

**Research Question Two: What types of behaviors or family interactions contribute to a child's adjustment to a formal school environment?**

This question addresses the type of behaviors or family interactions that contribute to a child's adjustment to a formal school environment. Although this question cannot be answered conclusively, inductive analysis of the qualitative data and the scores on the measurement instruments suggest certain behaviors that may contribute to a child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment.

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**Communication Skills**

A child with good communication skills will be more likely to adapt well to a formal school environment. This finding is supported through the qualitative data in which

the well adapted children were able to express themselves more appropriately and through the data from the Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scale Classroom Edition upon which the well adapted children had much higher scores on the communication portion of the test. Standard scores on the VABS communication domain can range from zero to 126. The well adapted children had standard scores that ranged between 108 and 119 while the poorly adapted children had standard scores that ranged between 32 and 83. High level verbal skills can enable a child to feel more proficient in what they are doing. They are understood much easier by the teachers and can express their thoughts and concerns much better. This verbal proficiency could give these children a sense of control in their lives. Those who know how to express their needs effectively will have a better chance of having their needs met.

The children's socialization scores on the VABS were notably different. Standard scores on the socialization domain of the VABS can range from zero to 106. The well adapted children's standard scores ranged between 91 and 100. The poorly adapted children's scores ranged between 32 and 51 with one outlier who scored 86. A child's ability to socialize can have an impact on his ability to adapt well to school. Children who do not have social interaction skills may find themselves isolated from the mainstream and unable to maximize their educational experiences.

### **Parental Involvement in the Child's Education**

Children whose parents are involved actively in their education are more likely to adapt well to school. Children are approval seeking beings and happily will become involved in activities in which they can receive parental approval. They are also more likely to have sustained interest in education if it is encouraged and valued by the parents. This is particularly true if the parents try to help the children understand why school is important.

Parental visits to the child's classroom help the parent understand what the child is being taught and how they best can reinforce the skills being taught at school at home. It also shows the child that the parent is interested enough in them that they are willing to spend their time learning about what he is learning. This can enhance the child's feelings of self worth and his attitudes toward education.

### **Supportive and Predictable Environment**

Children who come from homes that have a predictable routine and a supportive environment will have more energy to contribute to their education. They will be less worried about problems and situations at home and will be able to concentrate on their work. The children in this study came from rather rough neighborhoods, yet some of them adapted quite well. The results indicate that this is due to the



fact that their home is safe and predictable even if the neighborhood is not. They know that their family is there to protect them from dangers. They look out for one another.

**Research Question Three: Is there a relationship between social capital variables and the child's adjustment to a formal school environment?**

The third question addresses the relationship between social capital variables and the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment. Coleman (1987) states that families can help children develop the attitudes, efforts and conceptions of self that help them to adapt to a formal school environment. This study provides strong supportive evidence to this argument. The well adapted children came from homes in which education was valued highly. The parents of these children took personal responsibility for their child's education. They took the time to instill within the child the importance of a good education. They also established a routine around the house that reinforced educational skills. Established home work times during which the parent interacts with the child, extra reading, and celebrations for good performances in school, can instill within the child the desire to put out the necessary effort to do well in school.

The HOME instrument was utilized to determine the

characteristics of the family and home environment. Table 10 delineates the family's scores on the HOME. As depicted in the table, the well adapted children came from home environments that had higher levels of emotional and verbal responsiveness, encouragement of maturity, a positive emotional climate, access to growth fostering materials and experiences, provision for active stimulation and family participation in developmentally stimulating experiences.

The supportive environments in which these children are being reared enable them to develop positive self-esteem. They have learned through structured experiences and parental guidance that with effort they can learn the things that they need to know in order to do well in school. They also have been taught that if they put out enough effort they can grow up to be what they want to be, a lawyer, a teacher or a singer.

The well adapted children had more opportunity to interact with supportive adults with good verbal skills. These interactions helped them to define themselves and to define acceptable behavior. The skills that were taught in the homes of the well adapted children enable them to take advantage of the opportunities, demands and rewards that are provided by the school system. The social capital that the parents of these children helped to develop appears to have helped them adapt successfully to a formal school environment.

Table 10

A Comparison of Well and Poorly Adapted Student Scores on  
the HOME Inventory

Subscale	Well Adapted		Poorly Adapted	
	Range	Mean	Range	Mean
Emotional & Verbal Responsitivity (10)	7-9	8.8	4-10	7.5
Encouragement of Maturity (7)	3-7	6.2	3-7	5.5
Emotional Climate (8)	4-8	6.0	1-7	4.5
Growth Fostering Materials & Experiences (8)	3-8	6.4	4-6	4.5
Provision for Active Stimulation (8)	2-7	4.8	1-6	3.0
Family Participation in Developmentally Stimulating Exper. (6)	4-5	4.8	1-5	3.7
Paternal Involvement (4)	1-4	2.6	2-4	3.0
Aspects of the Physical Environ. (8)	4-5	4.4	4-5	4.2
Subset Totals (59)	37-48	44	27-47	35

Although there were no significant differences in the t-test analysis of the Family Functioning Style Scale (FFSS) variables, slight differences can be noted between the two

groups in the descriptive statistics. In all categories, except family involvement, the poorly adapted students had slightly higher scores on the FFSS. Table 11 provides a tabular representation of these descriptive statistics. The family identity variable represents the following behaviors: commitment, appreciation, time, sense of purpose and congruence. The Information Sharing variable includes the family's communication and role expectation behaviors, and the coping/resource mobilization variable measures the family's coping, problem solving, positivism, flexibility and balancing behaviors.

The lack of noticeable differences between the well adapted and poorly adapted childrens' family scores on the FFSS may be attributed to the strong kinship bonds and the adaptability of family roles that are associated with the black culture. These two factors may result from an inherent need for repressed groups to form their own informal social network to aid and support group members in times of need. Hill (in Hale-Bensen, 1986) however, argues that strong family bonds and family role adaptability stem from roots in the African Culture.

The similarity on coping and resource mobilization factors on the FFSS can be attributed to the fact that underprivileged individuals are often forced to depend on social institutions for their basic financial and health care needs. To survive, poor families must become aware of

available resources and identify ways in which they can utilize them to their advantage.

Table 11

A Comparison of Well and Poorly Adapted Student Scores on the Family Functioning Style Scale

Subscale	Well Adapted		Poorly Adapted	
	Range	Mean	Range	Mean
Family Identity (40)	33-40	35.2	29-35	32.5
Information Sharing (16)	9-16	12.6	13-14	14.3
Coping/Resource Mobilization (48)	32-48	38.4	38-42	40.2
Subscale Totals (104)	74-104	86.2	83-89	87.0

Conclusions

Results of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies indicate that there identifiable characteristics of the family and home environment which differentiates well adapted children from poorly adapted children with regard to school behavior. The data analysis also demonstrated that these characteristics go beyond the

demographic factors that are typically cited in the literature including pervasive poverty. The families of the well adapted and poorly adapted children were similar in socio-economic status, amount of parent education, religious orientation, and home environment. The factor most likely to aid in the child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment is the parent's ability to develop the social capital of their children. Families can contribute to their child's ability to adapt to school by teaching their children to value education, to be willing to put out personal effort to help their children acquire a good education, and by providing the child with a supportive and predictable environment through which they can develop positive self-esteem.

Parents also can aid in the development of social capital through active involvement in recreation and leisure activities. These activities can help to reinforce the child's academic skills and develop their self confidence. This is accomplished through active interaction with and manipulation of the child's environment through games and other activities. Children can also benefit from the social interactions with adults that result from family leisure involvement. Through these interactions they can learn how to solve problems, to develop personal values, to control frustration, and to discover positive and productive behaviors that contribute to the good of society.

### Recommendations

Recommendations for a study of this nature can be divided into two parts. Much of the information gathered through this study would provide a useful basis for the development of family intervention programs. In addition, the qualitative analysis allows the researcher to develop grounded theories that can be explored in future research projects. This section will provide recommendations which address these issues.

#### Programmatic Interventions

The results of this study indicate that there are certain family behaviors that can reinforce a child's ability to adapt well to a formal school environment. The behaviors that were identified as being useful are learned behaviors which can be taught through structured programs.

#### Parent Education Programs

Children's adaptability to school environments can be enhanced through the development of parent education programs that instruct parents in how they can provide a supportive learning environment, work with their children on their homework, and interact with their children in positive and productive ways. Schools can contribute to helping parents help their children by having a open door policy in

which parents are invited to come to the classroom to observe the teaching process, to interact and communicate with the teacher, and to work with the children in the classroom who are having educational difficulties. Teachers often are reluctant to allow parents into their classrooms because they feel that it would be difficult to monitor the parent's interactions with their child. They also may fear that the parents are there to evaluate them and perhaps question the teaching strategies and approaches that are utilized in class. This problem could be eliminated by having parent training programs in which the role of the parent in the classroom clearly is delineated and by having frequent parent/teacher meetings in which classroom interventions are discussed. Parents would be encouraged to ask teachers questions about their intervention strategies during these meetings. This approach not only would involve parents more in their child's education, but also would provide one on one attention for students who are having educational difficulties and help parents learn more effective strategies for working with their children at home.

This intervention assumes that the parents have the educational skills necessary to do help students academically. If they do not, parent literacy and educational skill development programs can be developed to teach them the skills they need to help their children. The



positive impact of a program of this nature would be that it would be enhancing the esteem of the parent as well as the child.

Programs such as the Parent Activity Leader Program, which currently is being implemented in the target schools need to be continued. In these programs a parent representative is chosen from the local community to act as a liaison between the families and the school. Programs of this nature seem to be very effective in establishing a cooperative relationship between the parents and the school. Programs such as this help to bridge the gap between the school and the community by providing parents with a resource person who understands their culture, values, and the environment from which they come. This program also offers parent education opportunities, parent resource rooms, and drop in centers. The drop in centers enable parents to interact with each other in positive and productive ways. Parents can share the frustrations and victories that they are having with their children under the guidance of a trained specialist who can guide them through problem resolution. These strategies help to break down the barriers of fear and helplessness that often are found in the families of underprivileged children.

The grant funded Parent Technician Program that is in place at the target schools is also a model program that needs to be continued. The goals for this program are

similar to that of the Parent Activity Leader Program but are more focused on outreach efforts. These technicians spend time in the homes of the school children, working with the parents and acting as the liaison between the school and the community. The parent technicians also offer parent education programs and special events for the children.

### Family Leisure Programs

The results of this study demonstrated that family involvement in recreation and leisure activities can help a child adapt to school. Although knowing how to play is an innate ability in young children, cultural, social, and environmental pressures interfere with the ability to recreate as a person grows older. It is for this reason that leisure education programs need to be designed and implemented in the public school system. These programs could be offered on three levels. First, parents need to be taught the importance of play in their children's lives and ways through which they can facilitate successful play. The goals of this program element would be to help parents understand the developmental stages of childhood and to teach them what types of play activities and equipment are appropriate for reinforcing the developmental process. Parents also can be exposed to community recreation resources be helped to work through barriers to recreation participation such as funding and transportation.

The second programmatic level would be leisure education for the children as an integrated part of their curriculum. In this component, children will be guided through the steps of identifying their personal leisure interests, skills and abilities, in developing a leisure attitude that could act as an alternative to involvement in substance abuse and other socially deviant behaviors, and in developing leisure skills that encourage a happy and productive lifestyle.

The final level of a leisure education program would be family leisure activities. In this program element, the families and children would be involved in leisure activities together. Program leaders would help parents and children develop an awareness of how recreational activities can reinforce education skills. Involvement in recreational activities can enable families to develop problem solving ability, encourage positive interaction between family members, and help the family to develop a positive leisure lifestyle.

### **Outreach Programs**

The programs delineated above would be most effective if they were implemented in the neighborhoods or homes of the target families. This would decrease problems with transportation and fear that commonly keep parents from being involved in school based programs. Program need to be

offered at various times so that all parents can be reached. Many of these parents are blue collar workers who may do shift work which would interfere with involvement in after school or evening programs.

### **Future Research**

The qualitative data analyzed in this study has led to the identification of specific behaviors that can contribute to a child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment. The identification of these behaviors leads to the formulation of grounded theories that could aid in development of educational programs and provide the focus for future research. These theories will be delineated in the following paragraphs.

Children who have developed social capital through interactions with their parents were more able to adapt well to a formal school environment. Programs focusing on the development of social capital can be implemented in the school system and then evaluated and tested to determine if they had any significant effect on the adaptation process.

The current Parent Activity Leader and Parent Technician Programs that are being implemented within the Norfolk Public School System need to be evaluated to determine their impact on breaking down the barriers commonly found between the home and school communities of underprivileged individuals.

More research needs to be done addressing the role of recreation activities in facilitating adaptation to a formal school environment. The variables for studies of this nature could include: the role of recreation activities in the development of social skills, the role of recreation activities in developing problem solving abilities, and the role of recreation activities in reinforcing the academic skills of children.

The focus of this study was well adapted and poorly adapted urban black children from low socio-economic families. From this investigation it was found that there are certain contributing forces to a child's adaptability to the classroom. An interesting study would be to determine if these same factors effect children from varying economic conditions. A study investigating the family characteristics and home environments across culture and economic status would enable researchers to determine if there are specific program interventions that would be helpful in aiding adaptation across populations.

Another topic of future study would be the role of family leisure involvement in the development of social capital. Family leisure involvement enhances children's interactions with adults in structured activities that focus on teaching participants social behaviors such sportsmanship, leadership, and cooperative interactions between participants. Leisure activities also provide a

practice ground for the development of skills such as following directions, respect for authority, and problem solving. These skills were included in those defined by Coleman (1987) as being essential components of social capital. It follows that family leisure activities could aid in the development of social capital.

### Summary

The results of this study have suggested that there are specific characteristics of families and home environments that may aid in a child's ability to adapt to a formal school environment. The results of the study suggest also that poor children can either be well adapted or poorly adapted in a formal school environment. This study focused on second grade children and demonstrated that the families and home environments of these children do make a difference. Clark's (1983) study of high and low achieving high school students and their families had similar results. The congruence between these two research projects supports the contention that families and home environments can make a difference through out a child's education. These findings are significant because they lend hope to the possibility of providing interventions that will enable the poor to adapt well to the education milieu and benefit more from the educational process.

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**Appendix A**  
**Consent Form**



**Appendix A**  
**Consent Form**

Dear Parent:

I am an education student from Old Dominion University and I am doing a study of second grade children. I would like to have your child and family help me gain the information that I need to complete my study. If you participate, your child's teacher would be asked to complete a survey related to your child's school performance.

Some children will be selected for a home visit. If your child is selected, I would need to talk with you and your child at your home. Your child's teacher or the school's parent advocate may visit your home with me. I also would need to talk with your child at school and review his/her academic records.

We will keep all information confidential, we will not share the information we have found with anyone but school staff. Your name will not appear in any written reports on the study. You may choose to drop out of the study at anytime. You also may ask questions about the study anytime you feel the need. If you have questions about the study, please feel free to call me at 683-4995.

I have read the above information and agree to allow my child and family to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I am not interested in taking part in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please return this form to school tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_,  
1990.

Thank you for your time and cooperation. I look forward to meeting you.

Janice Elich Monroe

**Appendix B**  
**Interview Schedule**

## Appendix B

### Interview Schedule

Upon entering the family home, introduce yourself and get acquainted with the family members that are present. After you have managed to set a friendly tone indicate that you would like to begin the interview. Tell the family members that you would like to record the interview so that you can utilize the recording to jog your memory when reviewing the data and that you will also be jotting down notes to yourself. Reassure them that the information that they give to you will be held in the strictest confidence and that their names will not be utilized in the data analysis or final reports.

Indicate that you are interested in seeing what \_\_\_\_\_ does in his home territory--how he occupies his time, what he like to play with, and what kinds of things he does with the family.

Begin the interview by asking them to describe a typical day for the child. You can utilize the following probe questions to help secure the data necessary to complete the instrument.

- Was he the first to wake up?
- Where did he eat his breakfast?
- How do you manage meals around the house?
- Does your child choose breakfast or lunch menu?
- What activities does he participate in during the day?
- When does he go to bed? Are there any night time rituals?

#### **FACTOR 1: Emotional and & Verbal Responsivity**

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a regular/predictable routine
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Is there anything that \_\_\_\_\_ is uncomfortable with or fears? Does parent yield to child's fears?
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ Has \_\_\_\_\_ done anything that you were especially proud of this past week? What did you say to him?  
(2X's)  
How do you encourage \_\_\_\_\_ to take on new responsibilities?
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ How do you feel about \_\_\_\_\_ reading on his own? Do you like for him to read at home or do you feel that he reads enough at school?
- (5)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Does the parent encourage the child to contribute to the conversation?
- (6)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Offer praise to the child. Positive emotional response from parent?

- (7)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Does the parent respond to the child's questions?  
 (8)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Does the parent use complete sentences?  
 (9)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Does the parent's voice convey positive feelings?  
 (10)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Does the parent initiate verbal interchanges  
with the interviewer?

**Subtotal:** Positive: \_\_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

### **FACTOR II: Encouragement of Maturity**

Running a household is not an easy task. Is \_\_\_\_\_ encouraged to help out?

- (11) \_\_\_\_\_ What chores or responsibilities does \_\_\_\_\_ have?  
 (3/4 - Makes bed, cleans room, cleans up after  
 spills, bathes self)  
 (12) \_\_\_\_\_ Living and play area clean & straight  
 (13) \_\_\_\_\_ Clothing in proper place

Do you have any particular strategies/ways to encourage to assume new responsibilities?

Children \_\_\_\_\_ age often refuse to help out around the house. How is this resistance handled in your home?

Most families have certain rules that govern family conduct (concerning bedtime, mealtime behavior, doing homework). Does your family have rules? What are they? What do you do if the rules are broken?

- (14) \_\_\_\_\_ Set limits, curfews, homework rules, etc.  
 (15) \_\_\_\_\_ Parent introduces child  
 (16)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Does parent introduce child?  
 (17)\* \_\_\_\_\_ Does parent violate rule of common courtesy?

**Subtotal:** Positive \_\_\_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_\_\_

### **FACTOR III: Emotional Climate**

- (18) \_\_\_\_\_ I'm sure that \_\_\_\_\_ does things that annoy you? Do you ever loose your temper with her? Has this happened in the last week? (No more than once in the last week= yes)  
 (19) \_\_\_\_\_ Has the child been physically punished during the past month? (Yes = no more than 1 X)  
 (20) \_\_\_\_\_ It is not unusual for children to become angry or upset and say disrespectful things or have temper tantrums. How are these angry and upset feelings handled in your home?  
 (Can express without harsh reprisal)

- (21) \_\_\_\_\_ Everyone has times when they are sad or unhappy or hurt. Do you feel that you should hide these feelings from your child or let her see you upset? In the past week how many times has she seen you upset? (Yes= no more than once in past week)
- (22) \_\_\_\_\_ Does the child have a special place to keep things that are important to him?
- (23) \* \_\_\_\_\_ Parent talks to the child beyond correction and introduction?
- (24) \* \_\_\_\_\_ Parent uses a term of endearment at least twice during the interview?
- (25) \* \_\_\_\_\_ Parent does not express over annoyance or hostility toward the child?

**Subtotal:** Positive: \_\_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR IV: Growth Fostering Materials and Experiences**

- (26) \* \_\_\_\_\_ Record players or radio
- (27) \* \_\_\_\_\_ Musical instrument
- (28) \* \_\_\_\_\_ Ten appropriate books
- (33) \* \_\_\_\_\_ House has at least two pictures on the wall
- (29) \_\_\_\_\_ Find time to read the newspaper? Buy and reads.
- (30) \_\_\_\_\_ Most children have homework or extra reading that they like to do. Does \_\_\_\_\_ have a special place that he likes to work on his homework? (free access)
- (31) \_\_\_\_\_ Does your family use a dictionary regularly?
- (32) \_\_\_\_\_ Does your child have a friend that lives close by? Has he visited that friend by themselves during the past week?

**Subtotal:** Positive: \_\_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR V: Provision for Active Stimulation**

- (34) \_\_\_\_\_ I'm sure you find T.V. to be able allot of company. Do you usually leave it on all day or just for special programs? How frequently does your child watch T.V. ? What shows does he watch regularly? (no tv = no; any scheduling = yes)
- (35) \_\_\_\_\_ Does your child have any hobbies? (encouraged)
- (36) \_\_\_\_\_ Does your family have any hobbies that \_\_\_\_\_ participates in? (included in family hobby)
- (37) \_\_\_\_\_ Is \_\_\_\_\_ involved in any organizations or taking any formal lessons?
- (38) \_\_\_\_\_ Does \_\_\_\_\_ have access to any playground equipment that she can get to by herself? (2 pieces)
- (39) \_\_\_\_\_ Does \_\_\_\_\_ have a library card? How frequently does she get to the library? (Yes = 1x/mo)

- (40) \_\_\_\_\_ Has the child had an opportunity to go to a scientific, historical, or art museum during the last year?
- (41) \_\_\_\_\_ Has the child had the opportunity to go on a plane, train, or bus trip within the past year?

**Subtotal:** Positive: \_\_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR VI: Family Participation in Developmentally Stimulating Experiences**

Give me some examples of places you go and take your child along.

- (42) \_\_\_\_\_ The family receives in home visits from relative and friends at least twice a month?
- (43) \_\_\_\_\_ Has the child had the opportunity to go on family business ventures 3-4 times during the last year?
- (44) \_\_\_\_\_ Has the child attended any live musical or theatrical performances? (taken or arranged)
- (45) \_\_\_\_\_ Has the child been on a trip more than fifty miles from home?
- (46) \_\_\_\_\_ Does your family enjoy watching TV together? What kinds of shows do you like? Do you ever talk about the programs you see?

Do you have a VCR? What type of movies do you watch?

- (47) \_\_\_\_\_ Do you help the child to learn new motor skills such as riding a bike?

**Subtotal:** Positive: \_\_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR VII: Parental Involvement**

- (48) \_\_\_\_\_ Does the father (significant male) engage in outdoor recreation activities with the child about once a week?
- (49) \_\_\_\_\_ Does \_\_\_\_\_ have the opportunity to spend time with his father at least four times a week? What activities do they do together? (no = if no father figure)
- (50) \_\_\_\_\_ Does the child eat at least one meal a day with both parents?
- (51) \_\_\_\_\_ Has the child remained with this primary family since birth?

**Subtotal:** Positive: \_\_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR VIII: Aspects of Physical Environment**

Ask the child to either show you his room or describe it to you?

(52)\*\_\_\_\_ Picture or wall decoration appropriate to children

The rest of the house:

(53)\*\_\_\_\_ The rooms are not dark or monotonous?

(54)\*\_\_\_\_ The rooms are not overcrowded with furniture?

(55)\*\_\_\_\_ The rooms are reasonably clean and uncluttered?

(56)\*\_\_\_\_ There at least 100 sq. ft. of space/person?

(57)\*\_\_\_\_ The house not overly noisy?

(58)\*\_\_\_\_ There are not any potentially dangerous structural or health defects?

(59)\*\_\_\_\_ The outside play environment safe/free of hazards?

**Subtotal:** Positive: \_\_\_\_\_ Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Questions:**

1. A child \_\_\_\_\_ age can tie a mother down much of the time. Do you ever manage to get away by yourself?

Who takes care of \_\_\_\_ when you are away?

Can you usually count on her/him or do you have to get a different person each time?

4. Where do you keep the child's toys? Have you set aside a specific place for them? May I see the play area?  
Note the kinds and types of toys, how they are arranged, which ones appear to be played with the most.

5. How does he start playing with his toys? Do you let him select what he wants to do or do you make suggestions to him or get out certain toys?

7. Do you sit down and play with him sometimes? Give examples?

8. Does he ask you to do that or does he prefer to play by himself?

9. What activities do your other children do with \_\_\_\_\_?  
Do they help you care for him?

10. Many families have established certain routines or traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. Does your family have any traditions?
11. Families are usually responsible for modeling and/or morale values for their child. These concern such matters as social behavior (i.e. respect for adults), personal pride, value toward academic achievement, etc.. What values do you attempt to teach to your child? How do you do this?
12. Do you find the time to hug your child during the day? How frequently? During what type of activities?
13. What types of things do at home to help your child adjust to school?
14. How well do you think you have done in preparing your child? What would do differently?
15. How well do you think your child has adjusted?
16. What schools has your child attended?
17. Has your child ever stayed away from home overnight?
18. Who are your child's friends? Where did he meet them?

#### **Children's Interview**

1. Who do you play with?
2. What types of games do you enjoy playing with your family? Friends? At school?
3. Where do you play when you are at home? Who plays with you?
4. What are your favorite toys? Do you feel that you have all the toys you would like?
5. Do you enjoy being in this school?
6. What school activities do you enjoy most? Least?
7. Do you receive encouragement from your family to do well in school?
8. What type of things does your family do to help you do well in school?



### Autobiographical Statement

**Name:** Janice Elich Monroe, M. S., C.T.R.S.

**Date of Birth:** November 14, 1953  
Pueblo, Colorado

**Education:** University of Illinois  
Champaign-Urbana, Illinois  
Degree: Master of Science 1981  
Major: Leisure Studies/Therapeutic Rec.  
Minor: Education Psychology  
  
University of Southern Colorado  
Pueblo, Colorado  
Degree: Bachelor of Science 1976  
Major: Recreation  
Specialization: Outdoor Biology and Public  
Relations

#### Publications:

"Family Leisure: A Cooperative Effort Between Parents, Special Educators, and Community Therapeutic Recreation Specialists. Family Recreation Manual, Visions in Leisure and Business (International), April, 1989.

Family Leisure Programming. Therapeutic Recreation Journal (National), XXI, 44-51., 1987.

"Self-Concept: It's Effects on Mental Health and the Role of Therapeutic Recreation in Developing It", Expanding Horizons X, 1983.

#### Appointments and Positions:

September 1985 to present

Lecturer: Recreation and Leisure Studies Program  
Graduate Faculty Status  
Old Dominion University  
Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation  
Norfolk, Virginia

September 1981 to August 1985

Unit Coordinator: Child and Young Adolescent Services  
Portsmouth Psychiatric Center  
Portsmouth, Virginia

August 1979 to September 1981

Graduate Teaching Assistant  
University of Illinois  
Leisure Studies Program  
Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

April, 1976 to July, 1979

Recreation Therapist  
Colorado State Hospital  
Children's Treatment Center  
Colorado State Hospital  
Pueblo, Colorado

### **Professional Positions:**

Virginia Recreation and Parks Society  
Therapeutic Recreation Section

Board Member: Liaison to the Allied Health  
Professions, 1985 to date  
Delegate Virginia Association of Allied Health  
Professions  
Delegate for the Virginia Health Council  
Trends III Conference Committee, 1987-88  
Evaluation Committee Chairperson, 1987-88

Virginia Association of Health, Physical Education,  
Recreation and Dance

Liaison to the American Association of Health,  
Physical Education, Recreation and  
Dance  
Recreation Section: Secretary 1988-90  
Chairperson 1987-88  
Chairperson Elect 1986-87

Virginia Association of Allied Health Professions

Chairperson: Fall conference 1990  
Board of Directors 1988-89 to date  
Delegate 1985 to date  
Newsletter co-editor 1988 to date  
Nominations Committee 1988-89

### **Honors and Awards:**

Virginia Recreation Educator of the Year Award  
presented by the Southern District of the American  
Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and  
Dance, 1991.