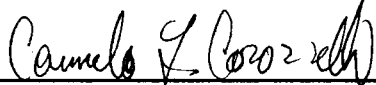


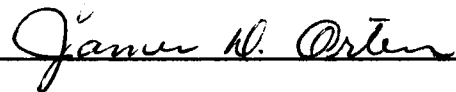
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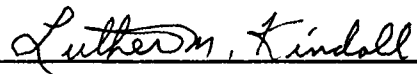
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Harvey Elliot Dean entitled "The Quality of Parent-Child Visitation in Foster Care and Its Relation to Family Background, Foster Placement Characteristics and Planned Outcome." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Social Work.


Carmelo L. Cocozzelli, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the Council:



Vice Provost
and Dean of The Graduate School

THE QUALITY OF PARENT-CHILD VISITATION IN FOSTER CARE

AND ITS RELATION TO FAMILY BACKGROUND,

FOSTER PLACEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

AND PLANNED OUTCOME

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Harvey Elliot Dean

August 1989

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate the completion of my dissertation research to the memory of a dear and sweet man, my Uncle Louis Gross, to my parents, Al and Frances Dean and to my children, Jennifer and Zachary. Both Jennifer and Zachary have been an enormous source of inspiration in making my dream come true. I hope I can do the same for them as they strive to fulfill their dreams.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined five questions: (1) Can a valid and reliable measure of children's behavior during parent-child visitation based on parental self-report be developed? (2) What is the relationship between children's behavior during visitation and various characteristics of foster placement? (3) What is the relation between children's behavior during visitation and various demographic variables of families with children in foster care? (4) What is the relation between interpersonal characteristics of families with children in foster care and demographic and foster placement characteristics? (5) What is the relation between planned outcomes of foster care and the following three categories of variables: (a) foster placement characteristics, (b) demographic variables of families with children in foster care, and (c) interpersonal characteristics of families with children in foster care? These questions were studied with an instrument devised by the author to measure children's behavior during parent-child visitation, a previously validated scale measuring interpersonal characteristics of families (FES) and data on a number of foster placement and demographic characteristics of families with children in foster care. Settings sampled represented nineteen branch offices of the Tennessee State Department of Human Services within East Tennessee. The study sample

Human Services within East Tennessee. The study sample consisted of 103 parents of children in foster care. The findings revealed that: (1) four underlying dimensions characterized children's behavior during visitation based on parental self-report: Positive Emotional Interaction, Detachment Behavior, Attachment Behavior, and Positive Affect and Closeness. The analyses revealed these four subscales (Child Behavior Scales or CBS) were valid and reliable measures of children's behavior during visitation. (2) Older children tended to be in care longer lengths of time, had fewer contacts with their parents and were also reported by parents as more detached during visitation. (3) Older parents tended to have older children who were in care as a result of their own behavior and these children remain in foster care longer, had fewer contacts with parents and showed more detachment behavior during parent-child visitation. (4) Families who were the least expressive tended to be older and had children who were in care longer, while younger families were more likely to have friends living in the home prior to the child's removal, had children who were more likely to be in care as a result of neglect or abuse and to be less cohesive and organized. (5) A ten variable model correctly classified 93% of the cases according to planned outcomes of care. Based on this model, variables describing stable versus unstable homes predicted plans for reunification/adoption versus long-term foster care.

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEM BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Current child welfare practice is being influenced by principles of permanency planning which have been incorporated into national and state child welfare legislation. The major thrust of these principles is their emphasis on a permanent, safe and continuous relationship for a child and a preference for reunification of the child with the natural parents within a relatively limited time-frame. Much of the impetus behind the permanency planning movement comes from several federally-funded demonstration projects conducted during the late 1960's and early 1970's, the goals of which had been to prevent the drift of children in foster care by increasing¹ efforts to place children in permanent placements.

In connection with the current emphasis on permanency planning, parent-child visitation is increasingly being thought of as a significant aspect of child welfare practice. Parent-child visitation is often viewed and explicitly stated by child welfare agencies as one of the goals and responsibilities assigned to parents of children in foster

¹
See, for example: Lahte, 1982; Stein, Gambrill and Wiltse, 1978, and Stein and Gambrill, 1977.

care. Whether parents satisfactorily meet these goals can determine if alternative placement decisions such as adoption need to be made. In addition, recent state and national legislation confirms the right of parents to visit their children, thereby placing responsibility on child welfare agencies to facilitate and encourage parent-child visitation (Cox and Cox, 1984; Knitzer, 1981).

Questions concerning the importance of natural parents and of parent-child visitation in foster care are being given greater attention in the child welfare literature. Sants (1964), in an early article on the importance of the biological parents to children in substitute care, coined the term "genealogical bewilderment" to refer to children who have either no knowledge or uncertain knowledge of their natural parents. Other authors have emphasized the place of natural parents in providing children with continuous relationships and in the development of a positive self-image and sense of personal worth (Geiser, 1973 and Colon, 1978).

Children in foster care face a number of psychological tasks, one of which is to master feelings aroused by separation from their parents (Littner, 1976). Children can be helped to work through their feelings about the actual separation through parent-child visitation. Visitation can also serve to help maintain the bond between parent and child, which is especially important in cases where placement is temporary and children are likely to return home. If a

permanent separation is unavoidable, visitation can play a key role in helping children work through the process of mourning, or detach themselves from the parents in order to be able to form a more successful bond with the foster parents (Steinhauer, 1977).

Although there is much theoretical and clinical discussion in the literature about parent-child attachment and the impact of separation in foster care, little research has been done on these issues. For the most part, studies of parent-child visitation have focused on the frequency of visitation and its relationship to reunification (Fanshel and Shinn, 1978), the length of time children remain in care (Mech, 1985), and children's adjustment to, and well-being in, the foster placement (Weinstein, 1960). Little attention has been given to studying the impact of separation on the quality of parent-child visitation. In light of the current emphasis on permanency planning, examination of the relationship between the quality of parent-child visitation and outcomes of care also seems justified. Studies of outcomes often cite the lack of preparation for reunification and subsequent difficulties in adjustment for both children and parents as a major reason for the instability of these placement outcomes (Fein, et al., 1983 and Lahte, 1982). At the same time, it seems reasonable to assume the adjustments required of both children and parents begin at the point of

separation and extend throughout the placement process (i.e., parent-child visits).

The primary purposes of the present study, therefore, were to: (1) determine if a valid and reliable measure of children's behavior during parent-child visitation can be developed, based on parental self-report; (2) examine the relationship between characteristics of children's foster care experiences and parental reports of children's behavior during visitation; and (3) examine the relationship between planned outcomes of care, characteristics of children's foster care experiences and parental reports of children's behavior during visitation. Two main bodies of literature related to these purposes are reviewed here: (1) literature addressing research on parent-child visitation (Sec. 1.2); and (2) literature addressing separation and attachment and their hypothesized relationship to parent-child visitation (Sec. 1.3).

1.2 RESEARCH ON PARENT-CHILD VISITATION

In this section, empirical findings on parent-child visitation will be reviewed. This section will be organized as follows: Section 1.2.1 will address studies relating visitation to outcomes in foster care; Section 1.2.2 will address studies that examined other correlates of visitation; Section 1.2.3 will address studies that have examined agency practices and their relationship to parent-child visitation;

and Section 1.2.4. will address studies that have examined the relationship between parent-child visitation and children's adjustment in foster care.

1.2.1 Parental Visitation and Outcomes in Foster Care

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, the adequacy of the foster care system was questioned continuously. The reasons for questioning the integrity of the foster care system were many and varied. Studies had been conducted that revealed high rates of placement disruptions (Eisenberg, 1962), high levels of psychopathology among foster children (Eisenberg, 1962), large numbers of children remaining in care indefinitely without permanent placements (Maas and Engler, 1959) and extensive numbers of children going unvisited (Maas and Engler, 1959). These findings touched the core of a system purporting to provide temporary substitute care and socio-therapeutic interventions to parents and their children. The message was that foster care might be deleterious to childhood adjustment and a reexamination of the system itself was advocated.

In 1966, Fanshel and Shinn, critical of the conclusions drawn from past research, set out on a five-year longitudinal study designed to evaluate the effects of foster care on children. Their view was that past studies of separation and foster care were not methodologically sound enough to draw the conclusion that foster care was harmful. For example,

Fanshel and Shinn suggested studies that found a positive correlation between length of time in care and degree of emotional disturbance may only reveal children who are more disturbed tend to remain in placement longer.

Fanshel and Shinn (1978) examined the status changes of 624 children in care over a five-year period to determine whether and how soon children were returned home and what variables contributed to this. They found frequency of parental visitation, on each of four separate testing occasions throughout the five-year period of the study, to be a significant predictor of reunification or discharge home. The findings indicated that parents who maintain consistent contact with their children are more likely to take them home than parents who hardly visit or who completely drop out of the picture.

In utilizing data already obtained from a national sample survey of social services to children, Mech (1985) analyzed the relationship between frequency of parental visitation and length of time in foster care. Findings indicated time in care varied significantly with frequency of parental visitation and this relationship held regardless of geographic location. Other studies have found high levels of parental visitation to be positively correlated with shorter periods of time in placement (Seaberg and Tolley, 1986; Gibson and Tracy, 1984; Milner, 1987).

Although empirical findings suggest a negative relationship between frequency of parental visitation and length of stay in care, the quality of parent-child visitation and its relation to both length of time in care and outcome has never been studied. Throughout the five-year period of Fanshel and Shinn's study, for example, findings indicate the absolute numbers of children going unvisited consistently increased so that, by the end of the five-year period, fifty-seven percent of the children still in care were unvisited. In addition, Fanshel and Shinn (1978) found a great deal of variance in the frequency of parent-child visitation. These findings suggest parental visitation is a complex phenomenon which warrants further study and investigation.

1.2.2 Other Correlates of Parental Visitation: Age, Reasons for Placement and Adequacy of Parenting

What is known about parental visitation has largely been derived from the longitudinal study by Fanshel and Shinn and independent analyses conducted by Fanshel (Fanshel and Shinn, 1978; Fanshel, 1977 and Fanshel, 1975). In one such study, Fanshel (1975) independently analyzed the data on parental visitation gathered from the longitudinal study he had conducted with Shinn beginning in 1966. As previously mentioned, the results indicated high parental visiting was positively related to the discharge of children from care. Several additional analyses were performed to explore the

relation between parental visitation and other variables. Children who entered care because of their own behavioral and/or emotional problems received a high number of visits in all four testing periods. Similarly, children who came into care due to the mental illness of a parent received relatively high numbers of visits. In contrast, by the end of the study, only one out of three children in the neglect or abuse category and only one in five of those who had been abandoned by a parent was visited (Fanshel, 1975).

The relationship between parental visitation and reasons for placement has received inconsistent support from other studies. In a field study that involved interviews with the natural parents of children in care, Jenkins and Norman (1972) found children placed because of their own behavior had the highest frequency of visiting (Jenkins and Norman, 1972). In contrast, Seaberg and Tolley (1986), testing a model different from Fanshel's in predicting parental visitation, found no significant relationship between reasons for placement and parental visitation (Seaberg and Tolley, 1986).

Fanshel and Shinn (1978) found older children, having more ties to their parents, have higher rates of parental visitation than infants. Seaberg and Tolley (1986) also found age to be predictor of parental visitation, but found age to be negatively correlated with frequency of parental visits. Hess (1987) also found age to be negatively

correlated with parental visitation (Hess, 1987).

Fanshel and Shinn (1978) found the assessment of mother by the caseworker in five functional areas (e.g., adequacy of maternal functioning), was positively related to frequency of parental visitation. That is, children of mothers receiving more positive evaluations by caseworkers had significantly more visitation over each of the four testing phases. They also found rates of caseworker contacts with parents were positively related to parental visitation (Fanshel, 1975).

In a later study, Fanshel (1977) found the discharge objective of the child's return home to be the strongest predictor of parental visiting (Fanshel, 1977). Discharge objective was also found to be the strongest significant predictor of parental visitation in the Seaberg and Tolley study (1986).

While the correlations among age, reason for placement and frequency of parent-child visitation have been inconsistent and sometimes contradictory, variables such as "discharge objective of child's return home" and "amount of caseworker contact with parents" revealed positive correlations with frequency of visitation. These variables have been incorporated into demonstration projects to facilitate the movement of greater numbers of children into permanent placements (Stein, Gambrill and Wiltse, 1978).

1.2.3 Agency Practices and Parental Visitation

Recent child welfare policies reflect the importance of the natural parents to children in placement by emphasizing parent-child visitation but little is known about actual practices. However, some recent studies have begun to examine agency practices and their impact on parental visitation. In one such study, Proch and Howard (1986) examined case records of children in public foster care to determine the relationship between visiting plans and actual visiting patterns. Two patterns of visitation emerged: (1) visits held in the agency office or another public place twice a month or less and (2) visits held in the parental home twice a month or more frequently. Over seventy-five percent of the 256 visiting plans studied fell into one of these two patterns with few changes in plans occurring over time. In addition, office visits were the most common visiting plan even when the outcome or the goal of placement was reunification. Further, Proch and Howard found parents tended to visit according to the schedule established by the agency. The authors concluded visiting plans bear little relation to the needs of individual children and parents and seem more a function of standard agency practices or social worker style (Proch and Howard, 1986).

Other recent research has begun to examine how caseworkers conceptualize parental visitation and what factors influence their decisions concerning frequency,

location or whether visits are to be supervised. For example, Hess (1987) interviewed caseworkers to determine factors they considered in developing visiting plans for children in foster care. Results suggested caseworkers consider such factors as evaluation of mother's parenting skills and age of the child as influential in planning visit frequency during all phases of the placement (Hess, 1987). These findings are consistent with Fanshel and Shinn's (1978) findings that evaluation of mother, amount of caseworker contact and age of child at placement are significant predictors of the child's eventual reunification with the parents (Fanshel and Shinn, 1978).

Findings from Hess's (1987) study also shed light on and clarify the extent to which frequency of parental visitation may independently influence other factors, such as the child's being discharged home. Her findings suggested frequency of parental visitation is likely to be an intervening variable, influenced by a multitude of interrelated variables. For example, she found actual frequency of parental visitation was clearly constrained by options determined by the written or verbal visiting plan developed by the caseworkers (Hess, 1987). These findings are consistent with those of Proch and Howard that agency practices tend to influence visiting patterns (Proch and Howard, 1986). Other considerations given by caseworkers in planning visitation in Hess's study were case phase (i.e.,

caseworkers seemed to consider increasing frequency of visits as it became closer to the time of discharging a child home), children's reactions to parental visits, child safety and parental characteristics (Hess, 1987).

1.2.4. Visitation and Child Adjustment

Placement in foster care represents a serious disruption in the relationships between children and their parents. Children have to adjust to the actual separation, to a new environment and to new parent-figures. Littner has pointed out that each of these adjustments represents a series of psychological tasks and parent-child visitation is important to the success of children's mastery of these tasks (Littner, 1976). It has been assumed that visitation will enhance the developmental progress and well-being of children while in placement (Hess, 1987). This assumption is supported by several studies examining the relation between visitation and children's adjustment to foster placement. But, as will be seen from the ensuing discussion, contact with natural parents through visitation also has a negative impact on various aspects of children's adjustment in foster care.

In their relatively early study, Cowan and Stout (1939) were interested in knowing whether abrupt and complete environmental changes were apt to be followed by emotional insecurity and behavioral symptoms. Their concern with this question emanated from the child welfare-related practice of

breaking the ties with a former home when, for any number of reasons, a child would be moved into a new foster home. The measure of emotional insecurity was determined by whether the children manifested certain behaviors and feelings, such as expressed loneliness, persistent disobedience, chronic fears, feelings of inferiority, poor contact with reality, inferior social status among playmates and enuresis. The case records of 100 children were studied and 30 had undergone approximately equal numbers of complete breaks (no contact with prior family) and partial breaks (some contact with prior family). Findings indicated partial breaks were less likely to be followed by behavior indicating insecurity than complete breaks. The authors concluded visits and contacts with former foster families and children will enhance the adjustment of the child to a new home (Cowan and Stout, 1939).

Pringle and Clifford (1961) tested the hypothesis that a significantly higher proportion of the more stable than of the more maladjusted children in residential care would be found to have regular and frequent contact with parents. The house mothers of several residential cottages were asked to complete questionnaires designed to provide information on the frequency, regularity and nature of parental visitation of children aged six to twelve years. A total of 66 children were in the study sample. The house mothers were also asked to rank these same children from the most stable to the most

maladjusted. The authors offered some guidance to the housemothers in interpreting the term "maladjusted" by suggesting the term be applied to behavior that was consistently difficult or deviant.

All 66 children were then divided into three groups, the most maladjusted, those neither markedly stable nor maladjusted, and the most stable. The mean scores on the questionnaire concerned with parental visitation for the three groups were obtained and an analysis of variance showed the differences to be significant. Based on these findings, the authors concluded that a negative relationship exists between emotional adjustment and the frequency of parental contact. Corroboration of these results was subsequently obtained when the housemothers completed an objective measure of social adjustment for seventeen of the most stable and maladjusted children (Pringle and Clifford, 1961).

In a landmark study by Weinstein, caseworkers were asked to assess the extent to which children in care had developed "the physical, intellectual, emotional and social abilities and resources to weather his or her life situations. . . ." (Weinstein, 1960, p.65). A measure of well-being or adjustment was used for this sample of 66 children ranging in age from five to fourteen or more years of age. Weinstein reported the results of an analysis of average well-being scores and patterns of parental visitation (e.g., twice a year or more versus yearly or less). Findings revealed

average well-being scores were significantly higher for those children whose parents had regular contact with them than children who did not have such contacts (Weinstein, 1960).

Other studies examining visitation and children's adjustment have shown visitation to have a negative impact on certain aspects of children's adjustment. Poulin (1985) studied whether continued parent-child contacts for children unlikely to return home results in greater conflicts of loyalty. Data were obtained from the case records of 100 randomly selected children who had been in placement for two or more years and whose placement goal was continued foster care. Information was obtained for the following six variables: reactions to separation, time in care, foster family attachment, frequency of kin visiting, natural family attachment, and loyalty conflict. All of the measures or scales utilized were derived from an earlier study by Fanshel and Shinn (Fanshel and Shinn, 1978). Results revealed frequency of visitation has an indirect effect on children's feelings of loyalty conflict. That is, children visited more frequently tended to develop stronger psychological attachments to their natural families which in turn influenced their feelings of loyalty conflict (Poulin, 1985).

Gean, et al. (1985), studied the relation between aspects of visitation and children's symptomatic behavior. The sample comprised twenty-three children, from birth to three years old, all of whom were having visitation and known

to be having various behavioral problems (e.g., sleep disturbances; crying episodes; aggressive behavior;). A retrospective review of their case records was done using a protocol developed to describe demographic characteristics of the sample, placement history, visitation history, evaluation and recommendations made by the psychiatrist and attachment behavior during diagnostic interviews. In addition, information was also included from interviews with both the natural and foster parents.

Results revealed the frequency with which children's symptoms related to their visits was significantly related to visitation only at the natural parent's home. Visitation in the home of the primary caregiver (e.g., foster parents) was unrelated to frequency or to number of symptoms. The attitudes of primary caregivers to visits in the home of the natural parents were found to be significantly related to both frequency and number of symptoms. That is, children whose foster parents opposed or were anxious about visits with natural parents tended to have greater problems than children whose foster parents were either neutral toward or supportive of these visits (Gean, et al., 1985).

What can be concluded from this review of studies examining the relationship between children's adjustment in foster care and parent-child visitation is that the phenomenon remains complex. This is probably because the various studies have both defined adjustment differently and

examined different aspects of it. The negative findings should be interpreted as normal reactions to missing someone with whom children remain emotionally attached, rather than some form of aberration. While visits can arouse feelings of separation, they can also provide the opportunity to help children work through them and in the long run enhance adjustment (Littner, 1975 and Steinhauer, 1977).

What is clear from reviewing the aforementioned studies is that there is an apparent lack of focus in studying the impact of separation on qualitative aspects of parent-child visitation such as the way children relate to their parents during placement. With few exceptions, the primary focus has been on children's adjustment to their foster home placements. In light of the current emphasis on reunification, this represents a serious gap in understanding important aspects of parent-child visitation.

1.2.5 Research on Parent-Child Visitation: Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from this review of studies examining parent-child visitation. Fanshel and Shinn's (1978) findings and conclusions regarding the importance of parent-child visitation to reunification received additional empirical support from these studies and their findings stimulated further research examining the relation between agency practices and parent-child visitation. The conclusions based on these research findings suggest that agency

practices do tend to influence the way in which parent-child visitation is carried out.

Research has revealed parent-child visitation to be a more complex issue than what has otherwise emerged from studies examining the relation between frequency of visitation and child adjustment. Studies examining the relation between parent-child visitation and child adjustment revealed visitation to have both a positive and negative impact on children's adjustment in foster care. While these studies may be limited by their small samples and inconsistent definition of the construct of adjustment, the findings corroborate existing clinical discussion on parent-child visitation.

A major limitation of the research on parent-child visitation is its predominant focus on quantitative aspects, such as frequency of visitation. Studies of the quality of parent-child visitation and its relation to both length of time in care and outcome have yet to be conducted. This warrants further investigation of qualitative aspects of visitation such as changes in the way children relate to their parents while in foster care.

1.3 THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE ON PARENT-CHILD VISITATION, ATTACHMENT AND SEPARATION

The knowledge supporting recent changes in child welfare practices and legislation stems largely from the field of child development, coupled with support from clinical theory.

This has led to the belief that placement in foster care initiates a disruption in the attachment relationship between parents and their children, with the primary mechanism for maintaining this attachment being visitation. Thus, one of the main purposes of parent-child visitation is to provide for the maintenance, strengthening and continuity of the relationship between parents and children so as to facilitate reunification. Littner (1975) has elaborated on the importance of natural parents to children, noting that children often develop irrational explanations for why separation has occurred. For example, children might view placement as a punishment for some actual or fantasized wrong-doing on their part. Further, Littner conceptualized parent-child visitation as important for providing children with continuous opportunities to see their parents more realistically (Littner, 1975).

In this section, empirical findings on this question will be reviewed. The section will be organized as follows: Section 1.3.1 will address studies which have examined the relation between parent-child visitation and children's attachment. Section 1.3.2 will address both the theoretical and empirical literature on separation, attachment and parent-child visitation.

1.3.1 Visitation and Parent-Child Attachment

According to Bowlby and others, attachment is the affectional bond that develops from early infancy through childhood between parent and child. When situations arise that might endanger or disrupt the relationship, actions are elicited from the child to prevent it. Such actions on the part of the child might entail clinging, crying or angry protests (Bowlby, 1973). Placement of a child in foster care represents an intense separation experience and disruption of the attachment relationship between parent and child. A primary purpose of visitation is to maintain and enhance the attachment relationship between parent and child.

The major empirical work and theorizing concerning parent-child attachment and the impact of separation derives from observational studies of children who have been hospitalized or have entered residential nurseries. A rather limited number of studies stem from child welfare research. In a previously mentioned study by Weinstein (1960), the following set of four questions were developed to measure and categorize a child's predominant family identifications:

1. If you had some trouble or were worried, whom would you like to talk to about it?
2. Whom do you love most in all the world?
3. Who loves you the most?
4. If you could pick anyone in the whole world to live with, whom would you pick?

Children whose responses indicated a preference for only the natural parents or only the foster parents, were categorized as having a predominant identification with those parents. Children who mentioned both sets of parents were categorized as having a mixed identification. A total of 61 children who had been in placement at least one year were categorized in this fashion.

Subsequently, Weinstein analyzed the relationship between visiting patterns (e.g., twice a year or more versus yearly or less) and children's predominant family identifications. The results of the examination indicated children whose parents visited more regularly were significantly more likely to identify with them. When natural parents did not visit or visited irregularly, identification tended to be with the foster parents. However, results also revealed eleven of the twenty-eight children who identified predominantly with their foster parents had natural parents visiting regularly. Weinstein concluded visitation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for identification with the natural parents (Weinstein, 1960).

In a study of 47 adjudicated delinquent adolescent boys confined in a state correctional school, Borgman (1985) examined the relationship between parental visitation, a child's sense of attachment to family and the boy's misconduct while in placement. A boy's sense of attachment

to family was measured by utilizing a modification of Weinstein's measure of predominant family identification mentioned earlier in this section. Borgman found a child's sense of attachment to family, when viewed in relation to parental visitation, was significantly related to major misconduct or infractions. Thus, only twenty percent of the youths who were below the median in attachment committed a major infraction if they were also above the median in frequency of visits. Those most likely to commit a major infraction were boys who were above the median in attachment, but were below the median in parental visitation. Borgman concluded there is a need for further research and his comments help to provide some guidance and direction. He writes:

Additional research is needed, however, concerning why some families do not visit their children more frequently. . . . Although visiting by the family may be a necessary condition for the youth to behave acceptably in the institution, visits in themselves may not be a sufficient condition to produce the desired behavior in individual boys. This study could not address the issue of the quality of the visits, which may mirror the quality of the parent-child relationship. . . . (Borgman, 1985).

In their longitudinal study, Fanshel and Shinn examined the relation between frequency of parental visitation and degree of children's attachment to their natural parents. The frequency of parental visitation was measured along a continuum from no visiting through maximum visiting. An index of attachment to measure the degree of emotional

closeness between child and parents was developed by the authors. Suprisingly, the results of the analysis indicated a significant negative correlation between frequency of parental visitation and children's attachment to their natural parents. That is, unvisited children seemed more attached to their parents than visited children. The authors offered no explanation of these rather puzzling results. In addition, frequency of parental visitation was not found to be a significant predictor of change in perceived attachment of the child (Fanshel and Shinn, 1978).

Based on the findings of these studies that have investigated the relationship between parental visitation and children's attachments to their natural parents, no firm conclusions can be drawn and many unanswered questions still remain. The negative correlation between parental visitation and children's attachment reported in the Fanshel and Shinn study may have been confounded by the variable of age. Indeed, the results of their study showed older children's perceived attachment to their natural parents tended to decrease over time, while younger children's attachments tended to increase. Further results of their study showed age was a significant factor in predicting frequency of parental visitation. That is, older children were significantly more likely to be visited than younger children. When these additional results are considered, the negative correlation does not seem as puzzling; older

children were both more likely to be visited and to be perceived by caseworkers as less attached to their natural parents.

Much of the child development research on attachment has been directed toward infants and young children. The rationale underlying this emphasis is that they are more likely to elicit attachment behavior. Only recently has an effort been made to begin to devise adequate measurement and assessment techniques allowing for the study of attachment in older children.

Once again, it is clear from the review of studies of the relationship between attachment and parent-child visitation that little attention has been given to examining the impact of separation on such qualitative aspects of parent-child visitation as the way children relate to their parents during visits. In addition, few studies have attempted an integration and application of relevant theoretical thinking in this area to the study of parent-child visitation.

1.3.2 Separation, Parental Visitation and Children's Reactions to Visits

The concept of separation has had a long and controversial history in connection with the area of foster care. The early work of Bowlby (1966) and Robertson (1970) led them to caution child welfare professionals about the deleterious effects of separation on children and the importance of

parental visitation to children's psychological well-being. Thomas (1967) pointed out that although most of the studies showing separation to be harmful involved specific age groups and settings, findings were generalized to all separation experiences and used to support the assumption that a child's own home is better than any substitute form of care.

Much of the controversy surrounding the concept of separation involves the extent to which separation has been conceptualized as a unitary event with simple predictable consequences. In an article reevaluating the concept of separation for child welfare, Rose (1962) pointed out the lack of attention given to such factors as age, vulnerability differences among children and pre-placement experiences when studying the impact of separation on children. The experience of separation has been further differentiated by Yarrow (1964) according to such dimensions as permanence, duration, and repetition and he has gone on to identify six major varieties of separation.

Other writers, such as Rutter, (1972) have questioned whether it is separation per se or other factors that contribute to both immediate and long-term disturbances in children. For example, Rutter suggests the syndrome of children's initial distress following separation described by Bowlby and others is probably due to a disruption of bonds rather than from separation itself.

Bowlby's own theoretical formulations conceives of separation as the key factor in initiating a process of mourning. According to this framework, mourning is the psychological process initiated by the loss of a loved one by which a longstanding attachment is gradually undone. The purpose or aim of the mourning process is the gradual withdrawal of interest, caring and investment from the lost attachment figure, or what Bowlby refers to as the phase of detachment.

Bowlby has described three successive phases of mourning that children typically go through in response to separation from or loss of primary attachment figures: (1) protest represents children's urgent effort to recover the lost object, children typically cry, plead, bargain or behave in any way likely to cause the return of the absent parent; (2) despair represents the loss of hope of the parent's return, children will often appear apathetic or withdrawn in the placement setting; and (3) detachment, which succeeds the stages of protest and despair is characterized by a striking absence of children's attachment behavior, children will typically turn away from, become more remote from and show less of an interest in their parents during visitation and reunion.

It is presumed that unless detachment occurs, children will be unable to form the new attachment relationships (e.g., with foster parents) needed to support ongoing

development. This point is made explicit in the writings of Bowlby and others, who stress the importance of the substitute caregiver or other significant adults (e.g., caseworkers) in actively assisting completion of children's grief work as a prerequisite for reattachment (Bowlby, 1961; Bowlby, 1980; and Steinhauer, 1977).

At the same time though, children's detachment from their natural parents can have deleterious consequences for their mutual adjustment if and when the child is to return home. If the physical separation of the child from the natural parents is prolonged, the possibility of the child becoming detached and subsequent problems of mutual maladjustment between parent and child upon reunification, is greatly increased (Rose, 1962).

Much of the empirical evidence for Bowlby's theoretical formulations comes largely from observational studies of children admitted to the hospital or residential nurseries. For example, in a controlled observational study by Heinicke and Westheimer, (1965) eighteen two-year olds were observed subsequent to being admitted to a residential nursery. The duration of children's separations varied from two to twenty-six weeks. Five behavioral dimensions were used to structure observations of children's reactions to separation as follows:

1. longing for the parents;
2. refusal to participate in nursery routine;

3. disturbance in sleep;
4. seeking a positive relationship with an adult in the nursery;
5. expression of hostility.

The results of observations of children's behavior with their parents early in the separation indicated much angry and anxious attachment behavior. But, as the duration of the separation increased, the parent was typically met instead with avoidance or detachment behavior. Such changes in children's behavior toward parents were generally preceded by changes in behavior in the separation environment. Initially, children showed little or no interest in interacting with or relating to the attendants in the nurseries. Their concern seemed to be increasingly centered upon the absent parent, which reflects the stages of protest and despair of the mourning process as outlined by Bowlby. As the duration of the separation increased, children began to "settle in" and showed an increased interest in their new environment. Yet, it was during this stage when children were observed to respond to parental visitation or to reunions with disaffection, physical avoidance and detachment.

Heinicke and Westheimer (1965) proposed that children's detachment behavior could best be understood as serving a defensive function, permitting children to maintain control over their distress that had grown too intense to otherwise

permit continued behavioral organization. While such conclusions can only be inferential, they are based upon strong correlations between children's observed detachment behavior toward their parents and angry behavior observed in other settings, such as the residential nursery.

Other observational studies of children's reactions to separation from their parents, such as Robertson's (1970) of hospitalized children, lend further empirical support to Bowlby's theoretical formulations. Such support eventually led to Bowlby's own formulation of attachment theory. In contrast to the then-prevailing psychoanalytic theories of object relations, which fell short of providing adequate explanation of children's reactions to separation, Bowlby conceptualized attachment as an instinctual system within the individual having its own distinctive internal motivation.

Until the mid-1950's, the traditional model of attachment held that an infant's attachment to the primary caregiver, usually mother, was based on the result of mother meeting the infant's physiological needs. Accordingly, children's attachment and issues of loss and separation were relegated to a very early period in an individual's development. In contrast, Bowlby (1977) theorized attachment as a distinct behavioral system, the goal of which is the maintenance of an affectional bond with the attachment figure. In so doing, attachment theory became a way of conceptualizing the propensity of human beings to form strong

affectional bonds to significant others throughout the life cycle and of explaining various forms of emotional distress following unwilling separations and losses.

While Bowlby and his supporters have been much criticized for supposing separation, in and of itself, to have a uniform effect in all cases, their writings have given serious consideration to the problem of differential response. For example, Ainsworth (1965) has pointed out much of the controversy has come from inadequate recognition that the term separation covers a diversity of experiences differing greatly in intensity. She has gone on to address the problem of differential response by delineating the following six independent variables: (1) age of the child at separation, (2) the nature of the child's experiences before separation, (3) duration of separation, (4) the extent to which substitute caretakers are present, (5) the presence of traumatic circumstances either surrounding the separation itself or complicating the experience following separation, and (6) the nature of the child's experiences after the period of separation is over (Ainsworth, 1965).

Two studies from the child welfare literature are important to the discussion of children's differential responses to separation from their natural parents. Both studies applied Bowlby's theoretical formulations to this area of study. Thomas (1967) hypothesized placement in foster care initiates a grief work process consisting of four

identifiable phases, similar to those outlined by Bowlby. Thirty-five foster children between the ages of seven and twelve who had no previous placements and had been in their current foster home at least nine but no more than eighteen months comprised the study sample. An interview guide was developed and administered to foster parents to gather retrospective data on children's predominant affect and behavior during four hypothetical time intervals corresponding to each of the four phases of the grief process.

Findings from the study supported the supposition of a grief process but the hypothesized time and sequence of phases were not supported by the data. Children's predominant behaviors during the beginning interval (i.e., one day to one week in placement) were distributed in all four of the hypothesized grief phases with a significant concentration in the protest and despair phases, whereas the expectation was for concentration in the pre-protest and protest phases. However, it was found that twenty-eight children experienced emotional or physical loss of one parent in the year which preceded placement. Moreover, all but one of those children whose initial reactions to placement were suggestive of behavior other than the beginning phase had sustained some type of parental loss in the year prior to placement (Thomas, 1967).

Following Thomas' study, Walker (1971) examined the relationship between persistence of mourning in the foster child and personality characteristics of the foster mother. The study sample consisted of twenty-six foster children, ranging in age from eight to nineteen years and their twenty foster mothers. Interviews were conducted with foster mothers to obtain data to help identify the foster mother's level of relationship functioning and the child's state of resolution of mourning. Two levels of foster mothers' functioning were operationalized under the categories "need bestowing" and "need appraising". The "need bestowing" foster mother was defined as an individual limited in her ability to differentiate her own needs from the needs of her foster child. The "need appraising" foster mother was defined as an individual with an adequate sense of identity and a capability to differentiate her own needs from those of her foster child. In addition, children were administered a projective picture-story test designed to measure the degree of covert unresolved mourning.

The results of the study indicated that children living with "need bestowing" foster mothers demonstrated a significantly higher degree of overt social maladjustment and unresolved mourning than those children living with "need appraising" foster mothers (Walker, 1971). These results should be viewed with caution since the children living with "need bestowing" foster mothers differed in some important

aspects from those living with "need appraising" foster mothers. For example, children in the "need bestowing" group were younger when initially placed in foster care and experienced more placement disruptions.

The theory of separation and attachment espoused by Bowlby and others provides a useful framework for studying children separated from their parents and placed in foster care. However, these studies have examined mainly children's adjustments to their foster placement with little consideration given to parent-child visitation. In contrast, when studies of parent-child visitation have been conducted they have lacked theoretical guidance and have examined primarily frequency of parent-child visitation. The result is a gap in understanding the impact of separation on children's adjustments to their natural parents during and while in placement.

1.3.3 Theoretical and Empirical Literature on Parent-Child Visitation, Attachment and Separation: Conclusions

In light of studies of children's attachments to their natural parents and their relationship to parent-child visitation no firm conclusions can be drawn. Yet the results suggest frequency of visitation to be a necessary condition for maintenance of the attachment relationship between parent and child. Borgman's (1985) conclusions concerning the limitations of his own study investigating the qualitative

aspects of parent-child visitation remain characteristic of most studies of parent-child visitation.

Bowlby's theoretical framework is useful in studying children's separation from their parents. Thomas (1967) found support for a grief process in studying children's adjustment to foster placement. However, most studies of separation have examined children's adjustment to the foster home with little attention given to investigation of the impact of separation on parent-child visitation. The theory of separation and attachment espoused by Bowlby (1969; 1973 and 1980) has direct relevance to an examination of changes in the way children relate to their natural parents during placement in foster care. This question warrants further investigation.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In light of the current emphasis on permanency planning and reunification, parent-child visitation has taken on an increased significance for child welfare practice and policy. Several conclusions can be drawn from the review of the literature on parent-child visitation.

First, few studies have examined the nature and quality of parent-child visitation. Second, while some studies have been guided by a theoretical orientation in studying children's adjustment to foster home placement, no attempt has been made to integrate or apply theoretically and

empirically relevant knowledge in studying aspects of the way children relate to their parents during visitation. Third, no attempt has been made to examine the relation between case disposition or outcome and such process variables as changes in the quality of the parent-child relationship during placement or interpersonal characteristics of these families.

Recent research by Rzepnicki (1987) revealed that while rates of discharge have increased there has also been an increase in the rates of entry. She concludes that part of this increase can be explained by an increase in rates of recidivism. In addition, other research revealed discharge home or reunification to be the most unstable of permanent placements. Explanations given by researchers for these results fail to take into consideration the effects of the separation itself and the changes in the quality of the parent-child relationship manifested during the placement process. Instead, they focus on the structural aspects of service delivery (e.g., court review process, case management). In his critique of foster care research, Kadushin (1978) notes that while the structure of services may be significantly related to outcome, factors such as limited practice capabilities in bringing about intra- and interpersonal change in families may be even more important.

Research examining the impact of children's separation from parents has shown that children relate differently to parents during and subsequent to any form of separation from

them and that their detachment behavior tends to increase over time. Since foster care placement represents a profound disruption and separation experience, it is reasonable to expect similar changes in the way children relate to their parents during and subsequent to the placement process.

This study examines the relationship between the quality of parent-child visitation, various foster placement and demographic characteristics of families with children in care, and planned outcomes. The study has implications for child welfare practice. Efforts of caseworkers in preparing parents and children for reunification would be enhanced by knowledge of changes in the quality of parent-child visitation. Increasingly, the work of preparing parents and children for reunification is being viewed as significant for its success. Findings from the study should provide additional substance and direction to the work already being done in preparing families for reunification.

The reactions and adjustments of children when reunited with their biological parents should be viewed within the context of the effects of the separation itself and subsequent changes in the way children relate to their parents during the placement process. By studying the quality and nature of parent-child visitation during the course of placement, earlier identification and assessment of problems in parent-child interaction becomes possible and may contribute to the success of reunification.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) Can a valid and reliable measure of children's behavior during parent-child visitation based on parental self-report be developed? If so, (2) what is the relation between children's behavior during visitation and various characteristics of foster placement, including length of time in foster care, past history of separation and loss, reason for placement, and consensus of placement plan? (3) What is the relation between children's behavior during visitation and various demographic variables of families with children in foster care? (4) What is the relation between interpersonal characteristics of families with children in foster care and demographic and foster placement characteristics? (5) What is the relation between planned outcomes of foster care and the following three categories of variables: (a) foster placement characteristics, (b) demographic variables of families with children in foster care, and (c) interpersonal characteristics of families with children in foster care?

2.2 SAMPLE AND SITE

Settings sampled represented nineteen branch offices of the Tennessee State Department of Human Services. Branch offices in which samples were drawn lie mostly within the East Tennessee area. The Assistant Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services gave her support to the research and final approval was given by the Commissioner.

Subsequent to this approval, the research was presented to the District Directors and Field Supervisors of the counties designated to participate in the research. Also, the author made presentations to all of the caseworkers who were to be involved in administering the research instrument to parents participating in the research.

The data were collected using a purposive sampling method. The sample was drawn from nineteen county offices of the Tennessee Department of Human Services. All parent respondents met the following criteria: (1) they were currently visiting their children in foster care, and (2) a decision with respect to permanency planning had been reached and/or was likely to be implemented shortly (i.e., reunification, adoption or long-term care).

The sample consisted of 103 parents of children in foster care, which represented 17.02% of the total number of families with children in care in the East Tennessee area as of October, 1988. Eighty-one and six-tenths percent of parent respondents were female and 18.4% male. Mean age of

parents was 34.36 years (median=34.00). See Chapter III for further information about the distribution of the sample on various demographic variables.

2.3 STUDY DESIGN

The present study is cross-sectional and exploratory and involved the administration of a four-part instrument described in Section 2.4 below. The first three parts of the instrument were completed by the parents and administered by the caseworker assigned to their case. Part IV of the research instrument was completed by the caseworker. Both group and individual meetings were set up by the researcher with all caseworkers involved in administering the instrument. The purposes of these meetings were to explain the nature of the research proposal, explain and answer questions concerning sample selection, and give instructions for administration of the instrument.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION: INSTRUMENT DESCRIPTION

In order to examine the research questions posed in Section 2.1 a four-part instrument was used (see Appendix A). The first part of this instrument was devised by the author and consisted of 40 Likert-type items. These items described specific behavioral and affective qualities of how children relate to parents during parent-child visitation. Parents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. In addition, several

questions were included to elicit reports of the way parents relate to their children during visitation.

The second part of the instrument consisted of the short-form of the Family Environment Scale (FES), developed by Moos (1974). This instrument is a valid and reliable measure of interpersonal characteristics of families. The FES is comprised of ten subscales, which measure characteristics of families along three dimensions: relationship, personal growth, and system maintenance and change. Parents were asked to respond to each of the forty items comprising the scale by indicating whether the item was true or false. The FES was administered in order to provide an index of the manner in which these families interact.

Part III of the questionnaire collected data from parent respondents on a number of demographic and foster placement characteristics. The thirty variables for which data were collected are: (1) age of child; (2) sex of child; (3) number of child's siblings; (4) child's past history of separations from parent; (5) child's past history of personal losses; (6) number of parent-child visits per month; (7) location of visits; (8) distance to and from visits; (9) whether this distance is a source of difficulty; (10) type of placement (i.e., relative or non-relative); (11) distance parent lives from closest relative; (12) number of foster placements; (13) parental agreement with decision to place child into foster care; (14) parental agreement with

child's current foster care plan; (15) reason for child's placement; (16) child's residence prior to coming into foster care; (17) a listing of of those individuals (and their relationship to parent) who were residing in the home at the time the child was placed in care; (18) a listing of individuals (and their relationship to parent) who are currently living with parent; (19) sex of parent; (20) age of parent; (21) marital status; (22) race of parent; (23) religion; (24) education of parent; (25) parental experience in foster care; (26) current status of employment; (27) number of job changes by parent in the past year; (28) length of time at current address; (29) current status regarding public assistance; and (30) status regarding public assistance prior to child entering care.

The fourth and final part of the instrument was completed by caseworkers familiar with and assigned to each case. The first twenty-nine items corresponded to the items found in Part I which were designed to measure children's behavior during parent-child visitation and were included as a measure of comparison with parental reports of children's behavior during visitation. Caseworkers were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the items. Further, information was collected from caseworkers on a number of placement characteristics. The seven variables for which data were collected are: (1) reason for placement; (2) planned outcomes; (3) individuals

and/or organizations involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes; (4) supervision of visits; (5) number of parent-child visits observed; (6) type of foster care setting; and (7) length of time children were in care.

2.5 DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLE CONCEPTUALIZATION

In general, the major dependent variable in this study is children's behavior during visitation. Further, the following three categories of variables are considered independent: (1) characteristics of the foster care placement, (2) characteristics of the families in foster care, and (3) planned outcome decisions for these families. However, for the fourth and fifth research questions, certain of these variables were conceptualized differently. This section will clarify how, for each research question, each variable was conceptualized.

For the first research question, children's behavior during parent-child visitation was the major dependent variable. The issue was whether it could be validly and reliably measured. Children's behavior during visitation was measured in two ways: (1) Part I of the instrument collected information relating to children's behavior during visitation from the parents' perspective and (2) Part IV collected information regarding the same construct from the caseworker's perspective. Correlating responses from these two methods of measuring this construct assisted in the

determination of how validly it was being measured in the study. Other methods of assessing the validity of the Part I items were also employed and will be discussed in subsection 2.6.

In the second research question, children's behavior during visitation was conceptualized as the dependent variable and characteristics of the foster placement were independent variables.

In the third research question, children's behavior during visitation was conceptualized as the dependent variable while selected demographic characteristics of the families were treated as the independent variable.

In the fourth research question, interpersonal characteristics of the families (FES), was conceptualized as the dependent variable while foster placement and demographic characteristics of the families were treated as independent variables.

In the fifth research question, planned outcomes of care was conceptualized as the dependent variable while the following three categories of variables were treated as independent: (1) foster placement characteristics, (2) demographic characteristics, and (3) interpersonal characteristics of families with children in care.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In conjunction with Sections 2.1 and 2.5, this section will describe the methods of statistical analysis which were used to answer the research questions.

The first question addressed how valid and reliable children's behavior during parent-child visitation was measured. To answer this question, all parts of the research instrument were used. First, the forty items of Part I of the instrument were factor analyzed to determine a distinct set of subscales measuring children's behavior during visitation. Next, the relationship between Part I items (completed by parents) and their corresponding items from Part IV (completed by caseworkers) was assessed as a form of criterion-related validity. This analysis was performed in several steps. First, Part IV items were factor analyzed in order to compare this factor solution with the one performed on Part I items. Secondly, a correlation analysis of Part I factor scales with scales comprised of corresponding items from Part IV was performed. A final assessment of validity of Part I items involved correlating the derived subscales from Part I with Part II, the Family Environment Scales (FES). If empirically meaningful and significant correlations could be found between Part I factors and the FES subscales, this would provide support for the construct validity of the Part I factors. Finally, Cronbach's

coefficient alpha was computed on the Part I factors to determine the reliability of the subscales.

To answer the second research question, Part I factor subscales were used as dependent variables in a series of simple correlations and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) which treated Part III and Part IV items related to characteristics of the foster care placement as independent variables.

To answer the third research question, Part I factor subscales were again used as dependent variables in a series of correlations and one-way ANOVAs which treated Part III items related to demographic characteristics of the families as independent variables.

To answer the fourth research question, Part II subscales (FES scores) were used as dependent variables in a series of correlations and mean comparison tests (i.e., t-tests and ANOVAs) treating foster placement and demographic characteristics as independent variables.

In the final research question, foster placement characteristics, demographic characteristics and interpersonal characteristics of families with children in care were treated as independent variables and each used in a series of mean comparison tests and cross-tabulations with planned outcomes of care. Further, all three categories of independent variables were used in a discriminant function analysis treating planned outcomes of care as the dependent variable.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will present a discussion of the findings. Chapter III will be organized according to the research questions formulated in Chapter II. Each section will be devoted to one of the five questions. Before each of the questions are addressed, however, the distribution of the sample in terms of the child's age, sex, type of foster care arrangement, length of time in placement, number of placements since entering foster care, and planned outcome will be discussed (Table 1). In addition, the issue of external validity will be addressed by comparing the most recent (i.e., 1984-1986) statistics relating to the overall population of foster children in the state of Tennessee with those from the study sample.

3.2 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

A sample of 103 parents of children in foster care was compiled from twenty counties, mostly within the East Tennessee area. As of October, 1988, there were 605 families² with children in care in the East Tennessee area. Therefore,

2

Tennessee Department of Human Services, Statistics, October, 1988.

Table 1

Sample Distribution by Sex of Child, Age of Child, Type of Foster Care Setting, Length of Time in Placement, Number of Placements, and Planned Outcome

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Sex (N=103)</u>		
Female	57.3%	
Male	42.7%	
<u>Age (N=103)</u>		
Less than 1	4.9%	7.7
01-04 years	25.3%	
05-08 years	29.1%	
09-12 years	17.3%	
13-16 years	22.4%	
17-up years	1.0%	
<u>Type of Foster Care Setting (N=102)</u>		
Foster Family Home (relative and non-relative)	89.2%	
Group Home	10.8%	
Emergency Shelter Care	0.0%	
Institution	0.0%	
Independent Living	0.0%	
<u>Length of Time in Care (N=102)</u>		
Less than 1 month	1.0%	1.6
1 month but less than 6 months	21.9%	
6 months but less than 12 months	19.4%	
12 months but less than 18 months	17.9%	
18 months but less than 24 months	8.8%	
24 months but less than 30 months	10.8%	
30 months but less than 3 years	6.5%	
3 years but less than 5 years	5.9%	
5 years or more	7.8%	

Table 1 (Continued)

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Number of Placements (N=98)</u>		
1 placement	54.1%	
2 placements	27.6%	
3 to 5 placements	13.3%	
6 placements or more	5.0%	
<u>Planned Outcome (N=102)</u>		
Reunification	73.5%	
Adoption	4.9%	
Independent Living	1.0%	
Long-term Foster Care	20.6%	

this sample of 103 represented 17.02% of the total number of families with children in care.

Table 1 displays the sample distribution on a variety of demographic and foster placement characteristics relating to the children in foster care. As can be seen from Table 1, 57.3% of the children were female and 42.7% were male. The children, in terms of sex, are similar to the population of foster children in the state of Tennessee according to the most recent statistics maintained by the Tennessee Department of Human Services.³ This information, which is based on a report of the total number of children residing in substitute care as of the last day in December, 1986, revealed that 51.7% were female and 48.3% male. The mean age of the children, as shown in Table 1, was 7.7 years. The mean age of the population of children residing in substitute care was 10.3 years. One possible reason for the younger ages of the children in the study sample might be that younger children are more likely to be visited and, since visitation was the major criterion for sample selection, these children were more likely to be included in the study.

Most of the children in the sample (89.2%) were residing in a foster family home with either a relative or non-relative and 10.8% were residing in group homes. This

³ Tennessee Department of Human Services, Statistical Flow Information, 1984-1986.

compares with 63.7% and 11.7%, respectively, as indicated in the statistical report maintained by the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

As can be seen in Table 1, the length of time children were in foster care varied considerably, but 60.2% were in care from one month to eighteen months. The mean length of time in placement for the study sample was 1.6 years. Similarly, the distribution for the population indicated 46.6% remained in care from one month to eighteen months. The largest difference between the two distributions was found in the intervals ranging from three years to over five years. That is, 28.7% of the population were in care three years or more, whereas the sample statistic for the same period of time was 13.7%. This difference might be explained by an increasing emphasis on permanency planning on the part of the state.

Table 1 reveals 54.1% were residing in their initial foster placement, 27.6% in a second placement, and 18.3% had three or more placements. The corresponding figures for the population indicate 42.7% were in their initial foster placement, 26.5% were in their second placement, while over 30% had three or more placements. A possible explanation for the greater number of first foster care placements in the study sample is that all children in this study were visited and studies have found children who are visited tend to make better adjustments to their foster home placements than

children who are unvisited.⁴ Another reason could be that due to the younger age of the study sample they simply hadn't experienced more placements.

As can be seen in Table 1, foster care workers reported 73.5% of the sample children had planned outcomes of reunification, 4.9% were expected to be adopted, and 20.6% were expected to stay in long-term foster care as the planned outcome. With the exception of adoption, these figures differ considerably with those reported by the state of Tennessee. Their report indicates 21.6% had goals of reunification, 4.8% had adoption as a goal and 2.1% had planned outcomes of long-term foster care. Some of this discrepancy can be explained by the fact that 65.7% of the population in care reported by the state of Tennessee had no goal or outcome established. The figures for actual outcomes (i.e., those children who left substitute care during the selected reporting period) reported by the state approximate more closely those of the study sample. For example, 60.6% of the population of foster children were reunited with parents or relatives during the selected reporting period.

As the above discussion suggests, though the sampling method employed in the study was purposive, there are many similarities between the sample and the population of

⁴ See, for example, Weinstein, E.A. The Self-Image of the Foster Child. New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1960.

children in foster care on numerous demographic variables and foster placement characteristics.

3.3 QUESTION 1: CAN A VALID AND RELIABLE MEASURE OF CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR DURING PARENT-CHILD VISITATION BASED ON PARENTAL SELF-REPORT BE DEVELOPED?

This question was answered in several ways. First, the content and factorial validity analyses of Part I items is discussed in Section 3.3.1. In Section 3.3.2, the criterion-related validity of Part I factor subscales is discussed. The construct validity and reliability of Part I subscales is addressed in Section 3.3.3. Finally Section 3.3.4 presents a summary of Question 1 findings.

3.3.1 Content and Factorial Validity of Part I Items

The 40 items comprising Part I of the instrument, which were developed by the author, were independently assessed by an M.S.W. and Ph.D. social worker to ascertain their content or face validity. Both judges agreed the items appeared to measure children's behavior during parent-child visitation.

In addition, the 40 Part I items were factor analyzed to determine their underlying factor structure. If a distinct set of subscales could be derived, this factor solution would justify treating the subscales as separate variables.

The initial principal-axis factor analysis of the 40 items of Part I resulted in twelve factors with eigenvalues

greater than 1.0.⁵ Using the results of the SCREE chart, however, the first four factors were retained and rotated to a varimax simple structure. The eigenvalues of these four factors were 9.7, 3.5, 3.1 and 2.1 respectively. Table 2 displays the four rotated factors which explains 46% of the total variance of the items. The percent of total variance for each of the four factors, which can be computed by dividing each factor's eigenvalue by the total number of variables, was: Factor 1 (24.2%), Factor 2 (8.7%), Factor 3 (7.8%) and Factor 4 (5.3%). In addition, the figures for percent of common variance, which measure how much of the variation accounted for by all four factors is shared by each factor, were as follows: Factor 1 (52.5%), Factor 2 (18.9%),⁶ Factor 3 (16.9%) and Factor 4 (11.6%).

The items in Table 2 have been labeled so they can be identified from the questionnaire in Appendix A. Each item begins with "P1" to indicate it is an item from Part I. The next two symbols are digits referring to the number of that item in Part I of the instrument. The rest of the label of

5

The eigenvalue is an index of the amount of variation accounted for by a factor. If a factor has an eigenvalue of at least 1.0, then that factor explains the variance of at least one item or variable.

6 It should be pointed out that percent of common variance is computed by dividing a factor's eigenvalue with the sum of eigenvalues of the four factors and multiplying by 100.

Table 2

Principal Axis Factoring of Part I Items: Varimax Rotation

Part I Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
P103HUG	78 *	-19	-11	0
P131PHAP	78 *	-6	-21	18
P101HAP	74 *	1	-24	17
P114HOLD	73 *	-24	3	-6
P109CHUG	71 *	-16	2	4
P125CTAK	66 *	-16	12	25
P120TALK	67 *	-11	0	28
P118ENJO	57 *	-18	-4	11
P136PENJ	53 *	-28	17	10
P113PLAY	51 *	-31	17	-14
P135CSPE	45 *	-19	14	17
P104ATT	46 *	-9	-6	22
P129TONE	45 *	-11	-15	29
P117GREE	42 *	3	0	35
P124BCLO	39 *	11	-31	22
P111USET	-38 *	28	14	-11
P137KEEP	-6	71 *	17	-16
P134PAFF	-7	71 *	8	12
P128AVOI	-29	65 *	-9	-9
P121RPLA	-25	61 *	1	-9
P138FSPE	-14	58 *	-20	-39
P123RAFF	-22	55 *	32	-7
P127PTAK	-2	53 *	-4	-3
P105SHY	-28	47 *	20	-7
P130HEAN	-12	46 *	10	-16
P122UNCO	-14	42 *	1	7
P110PDIS	-15	-37 *	18	35
P132ATON	-27	44 *	39	-36
P126CANG	5	-1	78 *	8
P112CRY	21	7	72 *	14
P115PANG	-3	-13	72 *	-4
P119COMP	-11	23	62 *	-2
P116NERV	-11	27	32 *	-22
P102SAD	-29	20	33 *	-17

Table 2 (Continued)

Part I Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
P139AWAY	-10	17	35	-50 *
P106ANG	-12	9	-7	-49 *
P108ATTH	-23	34	1	-40 *
P140CINT	31	-8	-13	54 *
P107DISS	7	-3	32	57 *
P133HEAR	24	6	-15	57 *

*Designates those items loading on each factor.

each item is an acronym which refers to the behavior it was designed to measure.

As can be seen from Table 2, the first factor is the largest factor and is comprised of sixteen items. Throughout the findings, Factor 1 will be descriptively referred to as "Positive Emotional Interaction" since the variables which load on it seem to be measuring a positive interaction between parent and child during visitation. The second factor is comprised of twelve items and will be referred to as "Detachment Behavior" since those items seem to be measuring avoidant and withdrawn behavior indicative of a mutual detachment between parent and child. The third factor, referred to throughout the findings as "Attachment Behavior" is comprised of six items, all of which seem to be measuring the child's reactions to placement and separation from the parent, such as crying and angry behavior when visits are ending and complaining about the foster home during visits. The fourth and final factor, referred to as "Positive Affect and Closeness" is comprised of six items measuring children's general interest in and positive reactions to visits along with the perception made by parents that their relationship with their child was becoming closer as a result of visitation. Although Factor 4 showed similarity to Factor 1, there was the lack of the strong mutual and interactive quality between both parent and child, as found in the first factor. These four factor

subscales, which are the major dependent variables in the study, will be referred to as the "Child Behavior Scales" (CBS).

3.3.2. Criterion-Related Validity of Part I Subscales

Another assessment of the validity of the Child Behavior Scales (completed by parents) involved examining their relationship with Part IV items (which caseworkers completed). The items comprising Part IV were essentially identical to the Part I items, except they were worded to facilitate completion by caseworkers. This analysis could be considered a form of criterion-related validity, which was performed in several steps. First, caseworker's responses to Part IV items were factor analyzed. The results of a four factor rotated solution of Part IV closely resembled that of Part I. Second, the Child Behavior Scales were correlated with scales comprised of corresponding items from Part IV. The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 3.

Significant moderate correlations were found between the first three Child Behavior Scales and Part IV scales while the fourth correlation is not significant (possibly due to the number of missing items that caseworkers couldn't complete). These results indicate a significant relationship between the reports of parents and caseworkers concerning children's behavior during parent-child visitation and lends empirical support to the validity of the CBS.

Table 3

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Between Child Behavior Scales and Corresponding Factor Items of Part IV

Part IV Scales	Child Behavior Scales			
	Positive Emotional Interaction	Detachment Behavior	Attachment Behavior	Positive Affect & Closeness
Scale 1	.56***			
Scale 2		.39***		
Scale 3			.50***	
Scale 4				.16

*** $p < .001$

3.3.3 Construct Validity and Reliability of Part I Subscales

A final assessment of the validity of Part I items, which measure children's behavior during visitation based on parental self-report, involved correlating the four Child Behavior Scales of Part I with the Family Environment Scale (FES). The FES is a validated self-report measure of interpersonal characteristics of families. It is comprised of ten subscales which measure characteristics of families along three dimensions. Table 4 displays the three

dimensions of the FES along with their corresponding subscales. If theoretically meaningful and significant correlations could be found between the Part I Child Behavior Scales and the FES subscales, then this would provide further empirical support for the construct validity of the Child Behavior Scales.

Table 4

Dimensions and Subscales of FES

Dimensions of FES	Subscales of FES
Relationship	Cohesion Expressiveness Conflict
Personal Growth	Independence Achievement Orientation Intellectual-Cultural Orientation Active Recreational Orientation Moral-Religious Emphasis
System Maintenance	Organization Control

Table 5 shows the correlations between the Child Behavior Scales and the FES subscales. As can be seen from Table 5, all of the correlations are relatively low ones,

Table 5

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among Child Behavior Scales and FES Subscales

FES Subscales	Child Behavior Scales			
	Positive Emotional Interaction	Detachment Behavior	Attachment Behavior	Positive Affect & Closeness
Cohesion	.00	-.10	-.01	.05
Expressiveness	.21*	-.25*	-.10	.18
Conflict	-.06	.10	.24*	-.18
Independence	.21*	-.01	-.14	.17
Achievement Orientation	.18	-.01	.13	-.02
Intellectual-Cultural Orientation	.28**	-.16	-.26*	.29**
Active-Recreational Orientation	.15	-.15	-.07	-.02
Moral-Religious Emphasis	.10	-.03	-.16	-.02
Organization	.09	-.06	.05	.11
Control	-.11	.14	.21*	-.08

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

ranging from .21 to .29, but are in directions that provide theoretical significance to the results. That is, a significant positive relationship was found between Factor 1 of Part I, Positive Emotional Interaction and the FES subscales of Expressiveness, Independence and Intellectual-Cultural Orientation of the FES. This result indicates a significant association between these variables in a theoretically expected direction. A negative relationship was found between the second factor of Part I, Detachment Behavior, and the subscale of Expressiveness on the FES. Again, the relationship is in an empirically expected direction. The association of Factor 3 of Part I, Attachment Behavior, was positively correlated with Conflict and Control and negatively with Intellectual-Cultural Orientation. Again, this relationship is theoretically correct. In fact, this result supports findings from studies in the attachment literature that have found physically abused children's attachment to parents to be the most insecure and yet these were the children more likely to show attachment behaviors, such as crying subsequent to separation from their parents.⁷ Finally, a positive relationship was found between the fourth factor of Part I, Positive Affect and Closeness, and the subscale of Intellectual-Cultural

⁷ See for example Growing Points of Attachment Theory and Research, I. Bretherton and E. Waters (eds.). Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 1985.

Orientation on the FES. Once again, this result indicates a significant association between these variables in a theoretically expected direction.

To assess the reliability of the Child Behavior Scales, Cronbach's coefficient alpha, an internal consistency measure of reliability, was computed on each. Table 6 depicts each of the four subscales along with their corresponding reliability coefficients. As can be seen, each of the subscales shows very good reliability.

Table 6

Alpha Coefficients for Child Behavior Scales

Factor	Label	Alpha
1	Positive Emotional Interaction	.82
2	Detachment Behavior	.75
3	Attachment Behavior	.74
4	Positive Affect & Closeness	.81

3.3.4 Question One Findings: Summary

Question One, whether a valid and reliable measure of children's behavior during visitation based on parental self-report could be developed, was answered in several ways. First, the content or face validity of Part I items was

assessed by both an M.S.W. and a Ph.D. social worker and the items were judged to accurately describe foster children's behavior during parent-child visitation. A factor analysis of these items revealed 46% of their total variance to be explained by a four factor solution. These factors are Positive Emotional Interaction, Detachment Behavior, Attachment Behavior, and Positive Affect and Closeness, which together comprise the Child Behavior Scales (CBS).

Next, the criterion-related validity of the CBS was assessed by correlating them with their corresponding items from Part IV. This analysis showed significant correlations between parental and caseworker reports of children's behavior during visitation. In addition, the construct validity of the CBS was assessed by correlating them with the FES. The results of this analysis revealed low but significant correlations and all were theoretically correct, thus providing evidence of construct validity. Finally, reliability of the factors was reported and the results showed each of the factors to have excellent reliability.

In conclusion, each of the analyses employed in answering Question One supports the validity and reliability of Part I of the research instrument. In Question Two, the relationship between each of the four CBS scales of Part I and various characteristics of foster placement will be explored.

3.4 QUESTION 2: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR DURING PARENT-CHILD VISITATION AND VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF FOSTER PLACEMENT?

Data on a variety of foster placement characteristics, treated as independent variables, were collected from Parts III and IV of the research instrument and used in a series of simple correlations and t-tests to answer Question Two. In subsections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2, the frequency distributions of the foster placement characteristic variables will be discussed. These two subsections will be organized according to whether the data were reported by parent or caseworker. Subsection 3.4.3 will report the significant relationships found between various foster placement characteristics and the CBS.

3.4.1 Foster Placement Characteristics Reported by Parents

In Part III of the research instrument parents were asked to report a number of variables relevant to the placement of their child into foster care. Table 7 displays the frequency distributions of these variables.

Parents were asked to respond to several specific questions concerning visitation with their children: the number of monthly visits, where their visits typically took place, and whether the distance travelled to and from visits was a source of difficulty for them. As can be seen from Table 7, most parents reported visiting with their children either two or four times per month, with the mean number of monthly

Table 7

Sample Distribution by Number of Monthly Visits, Visit Location, Difficulty Travelling the Distance for Visits, Parental Agreement with Decision to Place, Parental Agreement with Foster Care Plan, Number of Times Separated from Parent, Number of Personal Losses and Number of Foster Homes Since Placed

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Number of Monthly Visits (N=103)</u>		
1 monthly visit	13.6%	2.8
2 monthly visits	44.7%	
3 monthly visits	1.0%	
4 monthly visits	37.9%	
5+ monthly visits	2.8%	
<u>Visit Location (N=103)</u>		
DHS office	67.0%	
Parent home	23.3%	
Foster home	4.9%	
Other	4.8%	
<u>Difficulty Travelling the Distance for Visits (N=101)</u>		
Difficulty with distance	42.6%	
No difficulty with distance	57.4%	
<u>Parental Agreement with Decision to Place (N=100)</u>		
Agreement with decision	45.0%	
Disagreement with decision	55.0%	

Table 7 (Continued)

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Parental Agreement with Foster Care Plan (N=100)</u>		
Agreement with plan	77.0%	
Disagreement with plan	23.0%	
<u>Number of Times Separated from Parent (n=103)</u>		
None	65.0%	
One	23.3%	
Two	2.9%	
Three	4.9%	
Four+	3.9%	
<u>Number of Personal Losses (N=102)</u>		
None	53.9%	
One	34.4%	
Two	8.8%	
Three	2.9%	
<u>Number of Foster Homes Since Placed (N=103)</u>		
One	51.5%	1.9
Two	26.2%	
Three	10.7%	
Four	11.6%	

visits being 2.8. Sixty-seven percent indicated the DHS office was where visits occurred, while only 23.3% reported visits typically occurred in their own homes. The distance to and from visits was not a source of difficulty for 57.4% of the parents, while 42.6% indicated it was. The mean distance travelled to and from visits was 38 miles (Median=8).

As can be seen from Table 7, 55.0% of the parents disagreed with the decision to place their child into foster care, while 45.0% indicated agreement with this decision. Twenty-three percent indicated disagreement with their child's current foster care plan, while 77.0% said they agreed with the current plan. The foster care plan is a signed agreement outlining the goals towards reunification or other planned outcomes that are agreed upon by the parents and foster care worker (e.g., successful completion of parenting class, cooperation with a homemaker, resolution of identified areas of concern, visitation, etc.).

Parents were asked to report the number of times their children had been separated from them and the number of losses the child experienced during the twelve month period before coming into foster care. Table 7 shows that 65% reported their children experienced no separation and 23.3% one separation during the twelve months before entering care. In addition, 53.9% and 34.4%, respectively, reported their child had experienced no or one personal loss during the

same period. Parents reported death and divorce as the most common type of loss their children had experienced.

Table 7 reveals the majority of study children had either one or two foster placements (mean=1.9). The mean length of time in care was 1.6 years.

3.4.2. Foster Placement Characteristics Reported by Caseworkers

In Part IV of the instrument, caseworkers were asked to respond to a number of questions specifically related to the children's foster placements. As can be seen from Table 8, 81.4% had placements in non-relative foster homes, while 7.8% and 10.8%, respectively, were placed with relatives or in a residential group home. Further, 41.2% of parent-child visits were supervised visits, while 58.8% were unsupervised. The mean number of visits observed by the caseworkers was 20.9 (Median=12.0).

Caseworkers were also asked to rank-order the reasons for the child's placement into foster care. Neglect or abuse was reported as the primary reason for placement (50.5%), followed by family dysfunction (22.8%), mental illness (12.9%), child's behavior (9.9%) and physical illness of parent (3.9%).

Table 8 shows that 50.0% of the children were expected to be returned to their mother, 2.0% to their father, 15.6% to both parents and 5.9% to a relative. Adoption was reported as the planned outcome in 4.9% of the cases, 20.6%

Table 8

Sample Distribution by Type of Foster Care Setting,
Supervision of Visitation, Planned Outcomes and
Number of Individuals and Organizations Having Input
Into Planned Outcomes

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Type of Foster Care Setting (N=102)</u>		
Foster family	81.4%	
Relative placement	7.8%	
Group home	10.8%	
<u>Supervision of Visitation (N=102)</u>		
Supervised visits	41.2%	
Unsupervised visits	58.8%	
<u>Primary Reason for Placement (N=103)</u>		
Neglect/Abuse	50.5%	
Family dysfunction	22.8%	
Mental illness of parent	12.9%	
Child's behavior	9.9%	
Physical illness of parent	3.9%	
<u>Planned Outcomes (N=99)</u>		
Return to mother	50.0%	
Return to father	2.0%	
Return to both parents	15.6%	
Return to relative	5.9%	
Adoption	4.9%	
Long-term foster care	20.6%	
Emancipation/Independence	1.0%	

Table 8 (Continued)

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Number of Individuals and Organizations Having Input into Outcome Decisions (N=102)</u>		
One	1.0%	5.32
Two	2.0%	
Three	9.8%	
Four	18.6%	
Five	23.6%	
Six	18.6%	
Seven	17.6%	
Eight	8.8%	

were expected to remain in long-term foster care and 1.0% to be emancipated.

Caseworkers were asked to indicate which of the following individuals and organizations were involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes: foster care worker, foster child, natural parent, foster parent, group home staff, foster care supervisor, mental health provider, Foster Care Review Board, and Juvenile Court. Any of these individuals or organizations may be either directly or indirectly involved with the parent(s) or child depending on the family's circumstances. The Foster Care Review Board, comprised of community volunteers, is federally mandated to review foster care plans within three months of the initial placement and every six months thereafter. Although mandated to review each case, it may or may not be involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes, depending on the factors in a particular case.

An index was derived by summing the number of individuals and organizations who had input into the decision regarding planned outcomes. This index was created in order to ascertain how extensively the decision was planned. Table 8 shows the frequencies of the number of individuals and organizations who had input into the decision regarding planned outcomes. As can be seen from the table, the majority of cases had from four to seven individuals and

organizations having input into their planned outcome decision (mean=5.32).

In the subsection that follows, results of the analyses of the relationships between each of the four Child Behavior Scales and characteristics of placement will be discussed.

3.4.3 Answer to Question Two

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to analyze the relation among placement characteristics and the CBS. Table 9 shows the correlations found among the various placement characteristics and the four scales. The first series of correlations to be reported and discussed involve the following placement characteristics: frequency of parent-child visitation, age of child, length of time in care, and reasons for placement. Together, these variables have been given considerable attention in the foster care literature, especially in those studies that have examined the correlates⁸ of frequency of parent-child visitation in foster care.

The relationship between the number of monthly visits and Positive Emotional Interaction was positive ($r=.22$), indicating parents who visited their children more frequently were more likely to report their children's behavior during visitation, as well as their own behavior toward the child,

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See, for example: Fanshel, D., and Shinn, E.B., Children in Foster Care: A Longitudinal Investigation. New York, Columbia University Press, 1978.

Table 9

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among Placement Variables and Child Behavior Scales

Placement Variables	Child Behavior Scales			
	Positive Emotional Interaction	Detachment Behavior	Attachment Behavior	Positive Affect & Closeness
Number of Monthly Visits	.27**	-.18	-.13	-.01
Distance Travelled for Visits	.07	-.11	-.22*	-.02
Child's Age	-.16	.20*	.05	.07
Length of Time in Care	-.14	.22*	-.14	-.13
Agreement with Decision to Place	.07	-.14	-.26*	.15
Agreement with Foster Care Plan	.11	-.22*	-.23*	.22*
Input into Planned Outcome	-.28**	.03	-.17	.04

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

as positive. A negative correlation between frequency of visitation and Detachment Behavior ($r=-.18$) approached significance ($p=.071$), indicating parents who visited less frequently also tended to report the nature of their interaction during visits as detached.

Distance travelled for visits was negatively correlated with Attachment Behavior ($r=-.22$), indicating parents travelling greater distances to and from visits reported their children to have shown less attachment behavior (e.g., crying, anger, sadness, etc.) than those parents travelling lesser distances for visits.

There was a positive relationship between the age of the child and Detachment Behavior ($r=.20$), indicating that the older the child, the more likely it was for their behavior during visitation to be reported by parents as detached. The length of time children were in foster care also showed a significant positive correlation with Detachment Behavior ($r=.22$), indicating the longer a child was in care the more likely his or her behavior was reported as detached by the parents. It is interesting to note that, in correlations not shown, length of time in care and age were found to have significant negative correlations with frequency of parental visitation ($r=-.20$, $p=.041$; $r=-.21$, $p=.036$, respectively). In addition, a significant positive correlation was found between length of time in care and the age of the child ($r=.21$, $p=.037$). Such findings seem to indicate that older

children who have also been in care for longer lengths of time not only have fewer contacts with their parents but are also reported by their parents as more detached during visitation.

Correlations between the reported reasons for children being placed in foster care and the CBS are shown in Table 10. A significant positive correlation was found between neglect or abuse as a reason for placement and Positive Emotional Interaction ($r=.45$), indicating that as neglect or abuse was reported by caseworkers as a reason for placement, parents tended to report the quality of interaction during visitation as positive. A positive correlation (not shown) was also found between neglect or abuse and frequency of parental visitation ($r=.26$, $p=.017$), indicating when neglect or abuse was reported as a reason for placement, parents tended to visit more frequently. A possible explanation of these apparent inconsistencies is these parents were responding in a socially desirable manner, hoping their responses might influence decision-making about their children's outcomes.

When physical illness of the parent was reported as a reason for placement, a significant negative correlation with Detachment Behavior was found ($r=-.44$). It should be noted that physical illness of the parent was also negatively correlated with the child's age ($r=-.48$) (not shown),

Table 10

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among Reasons
for Placement and Child Behavior Scales

Reasons Placed	Child Behavior Scales			
	Positive Emotional Interaction	Detachment Behavior	Attachment Behavior	Positive Affect & Closeness
Neglect or Abuse	.45***	-.20	-.07	.19
Mental Illness of Parent	.01	-.00	-.13	-.17
Physical Illness of Parent	.27	-.44**	-.01	.25
Child Behavior	.15	-.13	-.19	.31*
Family Dysfunction	-.04	-.12	.11	-.00

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

indicating children placed due to the physical illness of their parents were younger than other children placed.

Finally, a positive correlation was found between the child's behavior as a reason for placement in foster care and Positive Affect and Closeness ($r=.31$). This suggests that, as children's behavior was reported as a reason for placement, parents indicated their children demonstrated a general interest in and positive affect during visits and further indicated the relationship becoming closer. In a correlation not shown, a significant positive relationship was found between child behavior as a reason for placement and children's age ($r=.43$), indicating children entering care due to their own behavior tended to be older than other children entering care.

In general, those placement characteristics most frequently examined in previous foster care research are shown in the present study to have significant and consistent relationships with the CBS. The final series of correlations and comparisons to be reported relate to the following placement characteristics, which have been given much less consideration, if any, in the foster care literature: parental agreement with the decision to place their child in foster care, parental agreement with the child's current foster care plan, and the number of individuals and organizations involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes.

Several interesting results were found from the correlations among parental agreement with the decision to place their child in foster care, agreement with the foster care plan and the CBS. Referring once again to Table 9 (see page 73), a significant negative correlation between parental agreement with the decision to place and Attachment Behavior was found ($r = -.26$), indicating when parents agreed with the decision to place their child in foster care, they tended to report less attachment behavior during parent-child visitation. Further, child behavior as a reason for placement was positively correlated (not shown) with parental agreement with the decision to place the child in foster care ($r = .23$), indicating children placed in care as a result of their own behavior tended to have parents who agreed with the placement decision. Similarly, the length of time children were in care was negatively correlated with parental agreement with the decision to place their child in care ($r = -.25$), indicating children who were in care for shorter lengths of time were more likely to have parents who agreed with the decision to place them.

As can be seen in Table 9, significant correlations were found between parental agreement with the current foster care plan and three of the four Child Behavior Scales. Significant negative correlations were found between parental agreement with the child's current foster care plan and both Detachment Behavior ($r = -.22$) and Attachment Behavior

($r=-.23$), indicating when parents agreed with the child's current foster care plan, they tended to report fewer detachment and attachment behaviors during visits. The fourth scale, Positive Affect and Closeness showed a significant positive correlation with parental agreement with their child's current foster care plan ($r=.29$), suggesting parents' who agreed with the foster care plan reported their children as showing a positive and general interest in having contact with them.

Two other related correlations suggest an emerging pattern. First, physical illness of the parent was positively correlated with parental agreement with the child's current foster care plan ($r=.30$), indicating children placed in care as a result of physical illness of the parent were more likely to have parents who agreed with their current foster care plan. Second, length of placement was negatively correlated with parental agreement with the child's current foster care plan ($r=-.18$), indicating children in care for shorter lengths of time were more likely to have parents who agreed with their foster care plan.

A consistent relationship has emerged between reason for placement, parental agreement with either the decision to place their child or the current foster care plan, length of time in care, and children's behavior during visitation. This pattern suggests parents whose children are in care as a result of the child's behavior or the physical illness of the

parent are more supportive of their child's foster care placement (i.e., in agreement with the decision to place and/or the foster care plan), tend to have children who are in care for shorter periods of time, and tend to report fewer detachment and attachment behaviors. A possible explanation for this pattern is that these parents, due to the nature of these particular reasons for placement, were more likely to seek and accept help from the child welfare system or were more likely to actually initiate the placement themselves. In addition, these reasons for placement suggest an acute or short-term need on the part of these families for child welfare intervention rather than more chronic family problems such as neglect or abuse.

The final analyses to be reported in this subsection are the correlations and comparisons between the index measuring input into the decision regarding planned outcomes and the Child Behavior Scales. As can be seen from Table 9, there was a significant negative correlation between the total number of individuals and organizations having input into planned outcomes and Positive Emotional Interaction ($r = -.28$), showing the greater the number of individuals and organizations involved in the decision regarding outcomes, the less mutual interaction during visits was reported by parents. This suggests the possibility that when greater numbers of people (i.e., professionals from a range of child welfare-related settings) are involved in the decision

regarding planned outcomes, the relationship between parent and child is thought to be more problematic.

Finally, comparisons between the mean scores on each of the Child Behavior Scales, according to whether the individuals and organizations were reported by caseworkers to be involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes, were performed using the t-test of the difference between means for independent samples. The results of these t-tests showed a significantly higher mean score on Positive Emotional Interaction when the Foster Care Review Board was not involved in the decision regarding planned outcome ($t=2.56$, $df=80.2$, $p=.0123$). Similarly, a significantly lower mean score on Positive Emotional Interaction was found when a mental health provider was reported by caseworkers to be involved in the decision regarding planned outcome ($t=2.33$, $df=61.8$, $p=.0226$). A significantly higher mean score on Detachment Behavior was shown when the Foster Care Review Board was involved in the decision regarding planned outcome ($t=2.12$, $df=85.7$, $p=.0369$). These findings suggest that input into the decision regarding planned outcomes appears to be related to certain characteristics or types of cases, such as reason for placement or age of the child. For instance, a negative correlation was found between physical illness of the parent as a reason for placement and the Foster Care Review Board having input into the decision ($r=-.31$). Further, positive correlations were found between age of the

child and group home staff and mental health providers having input into the decision ($r=.32$ and $r=.19$, respectively).

3.4.4 Question Two Findings: Summary

A series of correlations and mean comparisons were reported in examining the relationships among various foster placement characteristics and the CBS. A major finding derived from these analyses is those placement characteristics examined in other research correlate significantly and in some consistent ways with the CBS.

The relationships among frequency of visitation, age of child, length of time in care and the CBS all show consistent patterns. On the one hand, younger children tend to be in care for shorter lengths of time, are more likely to be visited, and parents tend to report a positive interaction occurring during visits. On the other hand, older children tend to be in care longer, have fewer contacts with their parents and their behavior tends to be reported as detached.

Furthermore, children entering care as a result of their own behavior tend to be older and parents report their relationship with their children becoming closer as a result of visitation. Children entering care as a result of neglect or abuse and the physical illness of a parent tend to be younger, but the findings indicate a significant difference in the parents' reports of their children's visiting

behavior. Specifically, for those children placed in care as a result of the physical illness of a parent, visits tend to be characterized by less detachment behavior while the visits of those children placed as a result of abuse or neglect reveal more positive interaction. Further, parents of children in care due to neglect or abuse tend to visit more frequently, which is inconsistent with the findings of other studies. For example, Seaberg and Tolley (1986) found no significant relationship between frequency of parental visitation and reasons for placement, and Fanshel and Shinn (1978) found parents of children in care for neglect and abuse had the fewest contacts with their children while in care. A possible explanation for this inconsistency is the fact that Fanshel and Shinn's study was a five-year longitudinal study and, in spite of the fact that the rate of visitation decreased over the five-year period for all the families in care, their figures regarding reason for placement reflect only the rates of visitation at the end of the five-year period.

Parental agreement with either the decision to place and/or the child's current foster plan suggests the following pattern with the CBS as well as with other placement characteristics. Children entering care due to their own behavior or the physical illness of the parent tend to be in care a shorter time, their parents are more likely to agree with the decision to place and/or the current foster care

plan, and the quality of their visits show less detachment and attachment behavior.

Finally, the findings show when more individuals and/or organizations are involved in the decision regarding planned outcome, parents tend to report less positive interaction occurring during parent-child visitation. Among those who may have input into the outcome decision, the Foster Care Review Board shows a consistent pattern of relation to the reported quality of visitation. On the one hand, when the board is uninvolved, parents report more positive emotional interaction in their visiting relationship. On the other hand, if the board is involved in the outcome decision, parents report greater detachment behavior. Furthermore, the findings suggest the characteristics of the case probably influences the nature of the input into decisions regarding planned outcomes.

3.5 QUESTION 3: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR DURING VISITATION AND VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE?

Data on a number of demographic characteristics of the sample were collected from Part III of the research instrument. In answering Question Three, the various demographic characteristics were treated as independent variables in a series of correlations and one-way ANOVAs. The four Child Behavior Scales were conceptualized and treated as dependent variables. Section 3.5 will be divided into two parts.

Section 3.5.1 will examine and discuss the frequency distributions of the sample according to the various demographic characteristics. Section 3.5.2 will report and discuss the findings of the statistical analyses employed in examining the relationships between the demographic variables and each of the CBS.

3.5.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Families

Table 11 shows the frequency distributions of the study sample on the various demographic characteristics reported in Part III of the instrument. The table shows that 81.6% of the parent respondents were female and 18.4% were male, with a mean age of 34.36. Forty-four and six-tenths percent of the parents reported being married, 14.6% single, 17.5% separated, 19.4% divorced and 3.9% widowed. Almost all of the parents in the study, 92.2%, were white and 6.8% were black. The mean number of years achieved in school was 9.48. Thirty-five and three-tenths percent of the parents reported they were currently employed and 64.7% indicated they were not employed at the time of the study.

Parents were asked to report the number of times they changed jobs in the past year. As can be seen from Table 11, 63.3% reported no job change, 14.9% reported having changed jobs once, 13.9% reported making two job changes, and 7.9% reported changing jobs three times within the past year.

Table 11

Sample Distribution by Sex of Parent, Age of Parent, Marital Status, Race, Highest Grade Achieved in School, Current Status of Employment, Number of Job Changes in the Past Year, Length of Time at Current Address, Distance from Closest Relative, Current Status Regarding Public Assistance, Status Regarding Public Assistance Prior to Child Entering Care, Child's Residence One Month Prior to Entering Care and Parental Experience in Foster Care

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Sex of Parent (N=103)</u>		
Female	81.6%	
Male	18.4%	
<u>Age of Parent (N=102)</u>		
16-20 years	10.7%	34.4
21-25 years	21.6%	
26-30 years	14.5%	
31-35 years	9.7%	
36-40 years	15.5%	
41-45 years	16.5%	
46-50 years	4.8%	
51+ years	6.7%	
<u>Marital Status (N=103)</u>		
Single	14.6%	
Married	44.6%	
Separated	17.5%	
Divorced	19.4%	
Widowed	3.9%	
<u>Race (N=102)</u>		
White	92.2%	
Black	6.8%	
Other	1.0%	

Table 11 (Continued)

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Highest Grade Achieved in School</u> (N=99)		
First - Fourth Grade	6.0%	9.48
Fifth - Eighth Grade	27.4%	
Ninth - Twelfth Grade	58.5%	
College	8.1%	
<u>Current Status of Employment</u> (N=102)		
Employed	35.3%	
Unemployed	64.7%	
<u>Number of Job Changes in</u> <u>the Past Year</u> (N=101)		
None	63.3%	
One	14.9%	
Two	13.9%	
Three+	7.9%	
<u>Length of Time at Current Address</u> (N=100)		
One - six months	41.0%	16.8
Seven - twelve months	28.0%	
Thirteen - eighteen months	8.0%	
Nineteen - twenty-four months	9.0%	
Twenty-five + months	14.0%	
<u>Distance from Closest Relative</u> (N=99)		
Less than one mile	5.1%	50.5
1 - 10 miles	62.6%	
11 - 20 miles	12.0%	
21 - 30 miles	3.0%	
31 - 40 miles	1.0%	
41 - 50 miles	2.0%	
51 - 60 miles	2.0%	
61+ miles	12.3%	

Table 11 (Continued)

Distribution	Percent	Mean
<u>Current Status Regarding Public Assistance (N=100)</u>		
Receiving Public Assistance	52.0%	
Not receiving Public Assistance	48.0%	
<u>Status Regarding Public Assistance Prior to Child Entering Care (N=101)</u>		
Received Public Assistance	74.3%	
Did not receive Public Assistance	25.7%	
<u>Child's Residence One Month Prior to Entering Care (N=102)</u>		
Parent's home	70.5%	
Relatives home	15.7%	
Friend's home	2.0%	
Other	11.8%	
<u>Parental Experience in Foster Care (N=103)</u>		
History in foster care	16.7%	
No history in foster care	83.3%	

Sixty-nine percent of parents reported having lived at their current address between one and twelve months (mean=16.85), while 67.7% reported living within ten miles of their closest relative. This distribution is skewed, with the mean computed at 50.5 miles and the median at 5.00 miles.

Forty-eight percent indicated they were not currently receiving public assistance and 52.0% indicated they were. Further, 74.3% indicated they had been receiving some form of public assistance prior to their child coming into foster care, while 25.7% never did.

Seventy and five-tenths percent of parents reported their child was living in their home one month prior to entering foster care, 15.7% indicated a relative's home, and 2.0% reported their child to be living in a friend's home. Further, 83.3% of parents reported having no experience in foster care as a child, while 16.7% indicated yes to this question.

Parents were also asked to list all individuals, and their relationship to the family, who were living with them at the time the child was placed into foster care. If a parent had a spouse, grandparent or friend living in the home at the time the child was placed in foster care, they would list the individual(s) and their relationship with that person. Second, parents were asked to list any other individual(s), and their relationship to them, who were currently living with them but were not reported in the

previous list. These questions were asked in order to derive what changes tended to be occurring in family composition as a result of the placement of the child into care.

In the section that follows, the relationships between the various demographic variables and each of the Child Behavior Scales will be addressed. This will be done by reporting the results of correlations between the demographic variables and each of the Child Behavior Scales. In addition, the results of group comparisons, employing t-tests and ANOVA, will be reported.

3.5.2 Answer to Question Three

A series of Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations, t-tests, and ANOVAs, were employed in studying the relationships between the demographic variables and each of the Child Behavior Scales. Table 12 shows that a significant positive correlation was found between parent's age and Detachment Behavior ($r=.19$), indicating older parents tended to report more detachment behavior during parent-child visitation. Number of years achieved in school was found to have a positive correlation with Positive Emotional Interaction ($r=.26$), showing parents with more education reported more positive interaction with their children during visits. A negative correlation was found between number of years achieved in school and Detachment Behavior ($r=-.33$),

Table 12

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among Demographic Variables and Child Behavior Scales

Demographic Variables	Child Behavior Scales			
	Positive Emotional Interaction	Detachment Behavior	Attachment Behavior	Positive Affect & Closeness
Parent Age	-.08	.19*	-.07	.03
Number of Years in School	.26*	-.33***	-.15	.08
Friends Living in Home Prior to Child's Removal	.08	.24*	.32**	-.09

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

indicating parents with more education tended to report less detachment behavior during visits with their children.

Positive relationships were found between presence of friends in the home when the child was removed and Detachment Behavior ($r=.24$) and presence of friends and Attachment Behavior ($r=.32$). These findings show when parents reported

friend(s) living in the home, they tended to report a less stable relationship with their child.

Black parents' reports of Positive Emotional Interaction were significantly higher than white parents ($t=4.207$, $df=18.6$, $p=.0005$). From Table 13, it can be seen that widowed and divorced parents reported the highest levels of detachment behavior during parent-child visitation, while single, married or separated parents tended to report less detachment behavior. Similarly, the table suggests parents who are single, married or separated report more Positive Emotional Interaction during visitation, while widowed and divorced parents tend to report less. This last finding, though, is merely suggestive, due to the low probability level ($p=.1638$).

Those placement characteristics found in the previous section to correlate significantly with the Child Behavior Scales, and the demographic variables reported here, are shown in Table 14. The purpose of reporting these correlations is to further reveal consistencies in the data as they relate to the CBS.

From Table 14, it can be seen that a significant positive correlation was found between parent's age and child's age ($r=.65$), not a surprising finding. A significant negative correlation, however, was found between the parent's age and the number of monthly visits ($r=-.22$), showing older parents tended to visit their children less frequently.

Table 13

One-Way ANOVA of Child Behavior Scales by Marital Status

Child Behavior Scales by Marital Status	N	Mean	F Probability
<u>Positive Emotional Interaction (N=91)</u>			
Single	14	73.57	p=.1638
Married	41	70.58	
Separated	14	75.42	
Divorced	19	69.73	
Widowed	4	69.75	
 <u>Detachment Behavior (N=97)</u>			
Single	14	19.57	p=.0037
Married	43	20.25	
Separated	16	15.69	
Divorced	20	23.05	
Widowed	4	30.75	

Table 14 reveals significant negative correlations between parent's age and physical illness of the parent ($r=-.45$), family dysfunction ($r=-.23$), and neglect or abuse ($r=-.30$) as reasons for children entering care. These findings indicate older parents were less likely to have children placed in care because of the physical illness of the parent, family dysfunction, and neglect or abuse. Further, the one significant positive correlation between parent's age and

Table 14

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among Demographic Variables and Placement Characteristics

Placement Characteristics	Demographic Variables		
	Age of Parent	# of Years Achieved in School	Friends In Home Prior to Child's Placement
Age of Child	.65***	-.19	-.15
Length of Time in Care	.19	-.24*	-.13
Number of Monthly Visits	-.22*	.34***	-.12
Physical Illness of Parent	-.45**	.21	-.06
Family Dysfunction	-.23*	-.00	-.14
Neglect or Abuse	-.30**	.17	.15
Child Behavior	.33*	.12	-.08

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

reasons for placement ($r=.33$), revealed older parents tended to have children in care as a result of the child's own behavior. It should be noted the positive correlation between parent's age and length of time in care ($r=.19$) closely approached significance ($p = .054$) suggesting older parents tended to have children in care longer.

Number of years achieved in school showed a significant negative correlation with length of time in care ($r=-.24$), indicating parents with more education tended to have children in care shorter lengths of time. As can be seen from the table, number of years achieved in school showed a significant positive correlation with number of monthly visits ($r=.34$), indicating parents with more education tended to visit their children more frequently. Finally, number of years achieved in school was found to have a negative correlation with age of parent ($r=-.28$) (not shown), indicating the better educated parents tended to be younger.

3.5.3 Question Three Findings: Summary

Few of the analyses of the relationships among demographic variables and the Child Behavior Scales were found to be significant. The few significant relationships corroborate earlier patterns reported in previous sections.

For instance, older parents tend to have less education and have older children who are in care as a result of their own behavior. These children tend to remain in foster care

longer, have fewer contacts with parents while in care and tend to show more detachment behavior during visitation. On the other hand, younger parents tend to have more education and have younger children in care as a result of physical illness of the parent, family dysfunction, or neglect or abuse. These younger children tend to be in care shorter lengths of time, have more contacts with their parents and tend to show less detachment behavior during visitation. Interestingly, a similar pattern of relationship emerges in regard to the marital status of the parent. That is, widowed and divorced parents, who probably are also older, have the highest mean scores on Detachment Behavior, whereas separated, single and married parents report less of this type of behavior.

These findings suggest that there are unique problems associated with the older child in care that the foster care system may need to address in order to more effectively facilitate permanency planning for this population. Further, these findings suggest that planned interventions with the older parent are indicated due to the low frequency of parent-child visitation and the detached quality of the visiting relationship.

3.6 QUESTION 4: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE AND DEMOGRAPHIC AND FOSTER PLACEMENT CHARACTERISTICS?

In Question One, correlations between FES subscales and the Child Behavior Scales were reported as a way of addressing the question of the validity of the CBS. The results of this analysis showed significant associations between the FES and Child Behavior Scales and these were in empirically expected directions. Questions Two and Three examined the relationships among placement and demographic variables and the CBS, which indicated consistent patterns of associations among these variables. Question Four will now examine the relationship among placement and demographic characteristics and FES subscales by reporting the correlations and mean comparisons among these variables.

3.6.1 Answer to Question Four

Table 15 displays those foster placement characteristics which showed significant associations with the FES. As can be seen from the table, number of monthly visits was positively correlated with Moral-Religious Emphasis ($r=.22$), indicating parents who visited more frequently tended to have a greater moral-religious emphasis in their families. Further, a negative correlation was found between number of monthly visits and Control ($r=-.24$), showing parents who visited more frequently tended to be less controlling. Distance travelled for visits was positively correlated with

Table 15

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among Placement
Characteristics and FES Subscales

FES Subscales	Placement Characteristics			
	Number of Monthly Visits	Distance Travelled for Visits	Age of Child	Length of Time in Care
Cohesion	-.05	.15	-.06	-.08
Expressiveness	.10	.32**	-.32**	-.18
Conflict	-.13	-.23*	.05	.12
Independence	-.06	-.03	.05	-.00
Achievement- Orientation	.12	.10	.01	-.00
Intellectual- Cultural Orientation	.07	.13	.00	-.07
Active- Recreational Orientation	.18	.00	-.15	-.07
Moral- Religious Emphasis	.22*	.18	-.06	.12
Organization	.15	-.05	-.11	-.15
Control	-.19*	-.24*	.06	.09

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Expressiveness ($r=.32$), indicating parents travelling greater distances tended to have more expressive families. Negative correlations were found between distance travelled and both Conflict and Control ($r=-.23$ and $r=-.24$, respectively), indicating parents travelling greater distances had families that were less conflictual and controlling.

The negative correlation between length of time in care and Expressiveness closely approached significance ($r=-.18$, $p=.068$), indicating children in care longer tended to come from families that were less expressive. Similarly, a negative correlation was found between age of child and Expressiveness ($r=-.32$), showing older children tended to have families that were less expressive. These findings are in empirically expected directions since, as reported in Section 3.3.3, Detachment Behavior and Expressiveness were also found to be negatively correlated (see Table 5).

Table 16 displays more of the foster placement characteristics which showed significant associations with the FES subscales. The number of parent-child visits observed by caseworkers showed a significant negative correlation with Expressiveness ($r=-.20$), indicating the greater number of visits observed, the less expressive the family tended to be. Further, number of observed visits was positively correlated with Control ($r=.21$), showing the greater number of visits observed the more controlling the family tended to be.

Table 16

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among Placement Characteristics and the FES Subscales

FES Subscales	Placement Characteristics			
	Number of Observed Visits	Supervision of Visitation	Number of Separations	Number of Losses
Cohesion	-.00	.00	-.23*	-.15
Expressiveness	-.20*	-.16	-.15	-.07
Conflict	.11	.23*	.15	.09
Independence	.10	-.12	-.04	-.02
Achievement-Orientation	-.07	-.13	-.01	-.07
Intellectual-Cultural Orientation	-.03	-.13	-.28**	-.19
Active-Recreational Orientation	-.02	-.08	.01	-.15
Moral-Religious Emphasis	-.07	-.19*	-.27**	-.17
Organization	-.04	-.09	-.11	-.26**
Control	-.21*	.18	-.15	-.11

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 16 shows supervision of visitation was positively correlated with Conflict ($r=.23$), indicating when visits were supervised, families tended to have more conflict. A positive correlation between supervision of visitation and Control approached significance ($r=.18$, $p=.072$), showing when visitation was supervised, the family tended to be more controlling. Supervision of visitation was also negatively correlated with Moral-Religious Emphasis ($r=-.19$), indicating when visits were supervised, the family had less of a moral-religious emphasis.

Number of separations was negatively correlated with Cohesion ($r=-.23$), indicating children experiencing greater numbers of separations tended to come from families that were less cohesive. Number of separations was negatively correlated with Intellectual-Cultural Orientation and Moral-Religious Emphasis ($r=-.28$ and $r=-.27$, respectively), indicating children experiencing greater numbers of separations came from families with less of an intellectual-cultural orientation and moral-religious emphasis. Similarly, negative correlations were found between number of losses children experienced during the year prior to entering care and Intellectual-Cultural Orientation and Moral-Religious Emphasis ($r=-.19$, $p=.056$; $r=-.17$, $p=.094$, respectively), suggesting children experiencing more losses tended to have families with less of an intellectual-cultural orientation and moral-religious emphasis. Further, number of losses was

negatively correlated with Organization ($r=-.26$), showing children experiencing more losses tended to come from families having less organization.

Finally, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the mean scores on the FES subscales according to type of foster placement. From Table 17 it can be seen children placed in foster homes and with relatives came from families with greater cohesion, while children placed in group homes had families with the least amount of cohesion. Similarly, children placed in foster homes and with relatives had families that were the most expressive, while children placed in group homes had less expressive families. Furthermore, children placed in foster homes and with relatives tended to have less conflict-ridden families, while children in group homes tended to have families with greater conflict. This last finding is merely suggestive due to the low probability level ($p=.1383$).

The correlations between demographic variables and FES subscales are displayed in Table 18. As can be seen from the table, age of parent was negatively correlated with Expressiveness ($r=-.21$), indicating older parents tended to have families that were less expressive. Age of parent was positively correlated (not shown) with age of child ($r=.65$) and child behavior as a reason for placement ($r=.33$), indicating older parents tend to have older children in care and those children are more likely to be in care as a result

Table 17

One-Way ANOVA of FES Subscales by Type of Foster Placement

FES Subscales by Type of Foster Placement	N	Mean	F Probability
<u>Cohesion (N=99)</u>			
Foster Family	80	7.037	p=.0264
Relative Placement	8	7.250	
Group Home	11	6.272	
 <u>Expressiveness (N=99)</u>			
Foster Family	81	6.222	p=.0057
Relative Placement	7	7.285	
Group Home	11	5.545	
 <u>Conflict (N=98)</u>			
Foster Family	79	5.582	p=.1383
Relative Placement	8	4.875	
Group Home	11	6.090	

of their own behavior. These findings suggest that older families who are also less expressive are more likely to have children in care as a result of their own behavior. Finally, age of parent was negatively correlated with Active-Recreational Orientation ($r=-.28$), indicating older parents tended to have families with less of an active-recreational orientation.

Table 18

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlations Among
Demographic Variables and FES Subscales

FES Subscales	Demographic Variables				
	Age of Parent	Number of Years in School	Current Public Aid	Prior Public Aid	Friends Present in Home
Cohesion	-.10	.11	.12	.17	-.27**
Expressive- ness	-.21*	.18	-.19	-.03	-.06
Conflict	.03	-.18	.14	-.03	.27**
Independence	.10	.12	.03	.01	-.02
Achievement- Orientation	.05	.10	.04	-.00	.11
Intellectual- Cultural Orientation	.02	.10	-.06	-.14	-.05
Active- Recreational Orientation	-.28**	.05	.01	-.20*	-.04
Moral- Religious Emphasis	-.06	.21*	-.03	-.00	-.05
Organization	-.04	.17	.06	.06	-.20*
Control	.06	-.24**	.22*	.10	.18

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Number of years achieved in school was positively correlated with Moral-Religious Emphasis ($r=.21$), showing parents with greater number of years in school tended to have families with a greater moral-religious emphasis. Further, number of years achieved in school was negatively correlated with Control ($r=-.24$), indicating parents achieving a greater number of years in school had less controlling families.

Table 18 reveals a positive correlation between parents currently receiving public assistance and Control ($r=.22$), indicating families receiving public assistance were more controlling. Parents currently receiving public assistance was negatively correlated with Expressiveness ($r=-.19$, $p=.060$), suggesting families receiving public assistance tended to have less expressive families. Finally, a negative correlation was shown between parents receiving public assistance prior to their child entering care and Active-Recreational Orientation ($r=-.20$), indicating families receiving public assistance prior to their child entering care tended to have less of an active-recreational orientation.

The presence of friends living in the home prior to the child's placement in foster care was found to be negatively associated with Cohesion and Organization ($r=-.27$ and $r=-.20$, respectively), indicating when friends were living in the home prior to the child's removal, the family tended to have less cohesion and organization. Further, presence of

friends in the home was positively correlated with Conflict ($r=.27$), indicating when friends resided in the home prior to the child's removal, the family tended to be more conflictual. Age of parent was negatively correlated (not shown) with presence of friends living in the home ($r=-.20$) and neglect or abuse as a reason for placement ($r=-.30$), indicating the younger the parent the more likely friends were living in the home and the more likely neglect or abuse was the reason for placement. Further, neglect or abuse as a reason for placement was negatively correlated (not shown) with age of child ($r=-.30$) and positively correlated with presence of friends in the home ($r=.16$), indicating families with children in care due to neglect or abuse tended to have younger children in care and were more likely to have friends residing in the home. A pattern seems to emerge from this series of correlations suggesting that those younger families who have less cohesion and organization, and who therefore are more likely to have friends living in the home, are more at risk of the neglect or abuse of their younger children.

The results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing the mean scores on the FES according to parents' marital status are shown in Table 19. Widowed, single, and divorced parents were the most controlling, while separated and married parents were the least controlling. Finally, black parents had a greater moral-religious emphasis in

Table 19

One-Way ANOVA of FES Subscales by Marital Status

FES Subscales by Marital Status	N	Mean	F Probability
<u>Control (N=99)</u>			
Single	15	6.600	p=.0448
Married	46	6.000	
Separated	17	5.823	
Divorced	18	6.333	
Widowed	03	7.333	

their families than white parents ($t=4.648$, $df=14.1$, $p=.0004$).

3.6.2 Question Four Findings: Summary

Several patterns of relationship emerge from the correlations and comparisons between foster placement characteristics and the FES subscales. First, children who experience more separations from their parents and more losses during the year prior to entering care have families with less of an intellectual-cultural orientation and moral-religious emphasis. Further, caseworkers more closely supervise and more regularly observe the visits of families who are more controlling and conflictual and who have less of an

intellectual-cultural orientation and moral-religious emphasis. This suggests that caseworkers supervise and tend to observe more closely families who have experienced greater turmoil and instability prior to their child entering care.

Secondly, families of children placed in foster homes and with relatives are the most cohesive and expressive and the least conflictual, while families with children placed in group homes are the least cohesive and expressive and the most conflictual. Since older children (adolescents) are generally more likely to be placed in group homes and were found to have less expressive families, the greater conflict also found in these families may be related to less ability on the part of these families to deal with the developmental issues of the older child. Furthermore, families who are less expressive tend to have children in care longer, suggesting the possibilities that either families become less expressive as children remain in care or the manner in which these families interact influences the length of time in care.

The correlations between demographic variables and FES subscales also show patterns of relationship based upon age. Older parents tend to have older children in care and also tend to have less expressive families. Similarly, widowed parents, who are probably older, have families that are the most controlling and have the least active-recreational orientations. Younger parents are more likely to have

friends residing in their homes, have younger children who are more likely to be in care as a result of neglect or abuse and their families tend to be less cohesive and organized.

3.7 QUESTION 5: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG PLANNED OUTCOMES AND FOSTER PLACEMENT CHARACTERISTICS, DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERPERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE?

In Questions Two and Three, the Child Behavior Scales were conceptualized and treated as dependent variables, while foster placement and demographic characteristics of families were treated as independent variables. In Question Four, the FES subscales were treated as dependent variables, while foster placement and demographic characteristics of families were treated as independent variables. The fifth research question treats planned outcomes of care as the major dependent variable, while treating the following three categories of variables as independent: (1) foster placement characteristics, (2) demographic characteristics, and (3) interpersonal characteristics of families with children in foster care (FES). One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and cross-tabulations were used to analyze the relationship between each of the aforementioned categories of independent variables and planned outcomes of care. Further, a discriminant analysis was performed employing all three categories of independent variables to test whether a set of variables could be found to discriminate between children

with planned outcomes of reunification and/or adoption and those with outcomes of long-term foster care.

3.7.1 Answer to Question Five

Table 20 displays the comparisons among foster placement characteristics grouped according to planned outcomes. As can be seen from the table, children visited most frequently tended to have a plan of being returned to mother, while children having the fewest contacts with their parent(s) tended to have a plan of return to relatives. Table 20 also shows children in care the longest had a plan of long-term foster care, while children in care shorter lengths of time were evenly distributed across the other categories of planned outcomes. Finally, Table 20 indicates children who experienced the most losses during the year prior to entering care had a plan of being returned to relatives, while children who experienced the least losses had plans of being returned to both parents or adoption.

Two other findings are worth mentioning. First, the youngest children tended to have a plan of adoption, while the oldest children tended to have a plan of either return to relatives or long-term foster care. This finding is merely suggestive due to a rather low probability level. Second, children with the greatest number of visits observed by the caseworker tended to have a plan of long-term foster care, while children with the fewest number of visits observed by

Table 20

One-Way ANOVA of Foster Placement Characteristics
by Planned Outcomes

Foster Placement Characteristics by Planned Outcome	N	Mean	F Probability
<u>Number of Monthly Visits (N=99)</u>			
Return to Mother	51	3.078	p=.0725
Return to Both Parents	16	2.375	
Return to Relatives	6	1.833	
Adoption	5	2.800	
Long-term Foster Care	21	2.428	
 <u>Length of Time in Care (N=99)</u>			
Return to Mother	51	1.272	p=.0048
Return to Both Parents	16	1.296	
Return to Relatives	6	1.111	
Adoption	5	1.450	
Long-term Foster Care	21	2.690	
 <u>Number of Losses Child Experienced Prior to Entering Care (N=98)</u>			
Return to Mother	50	0.720	p=.0791
Return to Both Parents	16	0.187	
Return to Relatives	6	0.833	
Adoption	5	0.200	
Long-term Foster Care	21	0.619	

the caseworker had a plan of being returned to relatives. Again, this finding is merely suggestive due to a low probability level.

Table 21 shows the comparisons among reasons for placement (weighted according to their priority) grouped according to planned outcomes. As can be seen from the table, children entering care due to the mental illness of the parent most likely had a plan of being returned to both parents and least likely had a plan of adoption. Also, Table 21 shows children entering care as a result of the physical illness of a parent most likely had a plan of being returned to both parents and least likely had plans for adoption. Similarly, children entering care as a result of their own behavior most likely had a plan of being returned to both parents and least likely had a plan of adoption. Finally, Table 21 shows children entering care due to neglect and/or abuse most likely had a plan of long-term foster care and least likely had a plan of return to relatives.

The results of these mean comparison tests examining the relationship among foster placement characteristics and planned outcomes seem to suggest a strong emphasis on and preference for reunification of the child with his or her family. It seems clear efforts were being made to devise plans utilizing the extended family and relatives as resources to facilitate reunification. For instance, children having the least contact with parents nevertheless

Table 21

One-Way ANOVA of Reasons for Placement by Planned Outcomes

Reasons for Placement by Planned Outcomes	N	Mean	F Probability
<u>Mental Illness of Parent (N=98)</u>			
Return to Mother	50	1.060	p=.0282
Return to Both Parents	16	2.437	
Return to Relatives	6	1.166	
Adoption	5	0.200	
Long-term Foster Care	21	1.523	
 <u>Physical Illness of Parent (N=98)</u>			
Return to Mother	50	1.260	p=.0440
Return to Both Parents	16	2.875	
Return to Relatives	6	0.833	
Adoption	5	0.800	
Long-term Foster Care	21	1.952	
 <u>Child's Behavior (N=98)</u>			
Return to Mother	50	1.480	p=.0004
Return to Both Parents	16	3.625	
Return to Relatives	6	0.833	
Adoption	5	0.200	
Long-term Foster Care	21	2.190	
 <u>Neglect or Abuse (N=98)</u>			
Return to Mother	50	1.100	p=.0249
Return to Both Parents	16	1.250	
Return to Relatives	6	0.833	
Adoption	5	1.800	
Long-term Foster Care	21	1.857	

had plans to be reunited with relatives. Similarly, children who experienced the most losses during the year prior to entering care nevertheless tended to have plans for being returned to relatives. This same emphasis on reunification held true across reasons for placement, the one exception being neglect and/or abuse where the most likely plan was long-term foster care.

A number of cross-tabulations (chi-square) were also used to examine the relationship among foster placement characteristics and planned outcomes. The original five categories of planned outcomes were collapsed into the following two categories in order to avoid having expected cell frequencies of fewer than five (which would tend to result in an inflated calculated χ^2 value): (1) reunification/adoption, and (2) long-term foster care. The results of the cross-tabulations showed parents were more likely to agree with their child's current foster care plan when the planned outcome was for the child to be returned home ($\chi^2 = 3.954$, $df=1$, $p=.047$). Further, the child was more likely to have a planned outcome of being returned home when the natural parent was involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes ($\chi^2 = 28.189$, $df=1$, $p<.00009$). These findings seem to suggest involvement of the parents of children in care may be a key aspect of helping families reunite. Finally, the child tended to have a plan of being returned home when the foster care supervisor was involved in the

decision regarding planned outcomes ($X^2 = 3.523$, $df=1$, $p=.061$). This finding suggests the supervisor plays a decisive role in promoting efforts toward reunification, which may be due to the legislative mandate that strongly stresses a preference for reunification. Another possible explanation is that the supervisor's input into the planned outcome decision is based on a more objective and wholistic perspective of the aspects of the case and the criteria for reunification than the worker's.

Table 22 displays the comparisons among demographic characteristics of families with children in foster care grouped according to planned outcomes. As can be seen from the table, the youngest parents had children in care with plans for adoption, while the oldest parents were more likely to have children with plans to be returned to relatives. Further, Table 22 shows parents with more years in school had children in care with plans to be either returned to mother or to be adopted, while parents with fewer years in school had children with plans to be returned to both parents, to relatives or to remain in long-term foster care. The last comparison displayed in Table 22 shows children with the greatest number of natural siblings had plans of being returned to both parents, while children with the fewest number of siblings had plans of being returned to relatives or adoption. The findings of the analysis of the relationship among demographic characteristics and planned outcomes

Table 22

One-Way ANOVA of Demographic Characteristics
by Planned Outcomes

Demographic Characteristics by Planned Outcomes	N	Mean	F Probability
<u>Age of Parent</u> <u>(N=98)</u>			
Return to Mother	50	30.24	p=.0001
Return to Both Parents	16	36.06	
Return to Relatives	6	51.00	
Adoption	5	21.00	
Long-term Foster Care	21	41.19	
 <u>Number of Years</u> <u>Achieved in School</u> <u>(N=95)</u>			
Return to Mother	48	10.20	p=.0309
Return to Both Parents	16	8.37	
Return to Relatives	6	8.00	
Adoption	4	10.25	
Long-term Foster Care	21	8.61	
 <u>Number of Natural</u> <u>Siblings Child Has</u> <u>(N=99)</u>			
Return to Mother	51	1.09	p=.0696
Return to Both Parents	16	1.94	
Return to Relatives	6	0.16	
Adoption	5	0.20	
Long-term Foster Care	21	1.48	

showed few distinctions between planned outcomes of reunification and long-term foster care, lending further support to the previously mentioned emphasis on reunification.

From the analysis of the relationship among FES subscales and planned outcomes, some distinctions seem to emerge between plans for reunification and long-term foster care. Table 23 displays comparisons among FES subscales grouped according to planned outcomes. As can be seen from the table, families that were the least expressive tended to have children with plans to remain in long-term foster care, while families that were most expressive had children with plans of adoption. This finding is merely suggestive due to the low probability level ($p=.0950$). Table 23 shows families that encouraged independence the least had children with plans to remain in long-term foster care, while families stressing independence the most had children with plans to be returned to both parents or to be returned to relatives.

Lastly, Table 23 shows families with the least active-recreational orientations tended to have children with plans to remain in long-term foster care, while families with the most active-recreational orientations had children with plans of adoption. Again, this finding is merely suggestive due to the low probability level ($p=.0700$). The results of these comparisons suggest families of children with plans to remain in long-term foster care are less supportive of the growth and development of their children than families of children

Table 23

One-Way ANOVA of FES Subscales by Planned Outcomes

FES Subscales by Planned Outcomes	N	Mean	F Probability
<u>Expressiveness (N=96)</u>			
Return to Mother	49	6.204	p=.0950
Return to Both Parents	16	6.500	
Return to Relatives	6	6.666	
Adoption	5	6.800	
Long-term Foster Care	20	5.700	
 <u>Independence (N=97)</u>			
Return to Mother	51	6.431	p=.0033
Return to Both Parents	16	7.062	
Return to Relatives	6	7.500	
Adoption	5	6.800	
Long-term Foster Care	19	6.052	
 <u>Active-Recreational Orientation (N=98)</u>			
Return to Mother	51	5.568	p=.0700
Return to Both Parents	16	5.812	
Return to Relatives	6	5.666	
Adoption	5	7.000	
Long-term Foster Care	20	5.350	

with plans for reunification. Further, since families of children with plans of long-term foster care tended to be less expressive and encouraged independence the least, the task of involving these families in the decision regarding planned outcomes might have been more difficult and influenced the plan of long-term foster care.

In order to further compare outcomes of reunification and long-term foster care, a discriminant analysis was performed employing all three categories of independent variables. Using planned outcome as the dependent variable, the three categories of independent variables (foster placement characteristics, demographic characteristics and interpersonal characteristics) were used as predictors to determine how well they discriminate between plans for reunification and/or adoption and long-term foster care.

A significant discriminant function was extracted from these data (Wilks' $\lambda = .25$, $\chi^2 = 70.791$, $df = 10$, $p < .000009$). Of all the variables entered into the equation, ten contributed significantly to the discriminant function. The standardized discriminant function coefficients reveal the relative contribution of each of the predictor variables to the discrimination between groups. Table 24 displays the ten predictor variables and their standardized discriminant function coefficients. As can be seen from the table, involvement of the foster care supervisor in the decision regarding planned outcome is the most influential predictor

Table 24

Predictor Variables and their Standardized
Discriminant Function Coefficients

Predictor Variables	Standardized Coefficients
1. Foster care supervisor input into decision regarding planned outcome	1.24
2. Presence of grandparent currently living in the home	- .83*
3. Supervision of parent-child visitation	- .79
4. Natural parent input into decision regarding planned outcome	.65
5. Positive Emotional Interaction	.62
6. Foster care worker input into decision regarding planned outcome	- .60
7. Number of years achieved in school by parent	- .55
8. Independence	.46
9. Foster parent input into decision regarding planned outcome	- .45
10. Presence of adopted children in home	.43

* A negative sign indicates those variables which are more likely to be associated with a planned outcome of long-term foster care.

of the decision to return a child home and/or place for adoption. Also, when the natural parent was involved in the decision regarding planned outcome, a plan of reunification was more likely to occur. Further, the more positive interaction occurring during parent-child visitation, the more likely the plan was reunification. If the family encouraged independence, reunification tended to be the planned outcome. Finally, if there were adopted children in the home, the plan tended to be reunification and/or adoption. This pole of the function appears to be characterized by variables describing stable homes. The second most influential predictor variable is the presence of a grandparent currently living in the home. In this case though, the presence of a grandparent currently living in the home tended to be associated with the planned outcome of long-term foster care. Table 24 also shows when the foster care worker was involved in the decision regarding planned outcome, a plan of long-term foster care tended to be made. Similarly, the more years the parent achieved in school, the more likely a plan of long-term foster care was made. When the foster parent was involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes, long-term foster care tended to be the planned outcome. This pole of the function appears to be characterized by variables describing unstable homes. Thus, this discriminant function appears to describe a "stable versus unstable home-life" continuum.

The canonical correlation, which is a measure of the degree of association between the group variable (i.e., return home/adoption versus long-term foster care) and the discriminant function was .87. Squaring the canonical correlation gives the proportion of variation in group membership explained by the function, revealing that about 75% of the variation in group membership is explained by the ten predictor variables acting together. Table 25 reveals that if just the values of these variables for all the cases in this particular sample were known, decisions regarding planned outcomes could be predicted correctly in 93% of the cases.

Since discriminant function analysis is employed to predict group membership, a measure of success is the percentage of cases correctly classified using the model. Ninety-three percent of the cases in the sample were correctly classified using the ten-variable model. This can be compared with how many cases would be expected to be correctly classified by chance alone to determine the usefulness of the model. With two groups of equal size, 50% of the classifications would be expected to be correct by chance alone. When the groups are not equal in size, however, the expected percent of correct classifications is found by squaring the proportion in each group and then summing the squares. In the present case, this expected proportion would be $[(0.195)(0.195)] + [(0.805)(0.805)] = 0.686$.

Table 25

Prediction Results Using the Ten-Variable Model

Actual Group	No. of Cases	Predicted Group Membership	
		Long-term	Return home
Long-term	16	11 (68.8%)	5 (31.3%)
Return home	66	1 (1.5%)	65 (98.5%)

Percent of "grouped cases" correctly classified: 92.68%

The predictive ability of the model can be evaluated by comparing its proportion of errors ($1.0 - 0.93 = 0.07$) to the proportion of errors expected on the basis of chance alone ($1.0 - 0.686 = 0.3140$). The model reduced the proportion of errors in prediction by $[(0.3140 - 0.07)] / 0.3140 = 0.7771$. It therefore reduces errors of predicting cases into their respective groups by 78% over what would have been expected by chance alone.

The information provided by the variables in the model has certain practice implications that could serve to facilitate and guide efforts toward reunification. The model indicates input into the decision regarding planned outcomes

tends to be associated with the decision. That is, when the foster care supervisor is involved, the planned outcome tends to be reunification. When the foster care worker has input, the decision tends to be long-term foster care. This seems to suggest decisions regarding planned outcomes are derived differently by the foster care worker and foster care supervisor. For example, the worker may evaluate the parenting ability of the parents differently than the supervisor in deriving a planned outcome decision. On the other hand, in cases where the foster care worker needs to be involved in the outcome decision, there may be more conflict or disorganization in the family. The model also shows when the natural parent is involved, the planned outcomes tends to be reunification. On the other hand, when the foster parent is involved, the planned outcome tends to be long-term foster care. Interestingly, involvement of the natural parent in the decision regarding outcomes has been a key intervention strategy of all the demonstration projects designed to enhance permanency planning for children in foster care.⁹ In any case, further research is indicated to examine how the decision regarding planned outcomes is conceptualized among those parties having input.

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See for example: Lahti, J. "A Follow-Up Study of Foster Children in Permanent Placements," Social Service Review, 56, 1982; or Stein, T. J., Gambrill, E. D. and Wiltse, K. T. Children in Foster Homes: Achieving Continuity of Care, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1978.

Further, the model suggests the quality of parent-child visitation tends to be associated with planned outcomes. Specifically, when the visiting relationship is reported to be positive, the plan tends to be reunification. This finding highlights an unexplored focus of practice (i.e., enhancing the quality of the visiting relationship) which may have potential for facilitating plans for and preparing families for reunification. Similarly, interpersonal and demographic characteristics of families with children in care tend to be associated with planned outcomes. That is, children whose families encourage independence tend to have plans for reunification. In contrast, the presence of a grandparent living in the home tends to be associated with the plan of long-term foster care. These findings suggest that certain intrafamilial characteristics, such as the level of stability or instability and the level of individuation or enmeshment of its members, may enhance or deter reunification. In any case, they seem to offer some direction in working to strengthen and prepare families for reunification.

Unlike the natural parents' involvement in the decision regarding outcomes, such factors as the quality of parent-child visitation and interpersonal characteristics of families have been given little consideration in the literature on permanency planning. The present model suggests, though, that such factors may have potential for enhancing and preparing families for reunification.

3.7.2 Question Five Findings: Summary

In answering Question Five, one-way analyses of variance and cross-tabulations were used to examine the relationship between planned outcomes and the following three categories of independent variables: (a) foster placement characteristics; (b) demographic characteristics; and (c) interpersonal characteristics of families with children in care. The results suggest an emphasis is being placed on devising plans for reunification. For example, children having the fewest contacts with their parents nevertheless have a plan of return to relatives. Similarly, children experiencing the most losses during the year prior to entering care nevertheless have plans to return to relatives. Such findings suggest efforts are being made to facilitate some form of reunification of the child with the family.

The results of the cross-tabulations show when the natural parent is involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes their child is more likely to have a plan of reunification, suggesting intervention with parents may be a key aspect of helping families reunite. Similarly, when the foster care supervisor is involved in the decision, children are more likely to have a plan of reunification, suggesting the supervisor also plays a decisive role in facilitating efforts toward reunification.

The results of the analysis of the relationship among FES subscales and planned outcomes show families differ

depending on the planned outcome decision. Specifically, children whose families are least expressive and encourage independence the least tend to have plans to remain in long-term foster care. These findings suggest families of children with plans to remain in long-term foster care are perhaps the least supportive of the growth and development of their children. Further, the interpersonal characteristics of these families suggests the task of involving them in the decision regarding planned outcomes would be more difficult to accomplish.

The results of a discriminant function analysis show ten variables explain 75% of the variance in the decision regarding planned outcomes. Based on knowledge of these ten variables, the planned outcome decision could be predicted correctly in 93% of the cases. This is an improvement of 78% over what would have been obtained by chance alone. The ten predictor variables found in the model are as follows: (1) foster care supervisor input into the decision regarding planned outcomes, (2) presence of a grandparent living in the home, (3) supervision of parent-child visitation, (4) natural parent input into the decision regarding planned outcomes, (5) Positive Emotional Interaction, (6) foster care worker input into the decision regarding planned outcomes, (7) number of years achieved in school by the parent, (8) Independence, (9) foster parent input into the decision regarding planned outcomes, and (10) adopted children in the home.

Chapter IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will first review the more pertinent findings from the analyses discussed in Chapter III. Then, on the basis of these findings, some conclusions will be drawn. Finally, implications from the study and suggestions for further related research will be considered.

4.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM CHAPTER III

The first research question examined whether a valid and reliable measure of children's behavior during parent-child visitation could be developed, based on parental self-report. Each of the analyses employed in answering Question One supported the validity and reliability of Part I of the research instrument, which was designed to measure children's behavior during parent-child visitation. In answering Question One, the forty items comprising Part I of the instrument were factor analyzed to determine whether a distinct set of subscales could be derived. A principal-axis factor analysis of the forty items of Part I resulted in four factors, which explained 46% of the total variance of items.

The first factor was named "Positive Emotional Interaction" since the variables which loaded on it seemed to be measuring a positive interaction between parent and child during visitation. The second factor, "Detachment Behavior,"

was defined by items describing avoidant and withdrawn behavior during visitation. The third factor, "Attachment Behavior," was defined by items describing children's reactions to placement and separation from the parent, such as crying behavior when visiting was over. The fourth and final factor, "Positive Affect and Closeness," was defined by items describing children's general interest and positive reactions to visits, along with the perception held by parents that their relationship with their child was becoming closer as a result of visitation. These four factor subscales, named the "Child Behavior Scales" (CBS), were the major dependent variables in the study.

A form of criterion-related validity of the CBS was assessed by examining their relationship with items from Part IV of the research instrument (which caseworkers completed). These items were essentially identical to the Part I items, except they were worded to facilitate completion by caseworkers. The results of factor analyzing caseworkers' responses to Part IV items revealed a four factor solution closely resembling that of Part I. Further, the Child Behavior Scales were correlated with the scales comprised of corresponding items from Part IV. The results of this analysis showed significant moderate correlations among the first three Child Behavior Scales and Part IV scales. These findings indicated a significant relationship between the reports of parents and caseworkers regarding the behavior of

children during visitation and lent further empirical support for the validity of the CBS.

A final assessment of the validity of Part I items involved correlating the CBS with the Family Environment Scale (FES). The FES is a valid self-report measure of interpersonal characteristics of families. The results of this analysis showed the correlations between the CBS and FES subscales to be in empirically expected directions, lending support for the construct validity of the Child Behavior Scales. Finally, reliability of the Child Behavior Scales was assessed using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, which showed each of the four scales to have excellent reliability.

In the second research question, the relationship between children's behavior during parent-child visitation and various foster placement characteristics was examined. A series of correlations and mean comparisons were used to analyze the relationships among the CBS and foster placement characteristics. These analyses showed parents who visited their children more frequently reported the visiting relationship as positive, while parents who visited less frequently tended to report more detachment behavior during visitation. Further, the visiting behaviors of older children and children in care greater lengths of time were more likely to be reported as detached by the parents.

A consistent pattern of relationships emerged among age of child, length of time in care, frequency of visitation and

the Child Behavior Scales. On the one hand, younger children tended to be in care for shorter lengths of time, were more likely to be visited, and parents tended to report a positive interaction occurring during visitation. On the other hand, older children tended to be in care longer, had fewer contacts with parents and their behavior tended to be reported as detached.

Parental agreement with either the decision to place and/or the child's current foster care plan showed a consistent pattern of relationship with the CBS as well as with other placement characteristics. Children who entered care due to their own behavior or the physical illness of a parent tended to be in care a shorter time, their parents were more likely to agree with the decision to place and/or the current foster care plan, and the quality of their visits showed less detachment and attachment behavior.

Finally, the findings showed when more individuals and organizations were involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes, parents tended to report less positive interaction occurring during parent-child visitation. Among those who had input into the outcome decision, the Foster Care Review Board showed a consistent pattern of association with the reported quality of visitation. That is, when the board was involved in the outcome decision, parents reported greater detachment behavior in their visiting relationship. On the

other hand, if the board was not involved, parents reported more positive interaction occurring during visitation.

Question Three examined the relationship between children's behavior during visitation and various demographic characteristics of families with children in foster care. While few of the analyses of the relationships among demographic variables and the Child Behavior Scales were found to be significant, certain patterns emerged that corroborated other findings. Older parents tended to have less education and had older children who were in care as a result of their own behavior. Further, these children tended to be in care longer and showed more detachment behavior during visitation. Younger parents tended to have more education and were likely to have children in care as a result of physical illness of the parent, family dysfunction, or neglect or abuse. These younger children were in care shorter lengths of time, had more contacts with parents and showed less detachment behavior during visitation.

Question Four examined the relationship among FES subscales and foster placement and demographic characteristics of families with children in care. The results of these analyses showed older children and children in care longer tended to have families that were less expressive. Interestingly, these analyses revealed children placed in group homes, who were also older, had families that were the least expressive and cohesive and the most conflictual.

Similarly, the correlations among demographic variables and FES subscales showed patterns of relationship based upon age. Older parents tended to have older children in care as a result of their own behavior and these families tended to be less expressive. Further, younger parents were more likely to have friends residing in their home, had younger children in care as a result of neglect or abuse and their families tended to be less cohesive and organized.

The fifth and final research question examined the relationship among planned outcomes of care, which was treated as the dependent variable and the following three categories of independent variables: (1) foster placement characteristics, (2) demographic characteristics, and (3) interpersonal characteristics of families with children in foster care (FES). These analyses showed an emphasis on the preference for plans involving some form of reunification of the child with the family. Further, these analyses showed when the natural parent was involved in the decision regarding planned outcome a plan of reunification was more likely to be made, suggesting intervention with parents may be a key aspect to helping families reunite. Question Five findings also revealed some distinctions between families with children who had plans for reunification and those with plans to remain in long-term foster care. That is, families encouraging independence the least had children with plans to remain in long-term foster care, while families stressing

independence the most had children with plans to be returned to both parents or to be returned to relatives.

To further compare planned outcomes of reunification and long-term foster care, a discriminant analysis was performed employing all three categories of independent variables. This analysis showed ten variables explained 75% of the variance in the decision regarding planned outcomes. Based on knowledge of these ten variables, the planned outcome decision was predicted correctly in 93% of the cases. This was an improvement of 78% over what would have been obtained by chance alone. Finally, the information provided by the variables in the model indicates input into the planned outcome decision, quality of parent-child visitation, and interpersonal characteristics of families are all associated with the planned outcome decision.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study's focus on the quality of parent-child visitation and its relationship to other aspects of foster placement reflects concerns about the current emphasis in child welfare practice and research on outcomes. The findings of this study indicate that because permanency planning is a complex and formidable task, it warrants a much broader approach in both practice and research. Further, on the basis of these findings, a number of conclusions can be drawn that have

direct relevance to related research on foster care as well as to child welfare practice.

A major goal of permanency planning is to reduce the length of time children remain in care. Studies have shown that length of time children are in care is related to outcomes (Fanshel and Shinn, 1978). That is, children who are in care longer tend to remain in long-term foster care. This has led to changes in the structure of services to facilitate permanent placements and to enhance the possibility of reunification. This study corroborated the findings of earlier studies and supported the goal of planning efforts early in the placement process in order to facilitate permanency. The efforts required to facilitate permanency planning, though, may need to go beyond improvements in the structure of service delivery (e.g., Foster Care Review Board, court review) to a more acute focus on influencing aspects of the placement process (e.g., enhancing the quality of parent-child visitation) and to a more thorough consideration of the unique characteristics of the population in care and of their families.

These conclusions are supported by a number of findings in this study. Among the three major categories of independent variables in the study (i.e., foster placement characteristics, demographic variables and interpersonal characteristics of families) the greatest number of significant associations were found between foster placement

characteristics and the quality of parent-child visitation. For example, frequency of parent-child visitation, which has been given considerable attention in foster care research and practice, is also related to the quality of visits. The findings derived from this study showed parents who visited more frequently reported their children's behavior during visits as positive while parents visiting less frequently tended to report more detachment behavior. This finding implies that frequency of parent-child visitation may be related to the quality of the parent-child relationship. Given these findings, the notion that frequency of parent-child visitation is, by itself, a sufficient condition in producing desirable outcomes, such as reunification, may need to be reconsidered. Frequency of visitation is easily measured and monitored, and therefore has emerged as a well-suited objective for the parent in the foster care plan. However, consideration of the quality of visitation is perhaps a more effective way to understand the quality of the parent-child relationship and may therefore better guide intervention strategies toward reunification.

Further, the length of time children were in care was also related to the quality of parent-child visitation. That is, this study found the longer children were in care, the more likely their behavior during visitation was to be reported as detached by the parents. This finding is supported in the theoretical writings of Bowlby (1973) and in

empirical findings of studies that examined children's reactions to separation from parents. These studies found an increase in children's detachment behavior the longer they were separated from parents (Heinicke and Westheimer, 1965).

Recently, there has been growing concern about the fact that many of the children currently entering foster care are older than in the past and whether the system is well prepared to meet the challenge they present. On the basis of the findings of this study, there are unique problems associated with the older child in care that the foster care system will need to address which make it difficult to facilitate permanency planning for this growing population. These findings indicate older children tended to remain in care longer than younger children, had fewer contacts with parents while in care and their behavior during visits tended to be reported by parents as detached. This study also found older children tended to be in care as a result of their own behavior and tended to have families that were less expressive. Further, the results of the comparisons among the FES subscales grouped according to the type of foster placement the child was in, lends additional support for this concern for the older child in care. That is, unlike children placed in foster and relative placements, children placed in group homes (adolescents) tended to have families that were the least cohesive and expressive and the most conflictual. These findings imply that the manner in which

these families interact may be related to an inability in dealing with the developmental issues of the older child. That is, the findings suggest that adolescent issues, such as independence, may not be as easily or as constructively addressed by families having these interpersonal characteristics.

Interestingly, there were problems associated with younger children in care as well, which tended to be related to the risk of neglect or abuse and to the kinds of family situations which may increase the likelihood of neglect or abuse occurring. The findings show younger parents were more likely to have a young child in care as a result of neglect or abuse. Further, these parents were also more likely to have had friends living in the home prior to their child entering care, which tended to be associated with less cohesion and organization and more conflict in families.

An emphasis on and preference for some form of reunification of children with their families, which is a central focus of permanency planning, is evident in the findings. These findings show children having the least contact with parents nevertheless had plans to be reunited with relatives. Similarly, children who experience the most losses during the year prior to entering care nevertheless tended to have plans for being returned to relatives. This same emphasis on reunification holds true across reasons for

placement, the one exception being neglect or abuse, where the most likely plan is long-term foster care.

A key aspect in facilitating plans for reunification appears to be intervention with the natural parents of children in foster care. This study found when the natural parent agreed with the child's current foster care plan, the child was more likely to have a planned outcome of being returned home. Further, when the natural parent was involved in the decision regarding planned outcomes, the child was also more likely to have a planned outcome of reunification. These findings are consistent with the experiences of a number of demonstration projects that emphasized involvement of the natural parents in planning for and meeting the agreed upon objectives set forth in the foster care plan.

This study found that certain other factors, besides the natural parents' input and involvement in planning for the return of the child, may be just as important to enhancing the goals of permanency planning. Based on the results of a discriminant analysis, the quality of parent-child visitation was also related to planned outcomes. When the quality of parent-child interaction during visitation was positive, the planned outcome tended to be reunification. Further, certain interpersonal characteristics of families with children in care were found to be associated with planned outcomes as well. For example, children whose families encouraged independence tended to have plans for reunification. Finally,

while previous studies have focused solely on the natural parent's involvement in outcomes (Stein, Gambrill and Wiltse, 1978), in this study input from the foster care supervisor, the caseworker and the foster parent also tended to be associated with planned outcomes, suggesting the decision regarding outcomes may be a more complex issue than previously thought. For example, input from the foster care supervisor was associated with planned outcomes of reunification. On the other hand, input from the caseworker and the foster parent was associated with planned outcomes of long-term foster care.

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of this study's findings. First, greater attention needs to be given to influencing aspects of the placement process, such as efforts to enhance the quality of parent-child visits. The majority of previous studies have focused only on frequency of parent-child visitation and, as a result, practice efforts have tended towards a similar focus. Second, a more thorough consideration of the unique characteristics of the population in care, and their families, is called for. Previous research has tended to compare foster children with children from the general population rather than examining differences among children in care and contributing in that manner to the knowledge base. Finally, the emphasis on incorporating the natural parent into the structural aspects of permanency planning (i.e., involvement

in and agreement with the foster care plan) in order to facilitate reunification without an accompanying emphasis on the interpersonal characteristics of these families needs to be examined. Follow-up studies examining outcomes in permanent placements where parents were involved in the planning effort found reunification to be the most unstable outcome (Lahti, 1982). This suggests other areas, such as those set forth in this study, need to be pursued to better prepare families for successful reunification.

4.4 IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The conclusions of this study have implications for social work research and child welfare practice. With respect to research implications, it should be kept in mind that the quality of parent-child visitation has only recently been discussed as an area of study. Prior research has focused exclusively on the frequency of parent-child visitation, which is a major reason for undertaking this study.

Although further testing of the validity of the Child Behavior Scales is required, the fact that the CBS proved to be a valid and reliable measure of the quality of parent-child visitation based on parental self-report in this study warrants its use in other research. It would be useful to conduct longitudinal research, employing the Child Behavior Scales, in further studying changes in the quality of parent-child visitation during the placement process. The CBS could

also be modified and administered to children in foster care, and their foster parents, as a measure of comparison with both parental and caseworker reports of the quality of visitation (which could also serve as a further assessment of the validity of the scales).

Studies that have examined factors associated with different outcomes in foster care have given little or no consideration to the quality of parent-child visitation or interpersonal characteristics of families with children in care. Although the findings in this study have shown the quality of visitation and certain interpersonal characteristics of families to be associated with planned outcomes, it remains unclear why these factors have an impact on the planned outcome decision. Therefore, more research is needed to examine the impact these factors have on planned outcomes as well as on actual outcomes.

When children in foster care have been the focus of study in the past, they have typically been treated as an homogeneous population and perhaps compared with children in the general population. While this may have been useful, depending on the purpose of a particular study, the findings of this study have shown a number of problems to be associated with older children in care that warrant further study. Additional support for the need for research focused on this distinct population in foster care stems from the

fact that children currently entering the foster care system tend to be older than in the past.

The implications of this study for child welfare practice relate to a deeper understanding of aspects of the placement process and how those aspects may have an impact on the outcomes. This suggests an ability on the part of the worker to focus on the parent-child relationship, or changes in the parent-child relationship during placement, rather than merely on the structural components of planning (i.e., case management, foster care plan, contracting). This further suggests that the successful preparation of families for reunification requires an awareness of the quality of parent-child visitation and of the interpersonal characteristics of families as they are revealed during the placement process. An approach such as this represents a departure from the existing tendency to focus either on the parent or on the child in care. Therefore, continuing education efforts need to be undertaken that inform and encourage workers to incorporate a more wholistic perspective into their practice, especially in light of the current emphasis on and preference for reunification.

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APPENDIX

PART I: PARENT'S FORM

CIRCLE one of the following:

Indicate your AGREEMENT	5	Strongly Agree	5
	4	Agree	4
or DISAGREEMENT with the	3	Undecided	3
	2	Disagree	2
following statements.	1	Strongly Disagree	1

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My child is happy to see me for visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. My child is sad during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. I kiss or hug my child during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. My child pays attention to me during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. My child shies away from greeting me when visiting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. My child easily becomes angry during visiting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. My child is disappointed when visiting is over. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. My child hardly pays attention to me during visiting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. My child kisses or hugs me during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. I am disappointed when visiting is over. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. My child complains or acts upset if he/she has to interact with me during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. My child cries when visiting is over. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. My child wants me to play during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

CIRCLE one of the following:

Indicate your AGREEMENT	5	Strongly Agree	5
	4	Agree	4
or DISAGREEMENT with the	3	Undecided	3
	2	Disagree	2
following statements.	1	Strongly Disagree	1

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. My child allows me to hold or touch him/her during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. I am angry when visits are over. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. My child is nervous during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. My child greets me without much difficulty. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. My child enjoys interacting with me during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. My child complains about the foster home during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. I can easily talk to my child during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. My child rarely asks me to play during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. My child is uncomfortable when I touch or hold him/her during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. My child rarely shows me affection during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. I sometimes think that my child and I are becoming closer to each other. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 25. My child easily talks to me during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 26. My child becomes angry when visits are over. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 27. I find it hard talking to my child during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

CIRCLE one of the following:

Indicate your AGREEMENT	5	Strongly Agree	5
	4	Agree	4
or DISAGREEMENT with the	3	Undecided	3
	2	Disagree	2
following statements.	1	Strongly Disagree	1

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28. My child avoids talking to me during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 29. My child speaks to me in a pleasant tone of voice during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 30. My child acts as if he/she doesn't hear me when I talk to him/her during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 31. I am happy to see my child for visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 32. My child speaks to me in an angry tone of voice during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 33. My child acts as if he/she hears me when I talk to him/her during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 34. I do not often show affection to my child during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 35. My child speaks to me without my having to speak first. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 36. I enjoy doing things with my child during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 37. My child keeps to himself/herself during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 38. My child rarely speaks to me during visits unless I speak first. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 39. I sometimes think that my child and I are growing away from each other. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 40. My child shows an interest in being with me during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

PART II: FES

The following list of items describe different parts of family life. Please circle whether each item is True (T) or False (F) about your own family.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Family members really help and support one another. | T | F |
| 2. Family members often keep their feelings to themselves. | T | F |
| 3. We fight alot in our family. | T | F |
| 4. We don't do things on our own very often in our family. | T | F |
| 5. We feel it is important to be the best at whatever you do. | T | F |
| 6. We often talk about political and social problems. | T | F |
| 7. We spend most weekends and evenings at home. | T | F |
| 8. Family members attend church, synagogue, or Sunday School fairly often. | T | F |
| 9. Activities in our family are pretty carefully planned. | T | F |
| 10. Family members are rarely ordered around. | T | F |
| 11. We often seem to be killing time at home. | T | F |
| 12. We say anything we want to around home. | T | F |
| 13. Family members rarely become openly angry. | T | F |
| 14. In our family, we are strongly encouraged to be independent. | T | F |
| 15. Getting ahead in life is very important in our family. | T | F |
| 16. We rarely go to lectures, plays or concerts. | T | F |

17.	Friends often come over for dinner or to visit.	T	F
18.	We don't say prayers in our family.	T	F
19.	We are generally very neat and orderly.	T	F
20.	There are very few rules to follow in our family.	T	F
21.	We put a lot of energy into what we do at home.	T	F
22.	It's hard to "blow off steam" at home without upsetting somebody.	T	F
23.	Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things.	T	F
24.	We think things out for ourselves in our family.	T	F
25.	How much money a person makes is not very important to us.	T	F
26.	Learning about new and different things is very important in our family.	T	F
27.	Nobody in our family is active in sports, Little League, bowling, etc.	T	F
28.	We often talk about the religious meaning of Christmas, Passover or other holidays.	T	F
29.	It's often hard to find things when you need them in our household.	T	F
30.	There is one family member who makes most of the decisions.	T	F
31.	There is a feeling of togetherness in our family.	T	F
32.	We tell each other about our personal problems.	T	F
33.	Family members hardly ever lose their tempers.	T	F
34.	We come and go as we want to in our family.	T	F

35.	We believe in competition and "may the best man win."	T	F
36.	We are not interested in cultural activities.	T	F
37.	We often go to movies, sports events, camping, etc.	T	F
38.	We don't believe in heaven or hell.	T	F
39.	Being on time is very important in our family.	T	F
40.	There are set ways of doing things at home.	T	F

PART III: PARENT-CHILD BACKGROUND FORM

1. What is your child's age? _____
2. What is your child's sex? _____Female _____Male
3. How many brothers and sisters does your child have?
____Natural _____Half _____Step _____Other
4. How many times had your child been separated from you during the twelve months before coming into foster care? _____
5. How many personal losses (for example, death of a relative or divorce in the family) had your child experienced during the twelve months before coming into foster care? _____
6. How many times monthly do you and your child visit? _____
7. Where do your visits usually take place?
____DHS Office _____Your Home _____Foster Home _____Other
8. How far do you travel for these visits? _____miles
9. Is the distance you have to travel to and from visits a source of difficulty for you?
____Yes _____No
10. Is your child currently placed with a relative?
____Yes _____No

11. How far away do you live
from your closest relative? _____
12. How many foster homes has your
child lived in since being
placed in foster care? _____ homes
13. Did you agree with the Department's
decision to place your child in
foster care? _____ Yes _____ No
14. Do you agree with your child's
foster care plan? _____ Yes _____ No
15. In your own words, what is the reason your child entered
foster care?

16. Where was your child living one month prior to coming
into foster care?

_____ Your Home
_____ Relative's Home
_____ Friend's Home
_____ Other

17. Please list all individuals living with you at the time your child was removed and placed into foster care and their relationship to you (for example: Robert-Husband).

Name / Relationship

_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____

18. Please also list any other individuals who are now living with you but not listed above.

Name/ Relationship

_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____

19. What is your sex? _____Female _____Male

20. What is your age? _____ years

21. What is your marital status?

_____ Single	_____ Married	_____ Widowed
_____ Separated	_____ Divorced	

22. What is your race?

☐ White ☐ Black ☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian ☐ American Indian ☐ Other

23. What is your religion? _____

24. What is the highest grade you achieved in school? _____

25. When you were a child, did you
spend any time in foster care? ☐ Yes ☐ No

26. Are you currently employed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

27. What is the work that you do? _____

28. How many times have you changed
jobs in the past year? _____

29. What is your weekly take home pay? _____

30. How long have you been living
at your current address? _____

31. Are you currently receiving any
form of public assistance? ☐ Yes ☐ No

32. Were you receiving any form of
public assistance before your
child was placed in foster care? ☐ Yes ☐ No

PART IV: CASEWORKER FORM

Based on your best knowledge CIRCLE one of the following:

indicate your AGREEMENT	5	Strongly Agree	5
	4	Agree	4
or DISAGREEMENT with the	3	Undecided	3
	2	Disagree	2
following statements.	1	Strongly Disagree	1

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. This child is happy to see parent for visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. This child is sad during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. This child pays attention to parent during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. This child shies away from greeting parent when visiting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. This child easily becomes angry during visiting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. This child is disappointed when visiting is over. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. This child hardly pays attention to parent during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. This child kisses or hugs parent during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. This child complains or acts upset if he/she has to do things with parent during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. This child cries when visiting is over. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. This child wants parent to play during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. This child allows parent to hold or touch him/her during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. This child is nervous during visits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. This child greets parent without | | | | | |

	much difficulty.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	This child complains about the foster home during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	This child rarely asks parent to play during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	This child is uncomfortable when parent touches or holds him/her during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	This child rarely shows parent affection during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	This child easily talks to parent during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	This child becomes angry when visits are over.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	This child avoids talking to parent during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	This child speaks to parent in a pleasant tone of voice during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	This child acts as if he/she doesn't hear parent when parent speaks during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	This child speaks to parent in an angry tone of voice during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	This child acts as if he/she hears parent when parent speaks during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	This child speaks to parent without parent having to speak first.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	This child keeps to himself/herself during visits.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	This child rarely speaks to parent during visits unless parent speaks first.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	This child shows an interest in being with parent during visits.	5	4	3	2	1

30. Of the following possible reasons for a child's placement in a foster care setting, please indicate those that apply by numbering the items (number 1 for that item which best applies, number 2 for that item which next best applies, and so on):

_____ Mental Illness of Parent _____ Family Dysfunction
_____ Physical Illness of Parent _____ Neglect or Abuse
_____ Child's Behavior

_____ Other, please specify below.

31. Please check which of the planned outcomes listed below best applies to this case.

_____ Return home to father
_____ Return home to mother
_____ Return home to both parents
_____ Return home to relative
_____ Adoption
_____ Long-term Foster Care
_____ Emancipation/independent living

32. Please check all of the persons and organizations listed below that were involved in this decision regarding planned outcome.

_____ Foster Care Worker _____ Foster Care Supervisor
_____ Foster Child _____ Mental Health Provider
_____ Natural Parent _____ Foster Care Review Board
_____ Foster Parent _____ Juvenile Court
_____ Group Home Staff _____ Other (Specify Below)

33. Are the parent-child visits supervised? ____ Yes ____ No

34. If yes to question 33, who supervises these visits?

35. Approximately how many parent-child visits have you been able to observe either in total or portions of?

_____ visits

36. What type of foster care setting is this child in?

____ Foster family

____ Relative placement

____ Group home

37. What is the length of time this child has been in foster care?

____ years ____ months

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Statement:

This study will examine characteristics of parent-child visitation in foster care. It is being undertaken by Harvey Dean, LCSW, in partial fulfillment of the Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee. It requires the participation of parents such as yourself with children in foster care. Should you elect to participate in this study, information regarding your relationship with your child will be collected. This information will be used to increase the understanding of parent-child visitation, which is important to both parents and their children while the children are in foster care.

If you choose to participate, this would mean that you would agree to an interview and to answer questions about your visits with your child. In no way, will your decision to agree or disagree to take part in this study be considered by the Department of Human Services in connection with your case. Your decision to take part in this research must be totally your own decision. If you do choose to take part in this study, it is important you know the information you give will be completely confidential and your name will never be identified with it. In addition, you may at any time during the study choose to stop taking part.

By signing this form, you would be indicating your interest in taking part in the study and giving the researcher permission to contact you to discuss further plans for your involvement. If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, you can contact me in Knoxville at 588-5390.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Harvey Elliot Dean, LCSW

Parent Signature: _____

VITA

Harvey Elliot Dean was born in Brooklyn, New York on August 25, 1948. He is a Vietnam Veteran, serving in the United States Navy from 1966 to 1968. He graduated from Brooklyn College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in June, 1978. In the fall of 1979, he began his pursuit of a Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee and graduated in June, 1981. In 1984, the author entered the Ph.D. program in Social Work at the University of Tennessee and received the Ph.D. degree in August, 1989, while maintaining a clinical practice in the Knoxville community throughout the course of his doctoral work.

In August, 1989, Dr. Dean and his family will be moving to Louisville, Kentucky, where he has accepted an appointment as Assistant Professor in the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville. Dr. Dean is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education.