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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Mary Ellen Cox entitled "Characteristics of foster family applicants willing to accept hard to place foster children." 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 for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Social Work.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF FOSTER FAMILY APPLICANTS WILLING TO ACCEPT HARD TO PLACE FOSTER CHILDREN

A Dissertation Presented for
The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Mary Ellen Cox

December, 2000

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Eleanor and Richard Cox, who always supported me in pursuing my educational goals. To my mother whose religious faith and practicality has grounded me. To my father whose courage and unconditional love has inspired me to follow my heart and fly. Together they provided the perfect balance and their belief in me never wavered.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Attaining my Ph.D. in Social Work has been a 10-year journey that began four years before I took my first social work class. I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of those who accompanied me on this incredible journey. To my friend, Jeanne Tedrow, whose tireless work in community development inspired me to change careers and whose friendship always has sustained me. To the staff at the Kubler-Ross Center in Virginia who facilitated and witnessed my emotional and spiritual rebirth. To Lea Abdnor, Sharon Guarnera, Angela Masini, Mary Mathews-Brantley, and Connie Toverud who provided safe places and sacred spaces to explore my feelings which gave flight to my personal and professional dreams.

To Jack Huber at Meredith College who reconnected me with my love of learning. To the faculty in the College of Social Work who not only taught me the basics of social work, but also instilled in me the values of social work. To Terri Combs-Orme, Ramona Denby, Charles Glisson, and Mary Rogge who provided me opportunities to develop my research skills.

To my chair, Catherine Faver, who through her unswerving dedication to scholarship expanded my worldview and who always supported my efforts to be true to myself. To committee member and unofficial co-chair, John Orme, who not only guided me through the intricacies of good quantitative research, but also demonstrated that kindness and science are not incompatible. To committee member, Al Burstein, whose support and encouragement eased my transition back to the University of Tennessee. To committee member, Cheryl Buehler, who provided invaluable feedback on this project. To research team members Katie Rhodes and Gary Cuddeback who encouraged me and provided practical assistance over the last two years.

To Cathy Greenberg, Melody Kirby, and Jim Post, who always met my numerous requests for assistance with competence and a sense of humor. To all my social work classmates, especially Pat Allen and Daphne Cain, whose friendship and support made learning a lot of fun. To my brother, Richard Cox, who always has supported and encouraged me.

To the Casey Family Program which provided funding for this study. And finally, to the foster families and foster care workers who provided data for this study. Their amazing dedication to foster children inspires me.

ABSTRACT

In addition to a shortage of foster homes, the unwillingness of many licensed foster parents to accept the growing number of hard to place foster children has jeopardized the quality of care provided to children in state custody. The purpose of this study was to determine the number of foster family applicants willing to foster different types of hard to place children and the types of foster families willing to foster such children.

Resource theory guided this study. Data were collected from 153 foster family applicants during preservice training. The following foster parent resources were measured: income, education, race, marital status, parenting experience, fostering experience, employed in a helping profession, employed less than full-time, social support, and belonging to a place of worship. Willingness to accept the following types of hard to place children also was measured: emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children, sibling groups, children regardless of gender, physically abused children, deprived children, and sexually abused children.

Results indicated high levels of acceptance of hard to place children. Seventy-one percent of foster families would accept sibling groups and a foster child regardless of gender. With the exception of children who set fires, over two-thirds of all families were at least willing to discuss accepting children with various types of emotional or behavioral problems.

Regression analyses revealed that total resources predicted willingness to accept emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children, children regardless of gender, deprived children, and physically abused children. Regression analyses also were used to identify foster parent characteristics that predicted willingness to foster hard to place children. White foster parent applicants were more willing to accept emotionally and behaviorally

disturbed children than non-white applicants. Foster parent applicants who belonged to a place of worship were more willing to accept deprived, physically abused, and sexually abused children. Foster parent applicants with previous fostering experience were more willing to accept emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children. In addition, those who were willing to foster hard to place children were more likely to have a foster child placed in their home.

The findings of this study and other willingness studies can be used in targeted recruitment efforts and can inform agency programs and policies regarding foster parent support and training. Additionally, willingness data can be used to more appropriately match foster children with foster parents.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A shortage of foster homes has jeopardized the quality of services provided to children in state custody. Adding to this problem, many licensed foster parents are unwilling to accept the growing number of hard to place foster children, including mentally or physically handicapped children, sexually abused children, children with HIV and AIDS, children with severe emotional and behavioral problems, drug exposed or medically fragile infants, sibling groups, minorities, and adolescents. Because the number of hard to place children has increased and the current population of foster parents does not seem to be a good match for these children, the needs of hard to place children are not being met within the foster care system. Currently, there is an insufficient understanding about the types of foster parents who will accept hard to place children.

There were four purposes of this study: (1) to identify the number of foster parents willing to accept hard to place children, (2) to determine whether cumulative foster parent resources predicted willingness to accept hard to place children, (3) to determine which individual foster parent resources predicted willingness to accept hard to place children, and (4) to determine whether willingness to accept hard to place children was associated with child placement. The results of this study have implications in the areas of foster parent recruitment, foster parent training and support, and the matching of foster children with foster parents.

Increasing Numbers of Foster Children

One of the aims of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-272) was to reduce the number of children in the foster care system by providing preventive services and emphasizing the need for permanency planning. Despite these efforts the number of foster children coming into the child welfare system keeps

increasing. In 1982 it was estimated that there were 262,000 children in foster care in the United States (Tatara, 1998). By the end of 1996 the number had swelled to 507,000 (Tatara, 1998) and as of March 31, 1999, there were 547,000 children in foster care (DHHS, 2000). In Tennessee the number of foster children similarly increased from 8,502 in FY 1990 to 11,509 in FY 1998 (Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, 1999).

There are a number of reasons for the increasing numbers of foster children. Societal factors such as increases in urban poverty, homelessness, teenage motherhood, and drug and alcohol abuse have been suggested as contributing to the increase in the number of foster children (Pasztor & Wynne, 1995; Smith & Gutheil, 1988). Federal child welfare policies also have led to increases in the number of foster children. Under the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, agencies have been required to place children in state custody in a setting that is the least restrictive for the child's psychosocial needs and geographically as close as possible to the birth parents. Both of these policies were intended to secure permanent placements in a timelier manner and to address "foster care drift," which is the problem of foster children being kept in the system for years, shuttled from placement to placement with little hope of finding a permanent home. As a result of these policies, many children previously placed in more restrictive settings, such as highly controlled residential facilities, have now been placed in less restrictive settings such as foster homes (DHHS, 1993).

State level deinstitutionalization polices implemented in the late 1960s and the 1970s also have contributed to the large number of foster children (Appathurai, Lowery, & Sullivan, 1986a; Appathurai, Lowery, & Sullivan, 1986b; Arkava & Mueller 1978; Bryant, 1981; Downs, 1989; Siegel & Roberts, 1989). As a result of deinstitutionalization policies, many mentally retarded and severely handicapped children once placed in

residential facilities or state institutions are now in foster care placements (Kamerman & Kahn, 1989; Siegel & Roberts, 1989). Further, many states have decriminalized status offenses such as truancy, closing many state institutions for delinquent youth (Eastman, 1982). As a result, delinquent youths previously served by juvenile justice systems have become the responsibility of child welfare agencies (Kamerman & Kahn, 1989).

According to the Child Welfare League of America (1998), higher re-entry rates and longer stays in foster care also have contributed to the increasing numbers of foster children. It is unclear whether higher re-entry rates and longer tenures in foster care are due to the ineffectiveness of the policies related to the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 or the failure to enforce these policies, but the goal of reducing "foster care drift" has not been achieved.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act was enacted in 1997 to increase the number of adoptions by providing financial incentives to adoptive applicants. The act also attempts to reduce delays in the adoption process by providing states guidelines that specify conditions under which parental rights should be terminated. It is unclear yet whether this relatively new legislation will significantly reduce the number of foster children.

Shortage of Foster Parents

At the same time that the number of foster children has increased, the number of licensed foster parents has decreased from 147,000 in 1985 to 100,000 in 1990 (Pasztor & Wynne, 1995). In addition to the decrease in the overall number of foster families, the average licensed capacity of foster homes has decreased from 3.9 children per home before 1980 to 2.6 children per home after 1980 due to smaller dwellings and stricter agency requirements (DHHS, 1993).

Since 1985 the shortage of foster homes has been influenced by many factors including societal changes, increased economic demands on foster families, and

agency-related factors. Societal factors that have negatively affected the supply of foster parents include an increase in women working outside the home (Campbell & Downs, 1987; Fein, 1991; Kamerman & Kahn, 1989; Pasztor, 1985; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995; Smith & Gutheil, 1988; Twigg, 1991), divorce rates (Smith & Gutheil, 1988), single parents (Pasztor, 1985), and family mobility (Pasztor & Wynne, 1995). Economic factors contributing to the foster parent shortage include inadequate reimbursement rates (Campbell & Downs, 1987; Chamberlain, Moreland, & Reid, 1992), inadequate liability insurance to foster parents (Chamberlain et al., 1992; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995), lack of affordable day care services (Pasztor, 1985; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995), and decreased availability of affordable and accessible housing (Pasztor & Wynne, 1995). Agencies often have failed to meet the changing needs of foster parents. Agency-related factors contributing to the foster parent shortage include inadequate foster parent training (Chamberlain et al., 1992; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995); lack of ongoing agency support of foster parents (Campbell & Downs, 1987; Chamberlain et al., 1992; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995); lack of respite care (Chamberlain et al., 1992; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995); and inadequate information supplied to foster parents about foster children (Pasztor & Wynne, 1995).

Challenge of Hard to Place Foster Children

In addition to the increasing number of foster children and the shortage of foster parents, foster care agencies face the challenge of the changing profile of foster children. Over the past few years, the numbers of adolescents, children with AIDS, drug-exposed infants, mentally or physically handicapped children, sexually abused children, minority children, and children with emotional and behavioral problems have increased within the foster care population (DHHS, 1993; GAO, 1989; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995). These types of children have been hard to place in foster homes because many foster

parents request healthy young white foster children. These hard to place foster children sometimes are referred to in the literature as "special needs" children (Eheart, 1995).

Foster parents can elect to receive special training and be approved as therapeutic or specialized foster homes for special needs foster children. With the number of special needs foster children increasing, the need for specialized foster homes has increased; however, there has been a decrease in specialized foster homes over time. According to a national survey, 32.1% of foster homes licensed before 1980 were specialized foster homes compared to 15.4% of foster homes licensed after 1985 (DHHS, 1993).

Because of the increasing number of hard to place children and the shrinking number of foster parents, many hard to place children are not well served within the current foster care system. Recognizing this need, in 1993 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recommended that foster care agencies must "better identify and target recruitment toward the type of parents who will care for children with special needs" (DHHS, 1993, p. 73). In order to find foster homes for hard to place foster children, agencies have increasingly used targeted recruitment, employing specialized recruitment strategies to attract a group of persons who are more likely to foster a particular type of foster child, especially hard to place children. Central to the idea of targeted recruitment is that some types of foster parents are more willing to accept hard to place children than are other types of foster parents. The characteristics of such foster parents was the main focus of this study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Finding foster parents who are willing to serve the current population of foster children is of critical importance. This chapter reviews the foster care literature related to foster parent willingness to accept hard to place children. After reviewing the literature, research questions for this study are presented.

Foster parent willingness to accept hard to place children can be implied or explicitly stated. Willingness can be implied by the actual fostering of such children. However, in many cases, foster parents are not informed prior to placement about certain characteristics of foster children. In a national survey of foster parents, 31.4% of foster parents who were fostering an emotionally or behaviorally disturbed child reported not knowing the child had emotional or behavioral problems at the time of placement (DHHS, 1993). Sometimes this information is withheld from foster parents in order to facilitate placement and other times this information is not available at the time of placement.

Willingness to accept hard to place children also can be explicitly stated by foster parents. Commonly, agencies gather such data from foster parents prior to approval. However, very little information on stated willingness is available within the foster care literature. Therefore, this study focused on the stated willingness to accept hard to place children as expressed by foster parent applicants during foster parent training. For the sake of readability and brevity, throughout this paper the term "willingness" will be used to refer to "stated willingness."

Willingness to Foster

In a national survey of current and former foster parents it was found that 35% of licensed foster parents have no children placed with them (DHHS, 1993). According to interviews with child welfare agencies conducted in this national survey, the problem is

not only an overall shortage of foster homes, but part of the problem also is finding foster parents willing to accept hard to place foster children, especially infants or young children with special needs and teenagers. Agencies also expressed the need for more minority foster parents.

When asked about their willingness to accept seven types of hard to place foster children (physically handicapped or seriously ill, emotionally or behaviorally disturbed, teenagers, drug-exposed infants, infants with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or other alcohol related disorders, HIV-positive, sexually abused children), only 2.5% of foster parents rejected all seven types of foster children and 57% of foster parents rejected two or fewer types of foster children (DHHS, 1993). In comparing the acceptability of the seven types of foster children, 74% of foster parents would not accept a child with the HIV virus, 44% would not accept a teenager, 36% would not accept a child with fetal alcohol syndrome, 34% would not accept a drug-exposed infant, 27% would not accept a child with physical handicaps or a serious illness, and 26% would not accept a child with emotional or behavioral problems (DHHS, 1993). No statistics were reported about the acceptability of a child who had been sexually abused. Regarding children with emotional and behavioral problems, a majority of foster parents (51.4%) reported that their acceptance would depend upon the extent of the child's problems.

It is unclear from the data presented in the report whether there was a clustering of foster parents that accepted or rejected groupings of types of children. For example, it is unclear whether the same foster parents who are willing to accept teenagers are also willing to accept children with emotional or behavioral problems. If so, when the supply of foster parents willing to accept children with emotional or behavioral problems is exhausted, then the supply of foster parents willing to foster teenagers also becomes exhausted.

The national survey of current and former foster parents (DHHS, 1993) investigated the differences between foster parents with children and foster parents without children in terms of the total number (0-7) of stated limitations (i.e., types of hard to place foster children not accepted). For example, more homes with no children refused to accept 6 or 7 types of hard to place children than did homes with at least one child (8.3% vs. 4%). However, more homes without children also placed no limitations on the type of children they would accept (22.6% vs. 16.6%). Both groups averaged a total of 2.2 types of children they would not accept. This type of analysis is not very useful because by summing the number of limitations, important information is lost in terms of what type of foster parent (e.g., in terms of age, race, income, marital status, religious affiliation, etc.) is willing to accept a particular type of foster child, which can be useful information in conducting targeted recruitment campaigns.

However, the national survey (DHHS, 1993) reported some data concerning willingness to accept different types of foster children by type of geographical region (urban, suburban, and rural). Rural and suburban foster parents were more willing to accept some hard to place children. For example, it was found that urban foster parents (54.2%) were more likely not to accept teenagers than foster parents who lived in suburban (45.6%) or rural areas (27.8%). In addition, foster parents from urban areas were more likely (30.2%) not to accept an emotionally or behaviorally disturbed child than suburban (24.2%) or rural (21.3%) foster parents.

The survey also found that over time foster parents have become increasingly less willing to accept some types of hard to place children. Although foster mothers who were licensed after 1985 were more likely to have work or volunteer experience with retarded, handicapped, or disturbed children than foster mothers licensed before 1985, foster parents licensed after 1985 were more likely not to accept (30.9%) a handicapped or

seriously ill child than those licensed before 1985 (21%). Willingness to accept foster children with emotional or behavioral problems also appears to have decreased over time with foster parents licensed after 1985 more likely (28.6%) not to accept an emotionally or behaviorally disturbed child than foster parents licensed before 1980 (23.4%).

In the survey only frequency data were presented on the willingness to foster hard to place foster children. Because no regression analyses were conducted to control for other variables, any comparisons such as the ones presented above should be viewed with appropriate caution. In order to determine what types of foster parents (e.g., in terms of age, race, income, marital status, religious affiliation, etc.) are willing to foster particular types of foster children, it would be necessary to perform regression analyses on each type of hard to place child. By including a number of foster parent characteristics in a study, it could be determined which types of foster parents are willing to foster which types of hard to place children.

The only other fostering study to investigate the willingness to foster was Down's (1989) analysis of foster parents using secondary data. Using the data from two different surveys of foster parents, Downs (1989) investigated the differences between foster parents who were willing to foster handicapped children and those not willing to foster handicapped children. In her secondary analyses of the survey data, Downs found that 39% of foster parents would accept a mentally retarded child and 47% of foster parents probably would accept a physically handicapped child. Foster parents willing to foster a mentally retarded child had fostered more children, had lower incomes, and were less educated than those foster parents not willing to foster a mentally retarded child. Foster parents willing to foster a physically handicapped child were more likely to have fostered

more children, be more educated, be married, be full-time homemakers, and be younger than those foster parents not willing to foster a physically handicapped child.

Willingness to Adopt

Given the lack of information available on what foster parent characteristics are associated with the willingness to accept certain types of foster children, the adoption literature was explored. Although not extensive, the adoption literature provides a little more insight into what types of foster parents are willing to accept particular types of children (see Chambers, 1970; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Silverman & Feigelman, 1977). Although the decision to adopt a child is different from the decision to foster a child, the adoption literature might be helpful in suggesting what foster parent characteristics might be associated with acceptance of certain types of foster children. In addition, because many foster parents also report a desire to eventually adopt, some overlap exists between the foster parent and adoptive parent populations.

In a survey of 175 adoptive applicants Chambers (1970) asked applicants about their willingness to adopt hard to place children. Chambers (1970) found acceptance rates for hard to place children as follows: Spanish-American child (56%), American Indian child (52%), physically handicapped child (51%), mentally handicapped child (22%), child over 5 years old (10%), emotionally disturbed child (7%), and African-American child (2%). Extensive demographic data were collected and chi-square analyses were performed to determine what characteristics were associated with the willingness to adopt particular types of children. No factors were associated with willingness to adopt a child over 5 years old. Willingness to accept a handicapped child was positively associated with the father being responsible for the infertility of the couple. Mothers who were younger, married for a shorter period of time, and intended to work outside the home were more likely to accept a child from a minority group. Willingness to

accept a mentally handicapped child was negatively associated with social class, length of marriage, and the father's education level. Willingness to accept emotionally disturbed children was positively associated with the mother's education level. Chambers attempted but failed to identify clusters of adoption applicants' characteristics that would predict willingness to adopt hard to place children.

In a survey of 700 adoptive parents Silverman and Feigelman (1977) investigated the relationship between various social and cultural factors and the willingness to adopt hard to place children such as African-American, older, physically handicapped, and mentally handicapped children. Silverman and Feigelman found that parents who were affiliated with a religion were less likely to accept an African-American child. However, those affiliated with a religion, with the exception of those affiliated with the Jewish religion, were more likely to accept a physically or mentally handicapped child. In light of this finding, Silverman and Feigelman surmised that "the religiously committed appear to be more willing to accept children stigmatized by individual misfortune, but much less inclined to accept those outcast by group membership" (p. 560). Political orientation (e.g., conservative, moderate, liberal) was unrelated to the willingness to adopt older, physically handicapped, or mentally handicapped children. However, adoptive parents who were more liberal were more willing to adopt an African-American child. Silverman and Feigelman also investigated the relationship between willingness to adopt hard to place children and level of adherence to traditional sex roles, which was measured by paternal involvement in childcare. Traditional parents, that is, those with low levels of paternal involvement in child care, were less willing to adopt physically handicapped and African-American children than non-traditional parents.

In a later publication Feigelman and Silverman (1983) reported that employed mothers were more willing to adopt African-American and older children than non-

employed mothers. Compared to married couples, single parents were more willing to adopt all hard to place children. Compared to infertile couples, fertile couples were found to be more willing to adopt physically handicapped and African-American children. In trying to understand the differences found between fertile and infertile couples, Feigelman and Silverman (1983) suggested that fertile couples might be motivated by more social or humanitarian objectives as opposed to infertile couples whose motives might be more individual and personal.

Feigelman and Silverman (1983) also investigated the relationship between willingness to adopt and social status and income. Results for social status and income were mixed and somewhat inconclusive. As measured by occupational rank and educational level, social status was positively related to willingness to adopt an African-American child; however, income was not related to willingness to adopt an African-American child. Although higher income parents were more willing to adopt older children, social status was not related to willingness to adopt older children. Lower income parents were more likely to be willing to adopt mentally handicapped children; however, social status was not related to such willingness.

In many cases Feigelman and Silverman (1983) compared parents' willingness to adopt hard to place children with their actual behavior as evidenced by what type of child they actually adopted. In general they found that parents' attitude of willingness matched their behavior when choosing adoptive children. One major exception was noted. Although parents who are affiliated with a Christian denomination (Catholic, Protestant) said themselves to be more willing to adopt physically or mentally handicapped children than non-religiously affiliated parents, this attitude was not reflected in their behavior. Religious affiliation was not related to actually adopting a physically or mentally handicapped child. However, from the findings reported it is unclear whether religiously

affiliated parents declined opportunities to adopt such children or if they simply were not afforded the opportunities to adopt handicapped children. It also should be noted that data from the above studies (Chambers, 1970; Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Silverman & Feigelman, 1977) were collected in the late 1960s and the mid 1970s, when transracial adoption was far less common than it is today. Therefore, the findings concerning the willingness to adopt minority children may no longer be valid.

Relationship of Literature to Present Study

In 1993 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) advocated the use of willingness data when it recommended that future recruitment efforts must "better identify and target recruitment toward the type of parents who will care for children with special needs" (DHHS, 1993, p. 73). However, as evidenced by this review of the foster care literature, very little attention has been given to identifying which types of parents are willing to accept hard to place foster children. In particular, it would be useful to identify which types of parents are willing to foster the ever-increasing population of emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children.

The Department of Health and Human Services has reported that "children entering foster care today have increasingly more emotional and behavioral problems than previously observed" (DHHS, 1993, p.63). In this same report it also was noted that many foster parents quit fostering because of the inability to deal with the behavioral problems of the foster child (DHHS, 1993).

Children with emotional and behavioral problems are more likely than other foster children to be in unstable foster placements (Campbell, Simon, Weithorn, Krikston, & Connolly, 1980; Pardeck, 1983). Campbell and colleagues (1980) found a positive correlation between child and family problems. Other research suggests that behavioral problems of foster children might increase the risk of further abuse occurring in foster

homes (McFadden, 1987 as cited in Henry, Cossett, Auletta, & Egan, 1991; Ryan, McFadden & Wiencek, 1988 as cited in Henry et al., 1991). From these findings, it is unclear whether the behaviors of foster children elicit abuse or placement instability or if unstable placements produce or increase behavioral problems in foster children. It is plausible that there is an interaction between the behavioral problems of foster children and the stability of foster placements.

Although not all foster families are equipped to deal with emotionally and behaviorally disturbed foster children (Campbell et al. 1980), no empirical studies have been done to identify which types of foster parents are most willing and able to foster children with emotional and behavioral problems. Thus, this study attempted to identify which foster parent characteristics predict willingness to foster children with emotional and behavioral problems.

Theoretical Framework

In addition to the lack of clear empirical evidence, no theories have been developed to explain the willingness of foster parents to accept certain types of foster children. Only Chambers' (1970) study of adoptive applicants investigated the willingness to accept emotionally or behaviorally disturbed children. Chambers found that higher educated mothers were more willing to adopt emotionally disturbed children than less educated mothers.

Given the absence of existing theories and the absence of a large body of empirical evidence to guide this investigation, a speculative leap is needed. Chambers' (1970) finding that more educated mothers are more willing to adopt emotionally disturbed children than are less educated mothers may suggest that persons with more resources (e.g., education, income, parenting experience, social support) may feel more equipped to deal with difficult behaviors. Consequently, this study proposed resource theory as a

theoretical framework from which to predict the relationship between foster parent characteristics and the willingness to accept foster children with emotional and behavioral problems.

Resource theory was derived from social exchange theory and has primarily been used to understand interpersonal relationships (Foa, Converse, Tornblom, & Foa, 1993; Foa & Foa, 1974). Resource theory has been widely used to investigate decision-making processes and power structures within marital relationships (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Lee & Peterson, 1983; Rank, 1982; Warner, Lee, & Lee, 1986). Within the context of familial relationships, Hesse-Biber and Williamson (1984, p. 262) define a resource as "anything one individual family member can offer another to help that person satisfy needs or attain goals." Foa et al. (1993, p. 2) more broadly define a resource as "anything transacted in an interpersonal situation." Illustrating the wide range of the resource types, Foa and Foa (1974) classify resources using the following six categories: love, service, goods, money, information, and status.

This study used resource theory to study foster parents' willingness to accept certain types of hard to place foster children. According to Foa and Foa (1974), one of the basic tenets of resource theory is "the larger the amount of a resource possessed by a person, the more likely it is to be given to others" (p. 93). Therefore, compared to foster parents with fewer resources, foster parents with more resources may be more likely to use their resources to take on the difficult task of taking care of hard to place foster children, such as children with emotional and behavioral problems.

Resources within a foster family can be conceptualized in a number of ways. Income and education are obvious resources within a foster family. Financial resources can be used to buy goods and services that make life more comfortable. Education can equip people with knowledge that can help them better deal with difficult situations.

Education also can lead to better paying jobs and to the development of a personal network of other professionals. Having a partner or being married can be considered a resource. In two-parent foster families the challenges of foster parenting can be shared, whereas in one-parent foster families the burden of parenting is shouldered alone, unless an extensive social support network exists. Time also can be considered a resource within a foster family. If a foster parent is not employed outside the home or is employed less than full time, then more time can be invested in spending time with foster children and driving them to scheduled appointments. In addition, foster parents who have more free time will undoubtedly be less stressed and may be more emotionally available to foster children.

Parenting experience is a resource within a foster family; foster parents who have had their own children have more realistic expectations about parenting. Similarly, foster parent experience is a resource; foster families who have fostered before are probably more prepared than first-time foster families. Belonging to a place of worship also can be considered a resource because many worship communities provide their members a sense of spiritual well-being, which can help sustain them through difficult times. In addition worship communities oftentimes provide more practical assistance and social support. The type of social support provided by worship communities may be different from other forms of social support. Therefore, social support from family and friends also is defined as a foster parent resource.

Knowledge gained by working in a helping profession (e.g., nurse, teacher, social worker, day care worker) is another resource within a foster family. For example, it is not uncommon for agencies to target nurses to care for special needs foster children, especially medically fragile foster children (GAO, 1989). Within our society, race also can be considered a resource. According to McIntosh (1998), being white in our society

affords one with a number of unearned privileges. McIntosh defines "white privilege" as "an invisible knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks" (p. 95). Given that foster families must navigate many bureaucratic organizations, such as foster care agencies and health care providers, white foster families may have advantages in accessing services for their foster children as well as for themselves.

Research Hypotheses

In addition to investigating the willingness of foster parents to accept children with behavioral problems, this study investigated the willingness of foster parents to accept sibling groups, children regardless of gender, sexually abused children, physically abused children, and deprived children. Although the main focus of this study was to investigate which foster parent characteristics predict willingness to accept emotionally and behaviorally disturbed foster children, the willingness to accept different types of hard to place children also was investigated.

For the purposes of this study the following eleven foster parent characteristics were defined as foster parent resources: higher income, higher education, being married, at least one parent working less than full-time, parenting experience, foster parent experience, belonging to a place of worship, social support from family, social support from friends, working in a helping profession, and being white. How the resources were measured and counted is described in the next chapter on research methods.

Research Question 1

What percentages of foster parent applicants are willing to accept hard to place children? This question is important because in order to serve the growing number of hard to place foster children, it is first necessary to understand the willingness of the current population of foster parent and foster parent applicants to accept hard to place

children. The national survey of current and former foster parents examined the willingness of approved foster parents with varying levels of fostering experience to accept hard to place children. This study examined the willingness of foster parent applicants to accept hard to place children.

Research Question 2

Does the number of foster parent resources predict the willingness of foster parents to accept hard to place children?

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept children with emotional or behavioral problems.

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept sibling groups.

Hypothesis 3. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a child regardless of gender.

Hypothesis 4. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a physically abused child

Hypothesis 5. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a deprived child.

Hypothesis 6. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a sexually abused child.

Research Question 3

Which foster parent characteristics or resources predict the willingness to accept different types of hard to place children?

Hypothesis 7. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept children with emotional and behavioral problems: working in a helping profession,

parenting experience, and being white. Working in a helping profession was chosen because experience in helping others may contribute toward willingness to help troubled children. Parenting experience was chosen because such experience may help foster parents feel more confident in working with children with emotional and behavioral problems. Being white was chosen because children with emotional and behavioral problems typically require mental health services that often are in short supply. In a white-dominated society whites may have an advantage in negotiating for such services because of the existence of "white privilege" as discussed above.

Hypothesis 8. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept sibling groups: being married, social support, and at least one parent not working or employed less than full-time. It is assumed that sibling groups take more time and effort to parent than single foster children. Therefore, married couples might be more willing than single parents to take on multiple foster children. Using the same line of reasoning, if one parent was not employed full-time then a foster family may be more willing to accept the extra responsibilities that come with multiple foster children. Similarly, foster families with more social support may be more willing to foster sibling groups because they know they have people in their lives to turn to if they need some extra help.

Hypothesis 9. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept a child regardless of gender: being married and being white. Up to a certain age foster parents seem willing to accept foster children regardless of gender. However, foster parents, especially single mothers, may be less willing to accept adolescent boys because these children often are more likely to display hard to handle defiant and aggressive behavior. Therefore, overall married couples may be more willing to accept children regardless of gender. In terms of race, Black foster parents, who typically foster Black children, may be less willing to foster Black adolescent males because of the

additional discrimination and harassment that Black males often face in our society. Therefore, whites may be more willing to foster children regardless of gender.

Hypothesis 10. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept a physically abused child or a deprived child: foster parent experience and belonging to a place of worship. Typically, physically abused and deprived foster children come with many special needs. Parents with previous foster parent experience may be in the best position to understand and accept these special needs. People who attend worship services, especially those in the Christian tradition, because of their religious beliefs feel a calling to help the less fortunate, especially those who have been victimized through no fault of their own. Therefore, they may be more willing to help children who have been victimized.

Hypothesis 11. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept a sexually abused child: higher level of education and working in a helping profession. Sexually abused foster children often act out sexually, which can make some people very uncomfortable. Understanding the psychodynamics behind such behavior may lead to an increased comfort level and acceptance of sexually abused children. Higher levels of education may contribute to this understanding and acceptance. Similarly, people who work in a helping profession because of their specialized education and training may be more likely to understand and accept the potentially disturbing behavior of sexually abused children.

Research Question 4

Does foster family willingness to accept hard to place children predict the likelihood that a child will be placed in the foster home?

Hypothesis 12. There is a positive relationship between willingness to accept hard to place children and whether a child is placed in a foster home. It is important to establish

the relationship between the attitude of willingness that is expressed by foster parents and the fostering behavior of foster parents. If an attitude of willingness to accept hard to place children is not followed by a behavior of actually accepting hard to place children, then the attitude of willingness does not distinguish foster parents in a meaningful way in regards to child placement. In this study no information was available as to whether the child placed could be categorized as hard to place; therefore, the relationship between the attitude of willingness and the placement of any child was examined in this study.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Design

This study was part of a larger study that used a longitudinal prospective panel design to assess successive cohorts of new foster families during initial foster parent training and during the initial placement of eligible foster children with these foster families. This study only used data collected from foster parents during foster parent training, which was prior to placement of foster children. Data were collected during training sessions from April 1996 through December 1999.

Human Subjects Review

The larger study, which encompasses this study, was approved by The University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board (IRB 5250-B). In order to ensure the confidentially of subject data, several steps were taken: (1) subjects were assigned identification numbers to code subject data into computer data files, (2) identification numbers and identifying subject information (names, addresses, phone numbers) needed to collect follow-up data were kept separate from other data files and will be destroyed upon completion of the larger study, and (3) research personnel were required to sign confidentiality statements (Appendix A).

Foster parents, foster parent trainers, and foster care workers participating in the study were required to sign consent forms (Appendices B, C, D). Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time and were ensured that their individual responses would not be shared with DCS and their participation would not affect, in any way, services received from DCS or their relationship with DCS, the University of Tennessee, or any other state agency.

Sampling

The sample of foster parents used in this study was drawn from the population of persons applying to become foster parents between April 1996 and December 1999 with the Department of Children's Services (DSC) in the State of Tennessee, a public child welfare agency. Successive cohorts of foster parent applicants were recruited and data from foster parents collected during MAPP training (Pasztor, 1987). MAPP training, which consists of 30 hours of training (presentations, role-play exercises, and didactic instruction), was provided by the state in which this study was conducted. At the time of this study this training was required of all non-kin foster mothers and fathers.

Potential foster mothers and fathers were required to attend training, providing a common point of entry for foster parents and a setting in which foster families could be recruited and assessed relatively easily, efficiently, and in a standardized fashion. In addition, at this point foster parents had not had time to develop what sometimes can be an adversarial relationship with the agency; they may have been more likely to voluntarily participate in an agency-based research project.

Foster and adoptive parents were recruited from three of the largest counties in the state, with demographically diverse populations. Adoptive as well as foster parent applicants were recruited because many applicants for adoption foster prior to adopting. In two-parent families both parents were required to participate in MAPP training; for a two-parent family to participate in this study both parents were required to consent. Kin foster families were not included because at the time of this study they were not required to undergo MAPP training. Therapeutic foster families were not included because at the time of this study they received training from contract agencies, not directly from the state. Finally, only foster families who completed MAPP training were included in this study.

Data Collection

At the second MAPP session a member of the research team introduced the larger study. Families were asked to volunteer to participate in the research (see Appendix E), and consent forms (see Appendix B) were distributed. Each family was offered a $25 gift certificate for completion of a battery of measures during MAPP training.

The study attempted to maximize participation by recruiting foster parent applicants at the beginning of the training phase to take advantage of their initial enthusiasm and interest in foster parenting and by providing a gift certificate as a financial incentive. Even though efforts were taken to maximize participation, it was anticipated that some foster parents would not participate. To determine whether participants differed from non-participants, comparable demographic information was collected from eligible participants and non-participants (see Appendix F).

Measurement

Data were collected from the foster parent applicants during MAPP sessions three through eight. A majority of data collected during these MAPP sessions measured different aspects of the applicants' psychosocial functioning. Most of these data were used primarily in the larger study. The data used in this study included extensive demographic data, a measure of social support, and data measuring the willingness to foster certain types of foster children.

Demographic Data

Extensive demographic data were abstracted from the foster families' DCS records. Approximately halfway through the study, due to the difficulty in obtaining this information from DCS records, a form was developed (Appendix G) to collect selected demographic data originally abstracted from DCS records. This form was added to the measures collected by research team members from the foster families during MAPP

training (week #6). Regardless of the source, all data collected were self-report data and collected at approximately the same time during foster parent training.

Demographic data on foster families were collected on both the family and individual-level. Family level data collected included marital status, family type (two-parent, single mother, single father), yearly income, interest (fostering only, adoption only, fostering and adoption), number of children, and whether a family belongs to a place of worship. Individual-level data collected included age, race, education level, occupation, religion, employment status, and whether they had previous foster parent experience.

Social Support

The Social Support Behaviors Scale (SSB) (see Appendix H) is a 45-item scale designed to measure social support available from friends and family (Vaux, Burda, & Stewart, 1986; Vaux, Riedel, & Stewart, 1987). Items are rated on a 5-point scale ranging from "No one would do this" (1) to "Most family members/friends would certainly do this" (5). Support from family and friends is rated for each of the 45 items. Mean total scores are computed for friends and for family, each subscale has a potential range of values from 1 to 5, and higher scores indicate more available support.

Vaux and his colleagues reported that mean coefficient alphas for the Family and Friend subscales ranged from .83 to .90. Construct validity was supported by theoretically predicted correlations with other validated measures of social support, and through having subjects complete the SSB while taking different predetermined roles (e.g., different levels of different types of social support from friends and family).

Number of Resources

The total number of resources was computed separately for each mother and father. Five resources (higher income, being married, one parent not working or working less

than full-time, parenting experience, belonging to a place of worship) were family-level variables. The remaining six resources (higher education, foster parent experience, social support from family, social support from friends, working in a helping profession, being white) were individual-level variables. The potential range of values for the resource variable was from 0 to 11.

Income was counted as a resource if family income was above $25,000. In this sample, 74.3% of families had incomes over $25,000. In the income distribution in this sample (see Table 2), there is a break in the data at the $25,000 amount with income below $25,000 representing the bottom quartile. All tables are in Appendix J. Moreover, although family size was not taken into consideration, when running a household of any size, an income below $25,000 does not provide many extras after covering the basic needs of housing, food, and transportation. Therefore, in families who had an income of over $25,000 income was counted as a resource.

For each mother and father, education was counted as a resource if they had received any college instruction. In this sample, over half of mothers (57%) and fathers (58%) completed at least some college. Equipped with additional knowledge, persons receiving at least some college education should be better equipped to deal with life's challenges than persons equipped with a high school education or less.

In the case of social support, since there are no clinical cutoff scores for the SSB scales, a cutoff had to be chosen for the purposes of this study. Scores on the SSB were positively skewed. On SSB items, which ranged from 1 to 5, the scores on the family subscale ranged from 1.8 to 5.0 for mothers and from 1.9 to 5 for fathers. Scores on the friends subscales ranged from 2.0 to 5.0 for mothers and from 1.6 to 5.0 for fathers. The mean score for the family subscale was 4.35 (SD = .62) for mothers and 4.37 (SD = .56) for fathers. The mean score for the friends subscale was 4.17 (SD = .66) for mothers

and 4.01 (SD = .76) for fathers. The distribution of the data revealed that using the scale value 3 ("Some family member/friend probably will do this") as a cutoff value would virtually include the entire sample on some subscales. In this sample, 96% of mothers and 96.9% of fathers scored 3 or higher on the SSB family subscale and 93.4% of mothers and 87.5% of fathers scored 3 or higher on the SSB friends subscale. Using the scale value 4 ("Some family member/friend certainly will do this") as a cutoff value would result in more variation in the social support resource variable since 78.1% of mothers and 68.9% of fathers scored 4 or higher on the SSB family subscale and 81.3% of mothers and 60.4% of fathers scored 4 or higher on the SSB friends subscale. However, using the scale value 4 ("Some family member/friend certainly will do this") seemed too stringent a criteria given the skewed nature of the data; therefore, the midpoint between scale values 3 and 4 was chosen as a cutoff for this sample. In this sample, 90.7% of mothers and 93.8% of fathers scored 3.5 or higher on the SSB family subscale and 83.4% of mothers and 79.2% of fathers scored 3.5 or higher on the SSB friends subscale. For the purposes of this study, if a mother or father scored 3.5 or higher on a subscale it was counted as a resource. Social support from families and social support from friends were counted as separate resources for both mothers and fathers.

Willingness to Foster Certain Types of Foster Children

Data were collected from foster parent applicants concerning their willingness to accept sibling groups, children regardless of gender, sexually abused children, physically abused children, deprived children, and children with different types of behavioral problems. All willingness data were family-level data with married couples jointly deciding about the willingness of their family to accept different types of foster children. Foster parent applicants responded "no" (coded as 0) or "yes" (coded as 1) to a question about their willingness to accept sibling groups. To determine their willingness

to foster a child regardless of gender, foster parent applicants were asked the following multiple choice question: "What gender do you prefer to foster?" (Choices: boy, girl, boy or girl). These data were recoded as "no gender preference" (0) or "gender preference" (1).

Foster parent applicants were asked about their willingness to accept sexually abused children, physically abused children, and deprived children. Foster parent applicants also were asked about their ability to accept children with the following nine behaviors: destructive behavior, trouble behaving in school, lying or stealing, wetting the bed, setting fires, banging his/her head, withdrawing totally, acting out sexually, and unruly behavior. Applicants rated their willingness to accept each of these twelve types of foster children on a 3-point scale: "Least acceptable" (1), "Willing to discuss" (2), and "Most acceptable" (3).

The scores for the nine behavioral items were summed to form a scale: the Behavior Acceptability Scale (BAS). A total score was computed for the nine items and so the BAS has a potential range of values from 9 to 27. A higher score on the BAS indicates a greater willingness to accept difficult behaviors. Just as in the case with demographic data, willingness data originally were extracted from DCS records, but due to difficulties in obtaining this information from DCS records, the willingness data later were obtained from the foster parents during MAPP training during week #8 (Appendix I). Regardless of the source, all data collected were self-report data and collected at approximately the same time during foster parent training. In addition, the format of willingness data was exactly the same in the DCS records and the data collection form used during MAPP training.

In order to explore research question #4, the relationship between willingness and child placement, a family-level count variable was created to measure a foster family's

overall willingness to accept deprived children, physically abused children, sexually abused children and children with nine different behavioral problems. As mentioned earlier, willingness to foster these 12 types of children was rated on a 3-point ordinal scale: "Least acceptable" (1), "Willing to discuss" (2), and "Most acceptable" (3). In order to construct the willingness count variable, these ordinal variables were recoded into dichotomous variables with "Willing to discuss" and "Most acceptable" coded as 1 and "Least acceptable" coded as 0. "Willing to discuss" and "Most acceptable" were coded as 1 since both of these answers represent some willingness to accept hard to place children, whereas "Least acceptable" represents little or no willingness to accept hard to place children. The 12 dichotomous variables that were recoded then were totaled into a willingness count variable with values potentially ranging from 0 to 12.

Child Placement

During the course of this study, child placement data were periodically (approximately monthly) collected from DCS. For each foster family this information indicated whether a child had been placed in the home. In this study no information was collected regarding the type of child or children placed, so it could not be determined whether the child placed was a hard to place child (e.g., child with behavioral problems, sexually abused child, etc.).

Chapter 4: Results

Between April 1996 and December 1999, 230 eligible foster/adoptive family applicants were asked to participate in the larger study. Among these 230 families, 161 (70%) agreed to participate. Out of these 161, 153 families provided data on their willingness to foster certain types of children. These 153 families composed the sample of foster parents for this study. Individual level data were reported both for foster mother applicants (n=151) and foster father applicants (n=96). The sample size for mothers is higher because there were more single mothers (n=57) than single fathers (n=2) in this study sample. The sample size actually analyzed for mothers ranged from 138 to 141, and for fathers from 88 to 90, as the result of missing data for particular dependent variables.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were computed for all variables. In order to test earlier stated hypotheses, regression analyses were used. Different kinds of regression analyses were used depending on the level of measurement of each dependent variable. In research questions 2 and 3 the dependent variable, the willingness to accept a particular type of hard to place child, was a family-level variable. Since some of the independent variables were individual-level variables (e.g., age, race, education) and the dependent variable (e.g., willingness to accept a child with emotional and behavioral problems) was a family-level variable, reporting the results may be misleading. For example, the following may be reported: "white mothers, when compared to African-American mothers, reported higher levels of acceptance of children with emotional and behavioral problems." In the case of married couples, mothers alone did not report willingness data. Therefore, the correct interpretation of this finding is that in the sample of mothers, the race of the mother predicted foster family willingness to

accept children with emotional and behavioral problems. An incorrect interpretation is that the race of the mother predicted foster mothers' willingness to accept children with emotional and behavioral problems.

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses were used to test hypotheses when the dependent variable was the 9-item Behavior Acceptability Scale (BAS) total, an interval level variable. Logistic regression analyses were used to test hypotheses when the dependent variable was the acceptance of sibling groups or acceptance of child regardless of gender, which were both dichotomous variables. Ordinal regression analyses were used to test hypotheses when the dependent variable was the level of acceptance of physically abused, deprived, or sexually abused children, which were all ordinal variables. Although no hypotheses were stated regarding individual BAS scale items, ordinal regression analyses also were used to identify predictive factors for the nine individual BAS scale items.

Ordinal regression analyses require the selection of a link function. As suggested in the SPSS documentation on ordinal regression (SPSS, 1999), for each ordinal regression a link function was chosen based on the distribution of the dependent variable. The following link functions are suggested for these distributions: flat distribution (Logit), normal distribution (Probit), distribution with more higher values (Complementary Log-log), distribution with more lower values (Negative Log-log), and distribution with extreme values (Cauchit). When the distribution of a dependent variable did not clearly fit one of these distributions, multiple ordinal regressions were conducted using the link functions that most closely fit the distribution of the dependent variable. In these cases, the results of the regression analyses were compared and the best fitting model, as determined by the $\underline{X}^2$ and $\underline{R}^2$ statistics, was chosen. In no cases in which

multiple ordinal regression analyses were conducted was the regression model statistically significant in one regression analysis and not the other(s).

Missing Data

Out of the eleven resources used as independent variables, few variables had missing data. Variables with missing data had only a small percentage of missing data and few respondents had any missing data. On the family-level, the following variables had missing data: income (3.3% of families), whether the family belonged to a place of worship (3.3% of families), and whether at least one parent worked less than full-time (2% of families). On the individual-level, only employment status (1.3% of mothers and fathers) and whether the individual worked in a helping profession (5.3% of mothers, 10.4% of fathers) had any missing data. Missing values were imputed separately for family-level, mother, and father data. Expectation maximazation was used to impute values (Acock, 1997), using SPSS Version 10.

On the family level, item values also were imputed for the 9-item Behavior Acceptability Scale (BAS). Out of the 142 foster families completing the scale, 96.5% completed all the items. Four of the nine items were completed by all the families. Another four items were completed by all except one family (.7% missing) and the remaining item was completed by all except two families (1.4% missing). On a case level, 137 cases had no missing items, 4 cases had 1 missing item (11% of items missing), and 1 case had 2 missing items (22% of items missing). Expectation maximazation was used to impute missing item values for the BAS items.

Comparison of Participants and Non-responders

Participants in this study (n = 153) were compared with non-responders. For the purposes of this comparison, non-responders were defined as those who did not

participate in the larger study (n = 69) or those who participated in the larger study but did not provide data on their willingness to accept certain types of foster children (n = 8).

Logistic regression analyses were used to compare the demographic differences between study participants and non-responders, which are shown in Table 1. Data were missing for eight non-responder mothers and eight non-responder fathers and listwise deletion was used in these analyses. The dependent variable was whether the foster parent was a participant in the study, coded as No (0) and Yes (1). Demographic variables measured for participants and non-responders were used as predictor variables. These variables included: interest in fostering, county, marital status, education, age, race, and whether a foster parent had previous fostering experience. Demographic characteristics, individual-level and family-level variables, were entered simultaneously in the regression analyses separately for mothers and fathers. Race was coded as African-American/Other (0) and White (1). Other dichotomous variables (Previous fostering experience and Married) were coded as No (0) and Yes (1). Effects coding was used for interest and county.

In the sample of mothers (n = 216), the likelihood of participation was not different by age, education, or previous foster parent experience. However, the likelihood of participation was greater for those who were not married (B = -1.07, p = .014, OR = .34) and Whites when compared to African-American/Others (B = .88, p = .028, OR = 2.43). The likelihood of participation was not different for those interested solely in fostering, but was greater for those interested in fostering and adoption (B = .74, p = .006, OR = 2.10) and lower for those interested solely in adoption (B = -.99, p = .001, OR = .37). The likelihood of participation also was greater for those residing in county D (B = .59, p = .034, OR = 1.81).

In the sample of fathers (n = 146), the likelihood of participation for fathers was not different by county, marital status, age, education, race or previous foster parent experience. The likelihood of participation was not different for those interested solely in fostering, but was greater for those interested in fostering and adoption (B = .62, p = .029, OR = 1.85) and lower for those interested solely in adoption (B = -1.04, p = .001, OR = .35).

Descriptive Data

Family-level Variables

Table 2 shows the family-level characteristics for the 153 foster families. As shown in Table 2, slightly fewer than two-thirds of families included married couples. Approximately three-fourths of families lived in single family homes. Considerable diversity existed in yearly family income. Of the total sample 25% had incomes less than 25,000, 35% had incomes from 25,000 to 44,999, and 37% had incomes of 45,000 or greater. Most foster parents worked full-time; only 28% of the families had a parent not working or working part-time. Fifty-seven percent of families had some parenting experience, which was defined as having children at some point in their lives. At the time of the study, 56% of families had no children in the home, and 39% of the total sample had from one to three children in the home. Over three-fourths of families belonged to a place of worship.

In terms of their interest in fostering and adoption, 51% were interested in fostering, 41% expressed interest in fostering and adoption, and 7% were interested only in adoption. Seventy-three percent of families were approved as foster families. Among those not approved, 18% did not complete the application process and 9% were rejected. As of August 2000, 65% of families had a foster child placed with them.

Foster Parent Characteristics

Table 3 shows characteristics of foster mothers and fathers. As shown in Table 3, 14% of fathers were African-American and 27% of mothers were African-American. Few parents had less than a high school education and 29% of mothers and fathers had a bachelor's or advanced degree. Eighty-eight percent of fathers and 75% of mothers were employed full time. More mothers (40%) than fathers (14%) were employed in a helping profession. Over 90% of mothers and fathers had no previous experience as a foster parent. The mean age of fathers was 37.9 years old (SD = 8.2) and the mean age of mothers was 38.1 years old (SD = 8.9).

As measured by the Social Support Behaviors Scale (SSB), the foster families in this study had high levels of social support. Possible item scores ranged from 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating higher levels of social support. On average foster mothers scored 4.35 (SD = .62) on the family subscale and 4.17 (SD = .66) on the friends subscale. Foster fathers scored 4.37 (SD = .56) on the family subscale and 4.01 (SD = .76) on the friends subscale. All social support scores were positively skewed. For this sample, coefficient alpha for the family subscale was .97 for mothers and fathers. Coefficient alpha for the friends subscale was .97 for mothers and .98 for fathers.

As described earlier in the methods section, the number of resources was computed for both mothers and fathers. Frequency distributions revealed that number of resources was normally distributed for both mothers and fathers. Mothers had an average of 6.5 resources (SD = 1.72) and fathers had an average of 7.0 resources (SD = 1.50). A t-test for paired samples comparing the number of resources for married couples ($n = 94$), revealed no significant difference ($t = 1.49$, $p > .05$) in the number of resources for mothers ($M = 7.2$, SD = 1.50) and fathers ($M = 7.1$, SD = 1.37).

Research Question 1

What percentages of foster parent applicants are willing to accept hard to place children? The willingness of foster parents to accept different types of foster children, the dependent variables in the study, is described in Table 4, 5, and 6. Descriptive data on the willingness of foster parents to accept sibling groups and a child regardless of gender are shown in Table 4. Of the total sample, 71% of families were willing to accept sibling groups and 71% of families were willing to accept a foster child regardless of gender. More specifically, 22% were willing only to accept a female foster child, and 7% were willing only to accept a male foster child.

Table 5 shows the descriptive data on the willingness of foster families to accept physically abused, deprived, and sexually abused children. Willingness was measured on a 3-point ordinal scale (least acceptable, willing to discuss, most acceptable). Of the total sample, 71% of families rated deprived children "most acceptable" and 63% of families rated physically abused children "most acceptable." Only 32% of families rated sexually abused children "most acceptable;" however, 61% of families were "willing to discuss" such a child. Few families found any of these children as "least acceptable." Deprived, physically abused, and sexually abused children were found "least acceptable" by 1.4%, 2.1%, and 7% of families, respectively.

Table 6 shows descriptive data for the nine-item Behavior Acceptability Scale (BAS). These nine behaviors also were rated on a 3-point ordinal scale (least acceptable, willing to discuss, most acceptable). Children who set fires (73% of families), behave destructively (32%), or act out sexually (30%) were the "least acceptable" to foster families. Children who wet their beds (59%), have trouble behaving in school (45%), and who withdraw totally (37%) were the "most acceptable" to foster families. With the exception of the behavior of fire setting, a majority of families were "willing to

discuss" accepting children with behavioral and emotional problems: unruly behavior (65% of families), acts out sexually (62%), lies or steals (59%), destructive behavior (57%), bangs head (56%), withdraws totally (53%), trouble behaving in school (53%). For this sample, coefficient alpha for the BAS was .85.

Relationships Among Dependent Variables

Correlations among the dependent variables are shown in Table 7. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between the willingness to accept sibling groups and a child regardless of gender (r = .27, p = .001). No statistically significant relationships were found between willingness to accept children with behavioral problems (BAS total score) and either willingness to accept sibling groups or willingness to accept a child regardless of gender. Not surprisingly, all items on the BAS scale (variables 7-15 in Table 6) were positively and statistically significantly intercorrelated and all BAS items also were correlated with the BAS total score. In addition, acceptance of physically abused, deprived, or sexually abused children also were positively and statistically correlated with most of the BAS items and the BAS total score. Thus, the dependent variables were intercorrelated as theoretically predicted, but they were not so highly correlated as to suggest that they were redundant.

Regression Analyses

The objective of this study was to identify foster parent characteristics that predict their willingness to accept hard to place children. In order to investigate this research question OLS, logistic, and ordinal regression analyses were used due to the different levels of measurement of the dependent variables, as noted in the earlier section on data analysis. In all the regression analyses, non-directional hypotheses were tested because results in either direction would be important, and alpha was set at .05.

Although the distributions of the dependent variables for the entire sample were

described above, the distributions of the dependent variables were not reported separately for the samples of mothers and fathers. Therefore, in reporting tests of each hypothesis for Research Question 2 the descriptive statistics for the dependent variables were reported for the mothers and fathers along with the results of each regression analysis. When discussing the regression results for Research Question 3, these descriptive statistics for the dependent variables for the samples of mothers and fathers were not repeated.

Research Question 2

Does the number of foster parent resources predict the willingness of foster parents to accept hard to place children? The results for this research question will be explained fully below in reporting tests of Hypothesis 1 through 6. For each hypothesis, bivariate regression analyses were used for mothers and fathers. In each case the independent variable was the number of resources, computed separately for mothers and fathers, since 6 of the 11 resources counted were individual-level. The dependent variable measuring the acceptability of different types of foster children was different for each hypothesis (e.g., children with behavioral problems, sibling groups).

Overall there was strong support for the hypothesis that the greater the number of foster parent resources, the more willing foster families are to accept certain types of foster children, including children with behavioral problems, children regardless of gender, deprived children, and physically abused children. However, the presence of resources did not predict the willingness to accept sibling groups or sexually abused children.

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept children with emotional or behavioral problems. Some support was found for this hypothesis. Ordinary least squares (OLS)

regression was used to test this hypothesis. The dependent variable was the 9-item BAS (Behavior Acceptability Scale). The mean score for the BAS scale was 18.22 (SD = 3.56) for mothers, and 18.53 (SD = 3.68) for fathers. For mothers, it was found that the greater the number of resources, the more likely families were willing to accept children with behavioral problems (R^2 = .09, Adjusted R^2 = .08, $F(1,139) = 13.51$, $p < .001$). Similarly for fathers, it was found that the greater the number of resources, the more likely families were to accept children with behavioral problems (R^2 = .05, Adjusted R^2 = .04, $F(1,89) = 4.83$, $p = .031$).

In addition to OLS regression, ordinal regression analyses were used to investigate the relationship between the number of foster family resources and the acceptability of the individual behaviors that compose the BAS scale. The results of these ordinal regression analyses can be found in Table 8 for mothers and Table 9 for fathers. As shown in Table 8 the ordinal regression analyses for mothers revealed that foster families with more resources were more likely to accept children with four of the nine behaviors: banging his/her head ($B = .23$, $p < .001$), withdrawing totally ($B = .13$, $p = .030$), unruly behavior ($B = .16$, $p = .009$), and trouble behaving in school ($B = .21$, $p = .004$). The regression analyses for fathers revealed that foster families with more resources were more likely to accept children with four of the nine behaviors: banging his/her head ($B = .17$, $p = .033$), withdrawing totally ($B = .22$, $p = .017$), trouble behaving in school ($B = .26$, $p = .012$), and wetting the bed ($B = .29$, $p = .005$).

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept sibling groups. The findings did not support this hypothesis. Results of the logistic regression testing this hypothesis are found in Table 10. The independent variable was the number of resources and the dependent variable was a dichotomous variable that indicated whether or not families

would accept sibling groups. In the sample of mothers (n = 138), 71% of foster families were willing to accept sibling groups and 29% were not willing to accept sibling groups. In the sample of fathers (n = 88), 70% of foster families were willing to accept sibling groups and 30% were not willing to accept sibling groups. Logistic regression analyses failed to produce statistically significant models for either mothers (X^2 = .001, p > .05) or fathers (X^2 = .006, p > .05).

Hypothesis 3. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a child regardless of gender. Support for this hypothesis was found for mothers but not for fathers. Results of the logistic regression analyses testing this hypothesis are found in Table 10. The independent variable was the number of resources. The dependent variable was a dichotomous variable that indicated whether a family would accept a foster child regardless of gender which was coded 0 for not willing to accept a child regardless of gender and 1 for willing to accept a child regardless of gender. In the sample of mothers (n = 141), 72% of foster families were willing to accept a child regardless of gender and 28% were not willing to accept a child regardless of gender. The logistic regression revealed that foster mothers with more resources were more likely to accept a child regardless of gender (B = .23, p = .039, OR = 1.26).

In the sample of fathers (n = 89), 79% of foster families were willing to accept a child regardless of gender and 21% were not willing to accept a child regardless of gender. The logistic regression revealed that the model was not statistically significant (X^2 = .20, p > .05) for fathers.

Hypothesis 4. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a physically abused child. The data supported this hypothesis. Ordinal regression analyses were used to test this

hypothesis. The dependent variable was a 3-value ordinal variable that measured the acceptability of a physically abused foster child. The values of the dependent variable were "least acceptable" (1), "willing to discuss" (2), and "most acceptable" (3). Results for these analyses can be found in Tables 11 and 12. In the sample of mothers (n = 140) 63.6% of foster families reported a physically abused foster child was the "most acceptable," 34.3% reported they were "willing to discuss" such a child and 2.1% reported such a child was the "least acceptable." The ordinal regression analysis for mothers revealed that foster mothers with more resources were more likely to accept a physically abused child (B = .21, p = .016).

In the sample of fathers (n = 90), 62.2% of foster families reported a physically abused foster child was the "most acceptable," 36.7% reported they were "willing to discuss" such a child and 1.1% reported such a child was the "least acceptable." The ordinal regression analysis for fathers revealed that foster fathers with more resources were more likely to accept a physically abused child (B = .38, p = .001).

Hypothesis 5. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a deprived child. The data supported this hypothesis. Ordinal regression analyses also were used to test this hypothesis. The dependent variable measured the acceptability of a deprived foster child. Results for these analyses can be found in Tables 11 and 12. In the sample of mothers (n = 138), 71.7% of foster families reported a deprived foster child was the "most acceptable," 26.8% reported they were "willing to discuss" such a child and 1.4% reported such a child was the "least acceptable." The ordinal regression analysis for mothers revealed that foster families with more resources were more likely to accept a deprived child (B = .23, p = .019).

Similarly, in the sample of fathers (n = 88), 69.3% of foster families reported a deprived foster child was the "most acceptable," 29.5% reported they were "willing to discuss" such a child and 1.1% reported such a child was the "least acceptable." The ordinal regression analysis for fathers revealed that foster families with more resources were more likely to accept a deprived child (B = .33, p = .005).

Hypothesis 6. There is a positive relationship between the number of foster parent resources and foster parents' willingness to accept a sexually abused child. The data did not support this hypothesis. Ordinal regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis with the dependent variable measuring the acceptability of a sexually abused foster child. Results for these analyses can be found in Tables 11 and 12. In the sample of mothers (n = 140), 32.1% of foster families reported that a sexually abused child was the "most acceptable," 60.7% reported they were "willing to discuss" such a child and 7.1% reported such a child was the "least acceptable." Similarly, in the sample of fathers (n = 90), 30% of foster families reported that a sexually abused child was the "most acceptable," 62.2% reported they were "willing to discuss" such a child and 7.8% reported such a child was the "least acceptable." Ordinal regression analyses failed to produce statistically significant models for either mothers (X^2 = 3.39, p > .05) or fathers (X^2 = 1.99, p > .05).

Research Question 3

Which foster parent characteristics or resources predict the willingness to accept different types of hard to place children?

As mentioned previously, some of the independent variables were individual-level data (e.g., education level, race, social support) and some were family-level data (e.g., income, belonging to a place of worship). Although it was possible to combine mother and father data into regression analyses, separate regression analyses were conducted

for mothers and fathers because of the large number of independent variables produced by including both mother and father data and the amount of data that would have been missing for fathers due to the large number of single mothers (n = 57).

All eleven resources, individual-level and family-level variables, were entered simultaneously into all regression analyses separately for mothers and fathers. Race was coded as African/American (0) and White (0). Other dichotomous variables (fostering experience, employed in a helping profession, married, a parent not working full-time, belonging to a place of worship, and parenting experience) were coded as No (0) and Yes (1). Prior to examining these regression analyses, multi-collinearity among the independent variables was examined. No problem with multi-collinearity was detected as tolerance values for the independent variables ranged from .51 to .94.

Hypothesis 7. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept children with emotional and behavioral problems: working in a helping profession, parenting experience, and being white. This hypothesis was partially supported. Being white predicted willingness to accept children with behavioral problems; however, working in a helping profession or parenting experience did not predict willingness to accept children with behavioral problems. Ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression was used for these analyses. The dependent variable was the 9-item BAS (Behavior Acceptability Scale). Results for these analyses can be found in Table 13.

For the sample of foster mothers (n = 140), white mothers, compared to African-American mothers, reported higher levels of acceptance of children with behavioral problems (B = 1.95, t [128] = 2.71, p = .008) when controlling for the other resources. However, contrary to prediction, there was no support for higher levels of acceptance being associated with working in a helping profession (B = 1.01, t [128] = 1.66, p > .05) or having parenting experience (B = -.54, t [128] = -.88, p > .05) when controlling for

other resources. Although not predicted, foster mothers with previous fostering experience reported higher levels of acceptance of children with behavioral problems (B = 2.18, t [128] = 2.12, p = .036) when controlling for the other resources. As shown in Table 12, the same regression analysis was performed using the sample of foster fathers (n = 90) and the overall model was not statistically significant (R^2 = .18, Adjusted R^2 = .07, $F(1,78)$ = 1.59, p > .05).

In addition to OLS regression, ordinal regression analyses were used to investigate the relationship between foster family resources and the acceptability of the individual behaviors that compose the BAS scale. Results of these ordinal regression analyses can be found in Tables 14 – 22.

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who sets fires are shown in Table 14. Using the sample of mothers, white mothers (B = 1.46, p = .011), foster families composed only of full-time working parents (B = -1.48, p = .009), and mothers with higher levels of social support from friends (B = 1.36, p = .002) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who sets fires when controlling for other resources. The ordinal regression model for fathers was not statistically significant (X^2 = 7.55, df = 11, p > .05).

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who bangs his/her head are shown in Table 15. Using the sample of mothers, white mothers (B = .81, p = .002) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who bangs his/her head when controlling for other resources. The ordinal regression model for fathers was not statistically significant (X^2 = 15.22, df = 11, p > .05).

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who withdraws totally are shown in Table 16. The regression models were not statistically significant for mothers (X^2 = 15.58, df = 11, p > .05) or fathers (X^2 = 12.43, df = 11, p > .05).

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who sexually acts out are shown in Table 17. Using the sample of mothers, white mothers (B = 1.06, p = .001), foster mothers with previous fostering experience (B = 1.06, p = .018), and mothers with higher levels of social support from family (B = .62, p = .020) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who sexually acts out when controlling for other resources. The ordinal regression model for fathers was not statistically significant (X^2 = 9.73, df = 11, p > .05).

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who displays unruly behavior are shown in Table 18. Using the sample of mothers, white mothers (B = 57, p = .049) and mothers with higher levels of social support from family (B = .70, p = .005) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who displays unruly behavior when controlling for other resources. Using the sample of fathers, fathers with higher levels of social support from family (B = .98, p = .017) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who displays unruly behavior when controlling for other resources.

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who displays destructive behavior are shown in Table 19. The regression models were not statistically significant for mothers (X^2 = 18.28, df = 11, p > .05) or fathers (X^2 = 13.91, df = 11, p > .05).

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who has trouble behaving at school are shown in Table 20. Using the sample of mothers, mothers who work in a helping profession (B = .59, p = .033) and families with no parenting experience (B = -.61, p = .025) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who has trouble behaving at school when controlling for other resources. Using the sample of fathers, white fathers (B = 1.48, p = .005) and fathers who work in a helping profession (B = 1.58, p = .025) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who has trouble behaving in school when controlling for other resources.

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who lies or steals are shown in Table 21. The regression models were not statistically significant for mothers (X^2 = 18.69, df = 11, p > .05) or fathers (X^2 = 9.43, df = 11, p > .05).

The ordinal regression analyses for acceptance of a child who wets the bed are shown in Table 22. Using the sample of mothers, foster families belonging to a place of worship (B = .77, p = .012) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who wets the bed when controlling for other resources. Using the sample of fathers, white fathers (B = .97, p = .028) and foster families belonging to a place of worship (B = 1.07, p = .006) reported higher levels of acceptance of a child who wets the bed when controlling for other resources.

Hypothesis 8. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept sibling groups: being married, social support, and at least one parent being employed less than full-time. The data did not support this hypothesis. Logistic regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis. The dependent variable measured whether foster parents were willing to accept sibling groups. Results for these analyses can be found in Table 23. Logistic regression analyses failed to produce statistically significant models for either mothers (X^2 = 15.28, df = 11, p > .05) or fathers (X^2 = 3.15, df = 11, p > .05). Therefore, contrary to prediction, none of the resources included in this study predicted foster families' acceptance of sibling groups.

Hypothesis 9. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept a child regardless of gender: being married and being white. This hypothesis was partially supported. Being white (in the sample of mothers) predicted acceptance of a child regardless of gender; however, being married was not predictive. Logistic regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis. The dependent variable measured whether

foster parents were willing to accept a foster child regardless of gender. Results for these analyses can be found in Table 24.

In the sample of mothers, white mothers (B = 1.36, p = .009, OR = 3.89) and families with no parenting experience (B = -1.12, p = .018, OR = .33) were more willing to accept a child regardless of gender when controlling for other resources. In the sample of fathers, only families with no parenting experience (B = -2.23, p = .021, OR = .11) were more willing to accept a child regardless of gender when controlling for other resources. However, contrary to prediction, the race of the father did not predict foster families' acceptance of a child regardless of gender.

Hypothesis 10. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept a physically abused child or a deprived child: foster parent experience and belonging to a place of worship. This hypothesis was partially supported. Belonging to a place of worship predicted foster families' acceptance of physically abused and deprived foster children. However, previous foster parent experience did not predict acceptance of physically abused and deprived foster children. Ordinal regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis with the acceptability of physically abused and deprived children serving as the dependent variables.

In the ordinal regressions (DV= physically abused children) for mothers and fathers and in the ordinal regression (DV= deprived children) for mothers, no solution for the model could be reached using the eleven resources as independent variables. Results of these analyses indicated that the variable fostering experience was the problem, perhaps because of the skewed nature of this variable. These ordinal regression analyses were conducted again without entering the variable fostering experience into the model and solutions were reached. It should be noted that no problems were encountered while conducting an ordinal regression with the inclusion of fostering

experience for deprived children using the sample of fathers. The results of the ordinal regression analyses can be found in Table 25 for physically abused children and Table 26 for deprived children.

As shown in Table 25, using the sample of mothers, foster families belonging to a place of worship (B = 1.06, p = .001) reported higher levels of acceptance of a physically abused child when controlling for other resources. Using the sample of fathers, white fathers (B = 1.89, p < .001), fathers employed in a helping profession (B = 1.96, p = .027), and foster families belonging to a place of worship (B = 1.51, p = .001) reported higher levels of acceptance of a physically abused child when controlling for other resources.

Belonging to a place of worship also was associated with the willingness to foster deprived children. As shown in Table 26, foster families belonging to a place of worship reported higher levels of acceptance of a deprived child when controlling for other resources in both the sample of mothers (B = 1.33, p < .001) and fathers (B = 1.72, p < .001).

Hypothesis 11. The following foster parent resources predict willingness to accept a sexually abused child: higher level of education and working in a helping profession. This hypothesis was partially supported. For mothers, working in a helping profession predicted foster families' acceptance of sexually abused children, but education was not predictive. Ordinal regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis. The dependent variable was the foster families' acceptance of sexually abused children.

The ordinal regression analyses are shown in Table 27. In the sample of mothers, mothers who worked in the helping profession (B = .60, p = .015) and families with no parenting experience (B = -.53, p = .029) reported higher levels of acceptance of a sexually abused child when controlling for other resources. In the sample of fathers,

foster families belonging to a place of worship (B = 1.23, p = .003) reported higher levels of acceptance of a sexually abused child when controlling for other resources.

Research Question 4

Does foster family willingness to accept hard to place children predict the likelihood that a child will be placed in the foster home? The results of this study indicate that there is some evidence that certain foster family or foster parent resources predict the stated willingness to foster some types of foster children. What is unknown is whether this stated willingness to accept certain types of foster children translates into actual fostering behavior. For example, do foster parents who state they are more willing to accept children with behavioral problems actually foster such children? Unfortunately, this could not be determined with the data in this study because data on the type of child placed was not collected. However, it could be determined whether foster parents who were more willing to accept hard to place children were more likely to have any child placed with them.

A bivariate logistic regression analysis was used to determine whether overall willingness to accept hard to place foster children predicted having a child placed. The independent variable was a family count variable created to measure a foster family's overall willingness to accept deprived children, physically abused children, sexually abused children and children with nine different behavioral problems. As described earlier, the score of this variable theoretically ranged from 0 to 12 and represented the number of types of hard to place children a foster family was willing to accept. The dependent variable, coded as No (0) and Yes (1), indicated whether a child had been placed with the foster family. In the sample of foster families (n = 140) who provided this willingness data, 66% of foster families had a foster child placed with them as of August 2000. The willingness count variable for these 140 foster families ranged from 3 to 12

with the distribution being positively skewed. The mean score for foster families' willingness was 9.8 (SD = 1.98).

In the logistic regression analysis, days since foster parent training was entered into the first block to control for length of time since completion of training and the willingness count was entered into the second block. Because data collection from foster parent applicants was staggered over 3 1/2 years (April 1996 to December 1999) during different foster parent training sessions, foster parents who completed training earlier potentially may have had more opportunities to have a child placed in their home; therefore, the length of time since completion of training was controlled for in the regression analysis. Results of the analysis indicated that the number of days since the completion of foster parent training did not predict whether a foster child was placed (B = <.001, p = .455, OR = 1.00), but overall willingness of foster parents to accept hard to place children did predict whether a foster child was placed (B = .179, p = .048, OR = 1.20).

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overall it is encouraging that foster families seem very willing to accept hard to place children. Over two-thirds of families were at least willing to discuss children who display difficult behavior, except for children who set fires. In addition, over two-thirds of families were willing to accept sibling groups and children regardless of gender. Families seemed most willing to discuss or accept children who had been abused. Approximately 98% of families were willing to discuss or accept children who had been deprived or physically abused. Slightly fewer (93%) were willing to discuss or accept children who had been sexually abused.

Given the high level of acceptance of children who have been called "hard to place," the term "hard to place" seems inaccurate and other terms may be needed to describe these types of foster children. The label "hard to place" may add to the perception that these children are difficult to foster; thus, the label itself may contribute to the perceived placement difficulty.

As mentioned earlier, hard to place children sometimes are referred to in the literature as "special needs" children (Eheart, 1995). The term "special needs" accurately describes some hard to place children such as mentally or physically handicapped children, sexually abused children, children with HIV and AIDS, children with severe emotional and behavioral problems, and drug exposed or medically fragile infants. However, other groups of hard to place children such as sibling groups, minorities, and adolescents do not necessarily have any special needs, so the term "special needs" is not inclusive of all foster children classified as hard to place. Perhaps it would be better not to group these diverse types of foster children together at all and to allow each group of children (e. g., handicapped, minorities, sibling groups) to be considered separately.

As with the national survey of current of former foster families (DHHS, 1993), 35% of this sample also had no foster children placed with them. As noted earlier, child welfare agencies reported that the main problem is finding foster families to accept hard to place children, rather than an overall shortage of foster homes (DHHS, 1993). To date there has been only anecdotal evidence as to why some families have children placed with them and others do not. Some child welfare agencies acknowledge that the practice of non-placement is sometimes used as an alternative to denying some foster parents licensure, which can result in legal recourse by rejected parents (DHHS, 1993).

In order to distinguish foster parents who are willing to foster hard to place children from foster parents who are not willing to foster hard to place children, resource theory was used to formulate hypotheses that potentially explained the willingness to foster hard to place children. In general it was predicted that foster families with more resources would be more willing to accept hard to place children. Regression analyses were used to examine the effect of the total number of resources and the effect of individual resources on the willingness of foster families to accept particular types of hard to place children.

Use of Resource Theory

Cumulatively, the total number of foster families' resources did predict willingness to accept children with behavioral problems, children regardless of gender, deprived children, and physically abused children. However, the total number of resources did not predict the willingness to accept sibling groups or sexually abused children.

Although in most cases the total number of resources predicted foster families' willingness to accept hard to place children, it was more difficult to identify which specific resources predicted foster families' willingness to accept hard to place children. For example, across the six types of foster children defined in this study (children with

behavioral problems, sibling groups, child regardless of gender, physically abused child, deprived child, and sexually abused child), a total of 15 predictions were made concerning what resources would predict the willingness to accept these foster children. In the sample of mothers, only 5 of these 15 predictions were supported by the results of this study. In the sample of fathers, only 2 of these 15 predictions were supported. Since virtually no empirical work had been done on foster parents' willingness to accept hard to place children, it is not surprising that it was so difficult to identify which resources would predict willingness. Given this difficulty, the results of this study should be viewed as more exploratory than confirmatory. Therefore, whether predicted or not, all findings will be discussed.

Resource Type

Income, marital status, and education. In no analyses did income, marital status, or education predict foster parents' willingness to accept hard to place children. These findings did little to clarify the results of other studies that investigated the relationship between these variables and willingness to accept hard to place children. Downs (1989) found that foster parents willing to foster a mentally retarded child had lower incomes than those foster parents not willing to foster a mentally retarded child and foster parents willing to foster a physically handicapped child were more likely to be married. Downs found conflicting evidence concerning the relationship between education and the willingness to foster, with less educated foster parents more willing to foster mentally handicapped children and more educated foster parents more willing to foster physically handicapped children. In a survey of adoptive applicants Chambers (1970) found that willingness to accept a mentally handicapped child was negatively associated with father's educational level, but willingness to accept emotionally disturbed children was positively associated with the mother's educational level.

Since this study did not investigate the willingness to accept physically or mentally handicapped foster children, it is difficult to compare the results of this study with past studies. However, it is surprising that in no case were income, marital status, or education related to willingness to accept hard to place children.

Non-employed parents. It was predicted that families who had at least one parent employed less than full-time would be more willing to foster sibling groups since they potentially would have more time to handle multiple foster children. However, this was not the case with sibling groups or any other type of hard to place child. Among the nine behaviors that compose the BAS, having a parent not employed full-time only predicted willingness to accept one type of foster child behavior – setting fires. However, not much credence should be given to this finding since this finding was not consistent over different types of behavior or types of foster children. In a previous study, Downs (1989) found that foster mothers who were full-time homemakers were more willing to foster physically handicapped children than women who worked outside of the home.

Since Downs' 1989 study, more women are working outside of the home (Campbell & Downs, 1987; Fein, 1991; Kamerman & Kahn, 1989; Pasztor, 1985; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995) and there has been an increase in two-income families (Smith & Gutheil, 1988; Twigg, 1991). As a result, there are fewer foster parents who are full-time homemakers. In this study only 16% of foster mothers and 7% of foster fathers were not employed outside the home. Given the small numbers of foster parents not employed outside the home and the lack of evidence that families with parents not working outside the home are more willing to accept hard to place children, this variable may be of limited usefulness in studies on willingness. However, before excluding this variable from future studies of willingness, the relationship between employment and willingness should be explored further.

Fostering experience. It was predicted that foster parent applicants with fostering experience would be more willing to foster physically abused or deprived foster children because their experience might give them confidence in handling the special problems such foster children present. Although this hypothesis was not supported in this study, fostering experience did predict willingness to accept children with emotional and behavioral problems. Foster parents with previous fostering experience may feel better equipped to deal with the parenting challenges involved in fostering emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children. Supporting this belief, Orenstein (1989) advocated recruiting therapeutic foster parents from the ranks of existing foster families. In addition, Downs (1989) found a positive relationship between the number of children fostered and foster parents' willingness to accept mentally retarded and physically handicapped foster children.

Working in a helping profession. It was predicted that foster parent applicants who work in a helping profession (e.g., nurses, teachers, social workers, day care workers) would be more willing to foster sexually abused children and children with emotional and behavioral problems. It was not found that applicants who worked in a helping profession were more willing to care for children with emotional and behavioral problems as measured by the total BAS; however, it was found that foster mother applicants who worked in a helping profession were more willing to foster sexually abused children and children who misbehave in school. In addition, foster father applicants who worked in a helping profession were more willing to foster physically abused children and children who misbehave in school. Working in a helping profession might provide some skills that give applicants confidence in their ability to handle deviant behavior.

Parenting experience. It was predicted that foster parent applicants with parenting experience would be more willing to foster emotionally and behaviorally disturbed

children. No support was found for this hypothesis, and regarding some types of children just the opposite was found. Foster mother applicants with parenting experience were less willing to foster children who misbehave in school and sexually abused children. Childless foster parent applicants may be naïve about the demands of parenting such children. Another explanation is that their desire to be a parent may override any concerns about the demands of fostering these types of children. In either case, it would be important to ensure that these childless foster parents had a realistic picture of the demands of fostering hard to place children. Taking advantage of the naivete of childless foster parents potentially might result in higher levels of placement disruptions and anxiety among these foster parents who may tend to enter fostering with unrealistic expectations.

It also was found that childless foster parent applicants were more willing to foster a child regardless of gender. Foster parents who already have children may be more particular about the gender of a foster child. For example, a foster couple who already have two biological sons may foster as an opportunity to parent a girl. On the other hand, childless applicants may be less particular about the gender of a foster child because of their desire to parent.

Social support. It was predicted that foster parent applicants with greater levels of social support may be more willing to foster sibling groups since they would have more support in meeting the challenges of fostering multiple children. No support was found for this hypothesis, but social support predicted willingness to accept children who act out sexually, children who display unruly behavior, and children who set fires. It is unclear why social support is related to willingness to accept these particular behaviors and not other behaviors. Among the nine behaviors that compose the BAS, children who set fires rank first in least acceptability and children who act out sexually rank third in

least acceptability (see Table 6). Thus, social support may be more important in influencing willingness among behaviors which are considered the most difficult.

Belonging to a place of worship. It was predicted that foster parent applicants who belonged to a place of worship would be more willing to accept deprived and physically abused children because of the traditional Christian call to serve those less fortunate and those who have been victimized in our society. In a study of adoptive parents Silverman and Feigelman (1977) found parents who were Protestants or Catholics were more willing to accept a physically or mentally handicapped child than non-religious parents, but less willing to accept African-American children. Silverman and Feigelman surmised that "the religiously committed appear to be more willing to accept children stigmatized by individual misfortune, but much less inclined to accept those outcast by group membership" (1977, p. 560).

In this study foster mothers and fathers who belonged to a place of worship were more willing to accept deprived children, physically abused children, and children who wet their beds. Foster fathers who belonged to a place of worship also were more willing to accept sexually abused children. Deprived, physically abused, and sexually abused children are generally perceived as being victimized, which may afford them special status among religiously oriented people who often feel a calling to help the unfortunate and victimized.

Race. It was predicted that white foster parents would be more willing to accept children with behavioral problems and a child regardless of gender. In the sample of mothers this hypothesis was supported. Compared to non-white mothers, white foster mothers were more willing to accept children with behavioral problems and children regardless of gender. In addition, white mothers were more willing to accept children with four of the nine behaviors that compose the BAS (setting fires, banging head, acting

out sexually, and unruly behavior). In the sample of fathers the hypothesis was not supported, but when compared to non-white fathers, white fathers were more willing to accept physically abused children, children who misbehaved in school, and children who wet their beds.

It was originally hypothesized that white foster parents might be more willing to accept hard to place children because being white in our society provides one with a number of unearned privileges that may assist foster families in accessing needed services for hard to place children, especially children with behavioral problems. Another possible interpretation is that non-white parents may be less tolerant of deviant behavior than white parents. Bradley (1998a, 1998b) suggests that African-American parents tend to use physical discipline more than white parents in order to prepare their children to live in a racist society. Similarly, Comer (1981) reported that harsh discipline of African-American children is "adaptive and necessary for Black survival" (p. 49). Given that foster care agencies do not allow foster parents to use any forms of physical discipline with foster children, African-American foster parents may feel somewhat ill equipped to deal with behaviorally disturbed foster children. If unable to use physical discipline, African-American foster parents may be less willing to foster children with known behavioral problems.

Although the role of physical discipline in parenting African-American children may be one possible explanation of the finding that non-white applicants were less willing to accept children with behavioral problems, it should be noted that not all scholars agree on the role of harsh physical discipline within African-American families. Raymond, Jones, and Cooke (1998) argue that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support claims that African-American parents must use harsh physical discipline to adequately prepare their children to adapt to a racist society.

These explanations about African-American applicants' willingness to accept hard to place children are highly speculative. Before any definitive conclusions can be reached about African-Americans foster parent applicants' unwillingness to accept hard to place children, researchers need to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews with African-American applicants and African-American foster parents to explore their willingness to foster hard to place children. These interviews may support the presented theories in this study or may be the basis for new theories that can be validated through quantitative research.

Other Resources

Besides the resources defined in this study, there may be other foster parent or foster family resources that might be useful in predicting willingness to foster hard to place children. With the exception of social support the resources defined in this study were demographic variables. Willingness may be partially explained by psychosocial characteristics or resources. When developing a therapeutic foster care program for emotionally disturbed children in New Brunswick, Orenstein (1989) sought foster parents and families with the following qualities: non-possessive warmth, patience and understanding, good communication skills, consistency, sense of humor, humility, self-confidence, clearly-defined familial roles, good interpersonal skills, understanding of child development, and an ability to accept frustration and disappointment. Although it would be interesting to investigate the relationship of willingness to such psychosocial qualities, it is not clear how this information would be used. If the main objective in investigating willingness is to use this information in targeted recruitment campaigns, then it would be difficult to target a group of persons based on a particular psychosocial profile. However, this information could be used in matching foster parents with foster children. Moreover, in cases where particular psychosocial characteristics are

associated with low levels of willingness to accept hard to place children, then this information could be used to identify parents who are candidates for additional training, services, or monitoring.

Another resource that potentially could be related to willingness is organizational affiliation. Organizational affiliation could be considered a resource just as belonging to a place of worship was considered a resource in this study. In foster parent recruitment campaigns, churches and civic organizations have long been used in a variety of ways (Coyne, 1986; CWLA, 1991; DHHS, 1993; Meltsner, 1984; Patsztor & Burgess, 1982; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995; Vick, 1967). However, what has not been explored empirically is whether foster parents affiliated with particular organizations are more willing to foster hard to place children. This study found that foster families who belonged to a place of worship were more willing to foster deprived, physically abused, and sexually abused children, which suggests that churches are fertile ground for recruiting foster parents for such children. By gathering data on willingness and the specific organizations with which foster parents are affiliated (e.g., PTA, YMCA, Lions Club, Junior League, etc.), it would be possible to explore whether foster parents who belong to a particular organization are more willing to accept hard to place children than foster parents who do not belong to that organization. By identifying such information, recruitment campaigns could target those organizations whose members are more willing to accept hard to place children.

Other Factors

Religion. In this study belonging to a place of worship predicted willingness to accept some types of hard to place children. In future studies it would be interesting to investigate the relationship between different religious denominations and the willingness to accept different types of hard to place children. Religion was not used as an independent variable in this study due to large amounts of missing data and the small

variation on religious affiliation in the study sample. In a more religiously diverse population, religion potentially could be a useful predictor variable. Foster parent recruitment campaigns could target religious groups who are more willing to accept particular types of hard to place children than other religious groups.

Residential area. In the national survey of current and former foster parents (DHHS, 1993) willingness data were compared across type of residential area (urban, suburban, and rural). It was found that compared to urban foster parents, rural and suburban foster parents were more willing to accept adolescents and emotionally or behaviorally disturbed children. In future studies on willingness type of residential area should be included because that information could be useful in targeted recruitment efforts.

Fertility. Another factor that may influence willingness is the fertility of the foster family. According to Feigelman and Silverman (1983), compared to infertile couples, fertile couples were found to be more willing to adopt physically handicapped and African-American children. Fertility may be related to the parenting experience variable used in this study, since parenting experience was defined as having biological children. However, many foster parents choose not to have biological children and that decision may or may not be related to fertility. In addition, many single foster mother applicants who are fertile may choose fostering over having children outside of marriage because of existing social taboos of giving birth to children outside of marriage.

Despite the potential relationship between fertility and willingness to foster hard to place children, there are two issues that must be considered. First, such questions can be extremely personal to potential foster parents and great care would have to be taken to collect this information in a sensitive manner. Second, similar to psychosocial variables, it is unclear how this information would be used. Logic would suggest targeting fertility clinics or fertility support groups during foster parent recruitment

campaigns. However, great care would have to be taken to do this in a way that would be sensitive to the feelings of infertile couples or single women. By developing a good professional relationship with the fertility clinic staff, it may be possible to provide the fertility clinic staff with information about fostering and leave it to their discretion when and under what circumstances it would be appropriate to disseminate this information on fostering to their clients.

Fungibility of resources. This study investigated the effect of the total number of resources and the effect of individual resources on the willingness to accept hard to place children. This study did not consider the fungibility of resources, that is, can a deficiency of one resource be compensated for by an abundance of another resource? For example, can a low income be compensated for by a very supportive extended family? Futures studies on willingness may consider this issue.

Cumulative vs. individual resources. As reported earlier, cumulative resources predicted willingness to accept hard to place children better than individual resources. Similar findings have been reported in other areas of research. For example, a cumulative risk model has been used to explain how adolescents adapt to their environment (see Rutter, 1979; Sameroff, Seifer, Zax, & Barocas, 1987). This model suggests that youths' behavior is predicted by the total number of risk factors, rather than one risk factor or a particular set of risk factors.

More research is needed to develop a cumulative resource model in foster family research. Besides willingness, such a model potentially could predict other foster care outcomes such as placement disruptions and foster family retention.

Usefulness of Willingness Data

If willingness to accept hard to place children was not related to child placement, the usefulness of willingness data would be questionable. However, in this study there was a

positive relationship between willingness to accept hard to place children and whether a child was placed in the foster home. No data were available on the type of child placed so it is not known whether willingness to accept hard to place children is related to actually fostering hard to place children. In other words, it is unknown whether there is a relationship between foster parents' attitude (willingness) and behavior (fostering). In a study of adoptive parents Feigelman and Silverman (1983) found a positive link between willingness to adopt and actually adopting hard to place children.

As mentioned previously, the behavior of fostering hard to place children also can be viewed as implied willingness. By accepting a hard to place child for placement, it can be inferred that willingness to accept that type of child exists. However, willingness only can be inferred when foster parents are aware of the type of children they are receiving. For example, it can be assumed that a foster family who fosters a sibling group, an adolescent, a minority child, or a handicapped child was willing to accept that type of hard to place children by virtue of accepting placement of such children. However, in the case of an emotionally and behaviorally disturbed child or a sexually abused child, often at the time of placement there is no evidence of these problems, so it is unclear whether initially the foster family was willing to accept this type of child or not. As noted earlier, in a national survey it was reported that 31.4% of foster parents fostering an emotionally or behaviorally disturbed child did not know that the child had emotional or behavioral problems at the time of placement (DHHS, 1993).

In future research on willingness to accept hard to place children, data on both explicitly stated willingness and the types of children actually placed (implied willingness) should be collected. By comparing explicitly stated willingness to implied willingness, it could be determined whether there is a mismatch between these two types of

willingness and whether this mismatch is related to foster care outcomes such as placement disruptions, foster parent satisfaction, and foster parent retention.

Strengths of Current Study

This main strength of this study is that it is one of very few studies that provide information about the percentage of foster parents who are willing to accept hard to place foster children. Only two other studies (see DHHS, 1993; Downs, 1989) provided information on the percentages of foster parents willing to accept different types of hard to place foster children. This information is important due to the growing number of hard to place children entering the foster care system (DHHS, 1993). Other strengths of this study include the sample, theoretical framework, measurement strategy, and statistical procedures used.

Sample

In contrast to previous studies on willingness to foster hard to place children that have only surveyed approved foster parents (DHHS, 1993; Downs, 1989), this study is the only study on willingness to accept hard to place foster children that surveys foster parent applicants. It may be advantageous to measure the willingness of applicants vs. licensed foster parents because applicants have been less influenced by the child welfare system. Conversely, it may be better to measure the willingness of licensed foster parents because that measure of willingness is proximately closer to the decision to foster than a measure of willingness collected from applicants during foster parent training.

Because most applicants have not had any negative fostering experiences, foster parent applicants may be more willing to accept hard to place children than experienced foster parents. However, experienced foster parents because of their experience in dealing with many different types of foster children may feel more confident in their

ability to handle hard to place children and thus, may be more willing to foster such children. The findings of this study support this latter contention; applicants with fostering experience were more willing to accept emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children than applicants with no fostering experience.

It is difficult to compare the studies that surveyed approved foster parents (DHHS, 1993; Downs, 1989) with this study of foster parent applicants since the studies did not ask about willingness to accept the same types of hard to place children. However, concerning children with emotional and behavioral problems some comparisons can be made between this survey and the National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents (DHHS, 1993). In the national survey, among current foster parents, 22.9% were willing to accept children with behavioral problems, 51.4% were willing to discuss such children, and 25.7% were not willing to accept such children. In this study applicants were asked to rate on a similar 3-point ordinal scale their willingness to accept children with 9 different types of emotional and behavioral problems. In order to compare the results of this study with the results of the above national study, an average percentage was computed across the different types of emotional and behavioral problems after removing the behavior "setting fires," which was an outlier. In this study, 28.5% of applicants rated children with these behaviors as "most acceptable," 55% of applicants were "willing to discuss" such children, and 16.5% rated these children as "least acceptable." It is recognized that there are many problems in comparing these data including the use of different operational definitions of "emotional and behavioral problems," differences in the ordinal scale definitions, and sampling differences. However, even given these problems, it is interesting to note that the percentages of acceptance (22.9% vs. 28.9%) and non-acceptance (25.7% vs. 16.5%) were fairly similar between current foster parents and foster parent applicants.

From these comparative data foster parent applicants were slightly more willing to accept children with behavioral problems than current foster parents. As suggested earlier, because of their lack of experience foster parent applicants may be more naïve and thus more willing to accept hard to place children. However, in order to further substantiate this supposition, willingness would need to be measured over time. For example, by measuring willingness before, during, and after the training process it could be determined whether foster parents become less willing with more fostering experience. Another possibility is that foster parent applicants who are less willing to accept hard to place children may be more likely to drop out of fostering before foster parent applicants who are more willing to foster such children.

Theoretical Framework

This study is the only study that has attempted to propose a theoretical framework (resource theory) to explain foster parent willingness to accept hard to place children. By using resource theory, this study not only investigated the relationship between individual foster parent resources and the willingness to foster, but also investigated the cumulative impact of foster parent resources on foster parent willingness to accept different types of hard to place children. Although somewhat useful, resource theory only was partially able to explain foster parent applicants' willingness to accept hard to place children. Other theories, such as decision making theories, should be explored and applied to future research on willingness.

Measurement

Another strength of this study is that willingness to accept children with behavioral problems was conceptualized along multiple dimensions and clearly operationalized. In the national study of current and former foster parents, current foster parents were asked about their willingness to foster a child with "serious behavioral or emotional

problems" (DHHS, 1993). In this study foster parent applicants were asked about their willingness to accept children who display nine different types of difficult behaviors. These nine items were combined to form a scale which measured foster parents' willingness to accept children with emotional and behavioral problems. The measure of willingness to accept children with emotional and behavioral problems used in this study is superior to the one used in the national survey because the measure in this study is better operationalized by defining what behaviors denote a child with emotional and behavioral problems.

Statistical Methods

This study is the only study that used multiple predictors simultaneously to predict what kinds of foster parents were willing to accept which types of hard to place foster children. Regression analyses were performed on each type of hard to place child to identify any foster parent characteristics that predicted the willingness to accept a particular type of foster child.

Limitations and Weaknesses of Study

Generalizability

In the absence of a national probability sample it is not possible to generalize the results of this study to all foster parents or foster parent applicants in the United States. Compared to a national representative sample of foster parents (DHHS, 1993), the foster parent applicants in this sample were more educated and more mothers were employed full-time. In the national study (DHHS, 1993) 18% of mothers licensed after 1985 had at least a bachelor's degree compared to 29% in this study. In the national study 38% of foster mothers were employed full-time compared to 75% in this study. In terms of income, in previous studies (see DHHS, 1993) most foster parents were classified as lower to lower-middle class. However, 56% of the foster parent applicants

in this study reported incomes of $35,000 and higher, which by current standards would be considered at least middle-class.

As reported earlier, on an individual level, the resources of education, parents working less than full-time, and income did not predict willingness to accept any of the six types of hard to place children defined in this study. Therefore, regarding the effect of individual resources on willingness, in terms of the resources defined in this study, one would not expect different results in this study when using a national representative sample. However, regarding the effect of cumulative resources on willingness, compared to a national representative sample, this sample may be biased in the direction of being more willing to accept hard to place children because both higher education and income are considered resources. In a sample of mothers the bias may be less because working less than full-time is considered a resource and compared to the national sample (DHHS, 1993), fewer mothers in this study worked less than full-time.

Geographical area. Other factors also may affect the generalizability of the results of this study. The data in this study were collected from three of the largest counties in the state of Tennessee which generally would be considered urban or suburban areas. As mentioned earlier, compared to rural and suburban foster parents, urban foster parents were less willing to accept some types of hard to place children. Therefore, regarding geographical area, given the high concentration of urban families and the absence of rural families in this study, compared to a national representative sample, this sample may be biased in the direction of being less willing to accept some types of hard to place children.

Therapeutic foster parents. Another potential factor affecting the generalizability of the results of this study is the lack of therapeutic foster parents in this study. In the state of Tennessee the care of therapeutic foster children is contracted out to private

agencies. Because therapeutic foster parents know they will be caring for the most difficult foster children, it would be reasonable to expect that therapeutic foster parents would be more willing to accept hard to place children than non-therapeutic foster parents. Additionally, the extra training and support received by therapeutic foster parents also may positively affect therapeutic foster parents' willingness to accept hard to place foster children. Therefore, the inclusion of therapeutic foster parents in this study might have increased the willingness of the sample to accept hard to place children.

Kinship foster parents. The study also did not include kinship foster parent applicants. Since kinship foster parent applicants are applying to foster particular children they already know well, these applicants are demonstrating a willingness to accept these children on the basis of an established relationship. Because of this established relationship with a child, kinship foster parents may be more willing to accept deviant behavior from these particular children; however, it is unclear whether this increased willingness would be extended toward unknown foster children.

Reasons for nonparticipation. As detailed earlier, the likelihood of participation in this study was (1) lower for married mothers, (2) lower for non-white mothers when compared to white mothers, (3) greater for those interested in fostering and adoption, and (4) lower for those interested solely in adoption. In order to participate in the study, both members of a married couple had to agree to participate. Therefore, one reason participation may have been lower for married mothers when compared to single mothers was that it was more difficult to obtain agreement to participate when dealing with more than one person.

In this study non-white mothers, 93% of whom were African-American, were less likely to participate. In the past researchers have suggested that African-Americans are

distrustful of white-dominated agencies (Brunton & Welch, 1983; Herzog, Sudia, & Harwood, 1971) and African-Americans feel more alienated from agencies than whites (Herzog et al., 1971). Although these articles are over 15 years old, when dealing with social service agencies, distrustful feelings among African-Americans may still exist. Even though the researchers for this study tried to ensure participants that this study was not connected with DCS (Department of Children's Services) in any way, potential participants may still have associated this research study with DCS because data were gathered during agency-sponsored foster parent training. Additionally, all researchers who gathered data for this study were white, which may have contributed to any racial distrust that black foster applicants felt toward DCS. Given that African-Americans in this study were found to be less willing to accept some types of hard to place children, the reluctance of African-Americans to participate in this study may suggest that the percentages of foster parent applicants willing to accept hard to place children may be inflated to some degree.

Among those interested in both fostering and adoption, their openness to both adoption and fostering may partially explain their increased likelihood of participating in this research study. Those interested only in adoption were less likely to participate in this study. Given that this study was presented to the applicants as a study about foster families, it is not surprising that families who were not interested in fostering were less likely to participate.

Sample Size

The sample size used in the study was adequate to detect medium to large effect sizes, but not adequate to detect small effect sizes. In the regression analyses in this study the sample size of mothers ranged from 138 to 141, which was adequate to detect medium to large effect sizes (Cohen, 1988). However, the sample of fathers, which

ranged from 88 to 90, generally was only adequate to detect large effect sizes. This in part may explain why more predictors of willingness were identified in the sample of mothers than in the sample of fathers.

Measurement

Although the measurement of willingness to accept hard to place children could be improved, there is evidence supporting the validity and reliability of the willingness measure used in this study. The validity of measured willingness is suggested by the predicted relationship with child placement. In addition, some degree of reliability is suggested by the numerous statistically significant relationships. In addition, the internal consistency of the 9-item BAS was good (coefficient alpha = .85).

In this study willingness was measured on a family level rather than on an individual level. In two parent foster families, parents jointly decided on their willingness to accept certain types of foster children. In future studies, it would be advisable to collect willingness data individually from foster parents, which would allow for comparisons of willingness between mothers and fathers in married couples.

Willingness data in this study were collected using either a dichotomous variable or a 3-point ordinal scale with values of "Least acceptable" (1), "Willing to discuss" (2), and "Most acceptable" (3). As shown in Tables 5 and 6, large percentages of foster families responded in the middle category "Willing to discuss," which provides little useful information. The category of "Willing to discuss" contains a wide range of degrees ofr willingness that could be better defined and measured. In future studies it is recommended that a five to seven point ordinal scale be used to measure willingness. By providing foster families more scale points to indicate their degree of willingness to foster hard to place children, a better measurement of willingness could be developed,

which would make it possible to further discriminate willingness to foster among different types of hard to place children.

The primary focus of this study was the willingness of foster parents to accept children with emotional and behavioral problems. Willingness to foster the whole range of hard to place children was not studied since this type of data was not collected in the larger study. Traditionally, in addition to emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children, hard to place foster children include mentally or physically handicapped children, sexually abused children, children with HIV and AIDS, drug exposed or medically fragile infants, minority children, sibling groups, and adolescents. This study did include willingness to accept sexually abused children and sibling groups, but future studies could be improved greatly by including all types of hard to place children, especially minority children and adolescents, since these groups of foster children represent a large percentage of the foster child population (DHHS, 1993; Tatara, 1997). This study also included the willingness to accept deprived and physically abused children who traditionally are not defined as hard to place, but these types of children were included in this study since difficult behaviors often are associated with these types of foster children.

Willingness to accept a child regardless of gender also was included in this study. However, in the literature a child of a particular gender is not considered a hard to place child. Therefore, the willingness to accept a child regardless of gender is not a good measure of a foster family's willingness to accept hard to place children, but rather may be an indicator of the flexibility of foster families. For example, in this study foster families who already had biological children were more willing to accept a foster child regardless of gender than childless foster families. Thus, with regard to gender foster families with children can be seen as more flexible than childless foster families.

Although related to flexibility, willingness to accept hard to place children can be interpreted as a more specific type of flexibility within foster families.

Research Design

When using a cross-sectional design, it is particularly difficult to establish causality between independent and dependent variables. The findings of this study suggest that resources (cumulative and individual) predict willingness to accept hard to place children and that willingness predicts child placement. However, it cannot be ruled out that other variables predict willingness and child placement. Some other variables that might predict willingness may include dispositional factors (e.g., empathy, patience) and family characteristics (e.g., rigidity, flexibility). Some other variables that might predict child placement may include family characteristics such as length of marriage, previous fostering experience, and reasons for fostering. In future studies on willingness, in order to better understand the causal relationship between resources and willingness and between willingness and child placement, other dispositional and family variables should be included in the study.

In this study willingness data were collected during foster parent training from foster parent applicants. In the national survey of current and former foster parents (DHHS, 1993) willingness data were collected from foster parents who had at least some experience fostering and in most cases had extensive fostering experience. In both cases willingness was measured as a snapshot in time. The timing of collecting willingness data is an interesting issue. Does willingness to foster hard to place children change over time or with fostering experience?

In this study foster families with no parenting experience were more willing to foster sexually abused children and children who have trouble behaving in school than foster families with parenting experience. This finding may suggest that compared with more

experienced parents, foster families with less parenting experience may be more naïve and be more willing to take on difficult children because they do not know what those types of children will require of them. If this is true of parenting experience, then it may also be true of fostering experience. In contrast, in this study foster mothers with previous fostering experience were more willing to accept children with behavioral problems than mothers with no previous fostering experience. However, due to the low percentage (9%) of foster parent applicants in the study with fostering experience, these results may need replication.

In order to clarify whether willingness changes over time or with experience, willingness data should be collected at several points such as during recruitment, during training, after approval as a foster parent, after placement of first child, after one year of service, and upon discontinuing fostering. By measuring willingness at various points in the life cycle of foster families, it would be possible to explore the stability of willingness as a variable and the relationship of willingness to other foster parent measures such as satisfaction, motivation, performance, and retention. In addition to measuring willingness over the life cycle of foster families, it is suggested that resources which are subject to change (e.g., education level, fostering experience, social support, employment status) also be measured over time to determine whether the willingness to foster changes as resources change over time.

Suggested Future Research

The discussion on the limitations of this study suggests an ideal study. An ideal study on willingness would use a representative national sample of at least 500 to 600 foster parent applicants. A sample size of 500 to 600 would allow relatively precise estimates of parameters and adequate statistical power to detect effect sizes of interest (e.g., Orme & Hudson, 1995) and it would allow for the inclusion of a relatively large

number of explanatory variables. The ideal study would be a longitudinal study that investigated willingness and child placement periodically over a period of time of at least three years. In such a study willingness to accept different types of hard to place children would be measured, including mentally and physically handicapped children, sexually abused children, children with HIV and AIDS, emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children, drug exposed or medically fragile infants, sibling groups, minority children and adolescents. Willingness data would be collected independently from both foster mothers and fathers and would be measured on a five to seven point scale using measures with demonstrated reliability and validity.

Extensive demographic data would be collected from foster parents as well as other identifying data such as a list of memberships in civic and church organizations for each foster parent, type of residential area (urban, suburban, rural), and fertility data. This study on willingness would be a part of a larger study on foster parenting. One of the goals of the larger study would be to examine the utility of willingness by exploring the relationship between willingness and a broad array of fostering variables including how foster parents were recruited, motivation to foster, satisfaction with fostering, number of children fostered, types of foster children, number of placement disruptions, foster parent performance, reasons for placement disruptions, length of service as foster parents, and reasons for discontinuing fostering (if applicable).

In this ideal study regression analyses using multiple predictors would be performed for each type of hard to place child to identify any foster parent characteristics or resources that predict the willingness to accept a particular type of foster child. In addition to understanding the relationship of individual resources to willingness, the relationship between cumulative resources and willingness would be analyzed using regression analyses. By performing cluster analyses on the willingness to foster different

types of foster children, it could be determined whether foster parents accept or reject the same types of foster children. In order to validate the usefulness of willingness data, regression analyses would be used to establish the relationship between willingness and various fostering outcome measures such as child placement, types of children placed, number of children fostered, number of placement disruptions, and length of service.

In addition to better designed quantitative studies on willingness, qualitative studies on willingness also are needed. By interviewing foster parents about their willingness or lack of willingness to accept certain types of foster children, a deeper understanding could be reached about the nature of willingness. Moreover, potential factors related to willingness could be identified, which could be validated through quantitative research.

Practice and Policy Implications

Foster Parent Recruitment

The study findings on willingness can be used to target applicants more willing to accept hard to place children. In this study, compared to foster parent applicants who did not belong to a place of worship, foster parent applicants who belonged to a place of worship were more willing to foster physically abused, deprived, or sexually abused children. In addition to being more willing to accept hard to place children, there is some evidence that foster parents who first heard about fostering through their church may be more suitable for fostering than other foster parents. Kraus (1975) reported that foster parent couples who reported church as their recruitment source were likely to be more altruistically motivated and more interested in the general welfare of children than those couples who listed other recruitment sources. In his article, Kraus contended that "altruistic" foster parents are more suitable for fostering than "self-centered" foster parents.

Targeting churches in recruitment activities is not a new idea. In a national survey of social service agencies, 61% of agencies reported involving civic or religious organizations in recruiting activities (CWLA, 1991). However, according to the national survey of current and former foster parents, only 3.9% of foster parents initially heard about fostering from a church or other religious organization (DHHS, 1993). Over time the trend is more discouraging: among foster parents licensed before 1980, 6.6% of foster parents first heard about the need for foster parents from either a church or civic organization, compared to 3.3% of foster parents licensed after 1985.

It is unclear whether places of worship are being underutilized by foster care agencies during recruitment campaigns or if people are not responding to recruitment efforts in places of worship. It either case, there are not many good examples in the recruitment literature about how to recruit foster parents in places of worship. Within the African-American community, one example is the One Church/One Child organization (GAO, 1989). This organization works with state child welfare agencies and African-American churches to increase the awareness of the need for African-American foster and adoptive parents. One Church/One Child also canvasses local church members and refers potential foster parents to state social service agencies.

The findings of this study suggest that church members may be very responsive to helping abused children. In terms of themes and messages in recruitment campaigns, over the past few years agencies have been shifting from child-focused messages to more job-centered messages (Pasztor, 1985; Pasztor & Burgess, 1982; Pasztor & Wynne, 1995). In the past pictures of foster children were used in urgent appeals such as "We Need Homes" and "Have You a Home for Us?" (Ougheltree, 1957, p.16). However, it has been suggested that such desperate messages should not be used because they might frighten or deter potential foster parents (Horejsi, 1977; Horejsi,

1979; Pasztor, 1985). Instead it has been recommended that recruiting campaigns focus on the job of fostering by emphasizing the positive, rewarding, and challenging aspects of fostering through messages such as: "Foster Parents Are Special People – Like You?," "Foster Parenting - A New Experience in Family Living," and "Foster Parenting: A Rewarding Job with Meaning, Purpose and Challenge" (Pasztor & Burgess, 1982; Pasztor, 1985).

However, the findings of this study suggest that recruitment messages that focus on the plight of abused children may be effective in attracting the subset of potential foster parents who belong to a place of worship. As Kraus (1975) suggests, people who belong to a place of worship may be more altruistic in their motives and less centered on their own needs. Therefore, many of these potential foster parents will probably not be frightened away by images of abused children, but rather they may feel a calling to help these children because of their strong religious beliefs.

Despite the fairly extensive discussions about recruitment themes and messages in the literature, thus far there have been no empirical studies that test which messages or themes are the most effective in recruiting qualified foster parents. Clearly, more research is needed to help agencies tailor their recruitment messages and efforts based on the motivations and needs of different groups of foster parents. Willingness data should be included in this research to help agencies recruit the types of foster parents they need to meet the growing needs of hard to place children.

Matching

Another potential use of willingness data is to match appropriate parents to different types of foster children. Rowe (1976) found that foster parents who were able to accept undesirable foster child behavior (early adult behavior, poor academic performance, and difficult social behavior) were more successful in fostering than foster parents who were

not as accepting of these behaviors. Therefore, matching a particular type of foster child with foster parents who are more willing to accept that type of foster child may produce more stable and successful placements and improve the retention of foster families. For example, in this study it was found that applicants with fostering experience were more willing to accept emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children than applicants with no fostering experience. Therefore, agencies should try to place children with known emotional and behavioral problems with experienced foster parents. By better matching foster parents with foster children, it also is hoped that there will be fewer disruptions of placements because of foster parents' inability to handle foster children's problems.

Additional Support and Training

If a foster parent is unwilling to accept hard to place children, it may be a conscious choice or it may be due to a foster parent feeling ill-equipped or ill-prepared to deal with hard to place children. When foster parent applicants express an unwillingness to foster certain types of children, caseworker should explore this with them to get an understanding for the basis of their unwillingness. If foster parents feel unprepared to foster certain types of children, then foster care workers should offer those foster parents additional support or training that is tailored to their areas of perceived deficiencies. Of course, additional agency resources may be needed to offer this additional support and training.

Compared to white applicants, African-American foster parent applicants were less willing to accept emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children. Given this finding, it may be tempting to suggest that additional support and training should be given to African-American foster parents so they would be more willing to foster children with emotional and behavioral problems. However, this should only be done with great care

and cultural sensitivity. As discussed earlier, this racial difference may be explained by the presence of white privilege in our society or the role of physical discipline in African-American families. However, these are only theories and caseworkers need to carefully explore these issues with African-American foster parent applicants before intervening with additional training and support.

Agency Policy

On an agency level, willingness data should be collected routinely and tracked. As the gap between the number of hard to place children and the number of foster parents willing to accept these children increases, agencies should implement policies and provide resources to improve the situation; otherwise caseworkers will be forced to place children with foster parents who feel unwilling or ill equipped to deal with these hard to place children.

Conclusion

As foster care agencies continue to struggle to recruit foster parents for the growing number of hard to place foster children, a better understanding is needed of the foster parents who are willing to care for hard to place foster children. By exploring the willingness of foster parents applicants to accept different types of hard to place children, this study has attempted to add to this understanding. This study has shown that willingness to foster hard to place children is a useful variable in predicting foster child placement, thus establishing that willingness may be an important intermediate variable in foster care research. Future research is needed to explore the relationship of willingness to other foster care measures and outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Confidentiality Pledge

CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGE
FOSTER CHILD MENTAL HEALTH STUDY

Principal Investigator: John G. Orme, Ph.D.

I, _____, understand that any and all information that I obtain about clients in connection with this research project is to remain completely confidential.

Confidentiality is to be specifically ensured in three ways:

•Original records will not be taken from the agency at any time.

•Original records will be read only in specifically designated areas of the clinic and will not be removed from these areas at any time.

•Participants in the project will not discuss any client information with anyone other than the Principal Investigator or other members of the research team, nor discuss such information in public or in the presence of anyone outside the project.

•No data will be analyzed without the express permission of the Principal Investigator, and in such cases the data will be analyzed using only a specially constructed data set that contains no client names.

I have received a copy of this confidentiality pledge and agree to all terms.

_____ _____

(Signature) (Date)

_____ _____

(Principal Investigator) (Date)

Appendix B. Foster Parent Consent to Participate

FOSTER PARENT
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We are inviting you to be part of a study of foster parents. This study is being done by the University of Tennessee with the help of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS). The purpose of this study is to help us better understand the influence of foster parents on foster children, and to help us understand the training and services that foster parents need.

If you agree to be part of this study, we will ask you to complete a series of questionnaires about you or your family during MAPP training, starting at week three and ending at week eight. Also, after a foster child is placed in your home, we will ask you to complete several questionnaires about your foster child 60 days after placement, and then again after one year, or earlier if the child leaves your care before that time. In addition, if you agree, the worker who completes your home study will answer some questions about you as a foster parent. Finally, a researcher from the University of Tennessee, Dr. John Orme, another faculty member, or a graduate student member of his research team, will collect information from your "Family Income and Expenditures" questionnaire, your "Family Assessment Profile," and your foster family file at DCS (e.g., date foster child placed, date and reason foster child left placement, if applicable, and type of services received from DCS).

Protections for you. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to participate only basic demographic information will be collected about you (e.g., age, race, family structure) from your DCS foster family file, but your name will not be linked to this information. If you do agree to participate, the information about you will be stored on computer without your name or other identifying information, and only the research team will have access to this information. **DCS will receive research results about all families combined, but they will not get information about you as an individual or your particular family**.

If you do not agree to be part of this study, it will not affect your status as foster parents in any way, nor any services you may receive from the state of Tennessee or the University of Tennessee. However, we do hope that you will agree to help us in our efforts to improve the services provided for foster parents and foster children. If you agree to participate and then change your mind, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without DCS being notified. Also, except for basic demographic information (e.g., age, race, family structure) the information about you will be destroyed. Not being part of the study will not affect your status or services at DCS or any other State agency.

Risks and benefits. There are no anticipated risks to you from participating in this study. Being part of the study will give you the opportunity to help us help foster children and foster families.

As a token of our appreciation, your family will be offered a $25 Wal-Mart gift certificate for completion of the entire set of questionnaires during MAPP training, another $25 Wal-Mart gift certificate for completion of the first set of questionnaires about your foster child, and another $25 Wal-Mart gift certificate for completion of the second set of questionnaires about your foster child.

The name and telephone number of the director of this study, Dr. John Orme, are listed below. You may contact him if you have any questions or concerns about this study.

I have read the informed consent document and understand the explanation of the study. I agree to participate in the study and understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

_____
Name (Please Print)

_____
Signature/Date Signed

Project Director
John G. Orme, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
(423) 974-7503

Appendix C. MAPP Trainer Consent to Participate

MAPP TRAINER
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We are inviting you to participate in a study of the characteristics of foster parents and their experiences while foster parenting. This study is being conducted by the University of Tennessee with the help of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS). The purpose of this study is to help us better understand the influence of foster parents on foster children, and to help us understand the training and services that foster parents need to provide effective services.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your professional opinion of the potential of each parent in each of your MAPP groups to act as a foster parent.

Protections for you. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and DCS will not be informed of your decision to participate or not participate. If you do agree to participate, the information you provide will be stored on computer without your name or other identifying information, and only the research team will have access to this information. **DCS will receive research results in aggregate form, but DCS will not have access to information that you as an individual provide.**

If you do not agree to participate in this study, it will not affect your status an employee of DCS. However, we do hope that you will agree to help us. If you agree to participate and then change your mind, you may withdraw from the study at any time without it affecting your status as an employee of DCS or any other State agency, including the University of Tennessee.

Risks and benefits. There are no anticipated risks to you from participating in this study. The only benefit is the opportunity to express your professional opinions and the possibility of helping contribute to improving the quality of foster parents and the services provided to them.

The name and telephone number of the director of this study, Dr. John Orme, are listed below. You may contact him if you have any questions or concerns about this study.

I have read the informed consent document and understand the explanation of the study. I agree to participate in the study and understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

_____
Name (Please Print)

_____
Signature/Date Signed

Principal Investigator
John G. Orme, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
(423) 974-7503

Appendix D. Foster Care Worker Consent to Participate

FOSTER CARE WORKER
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We are inviting you to participate in a study of how foster care workers view the role of foster parents. This study is being conducted by the University of Tennessee Children's Mental Health Services Research Center. The purpose of this study is to help us better understand what foster care workers expect of foster mothers and fathers.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire that asks about your professional opinion of what foster mothers should do, and a comparable questionnaire about foster fathers. Also, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about your background.

Protections for you. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and DCS will not be informed of your decision to participate or not participate. If you do agree to participate, the information you provide will be stored on computer without your name or other identifying information, and only the research team will have access to this information. **DCS will receive research results in aggregate form, but DCS will not have access to information that you as an individual provide.**

If you do not agree to participate in this study, it will not affect your status an employee of DCS. However, we do hope that you will agree to help us. If you agree to participate and then change your mind, you may withdraw from the study at any time without it affecting your status as an employee of DCS or any other State agency, including the University of Tennessee.

Risks and benefits. There are no anticipated risks to you from participating in this study. The only benefit is the opportunity to express your professional opinions and the possibility of helping contribute to improving the quality of services provided to foster parents and children.

The name and telephone number of the director of this study, Dr. John Orme, are listed below. You may contact him if you have any questions or concerns about this study.

I have read the informed consent document and understand the explanation of the study. I agree to participate in the study and understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

_____
Name (Please Print)

_____
Signature/Date Signed

Principal Investigator
John G. Orme, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
(423) 974-7503

Appendix E. Invitation to Participate in Study

Introduction to Participants
at Second MAPP Session

Purpose of the Research

We are inviting you to be part of a study of foster parents. This study is being done by the University of Tennessee with the help of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS). The purpose of this study is to help us better understand the influence of foster parents on foster children, and to help us understand the training and services that foster parents need.

What We Would Like Foster Parents to Do

If you agree to be part of this study, we will ask you to:

(1) complete a series of questionnaires about you or your family during MAPP training, starting at week three and ending at week eight;

(2) complete several questionnaires about your foster child 60 days after placement;

(3) complete several questionnaires about your foster child after one year, or earlier if the child leaves your care before that time;

(4) allow us to have the worker who does your home study to answer some questions about you as a foster parent;

(5) allow a researcher from the University of Tennessee, Dr. John Orme, another faculty member, or a graduate student member of his research team, to collect information from your "Family Income and Expenditures" questionnaire, your "Family Assessment Profile," and your foster family file at DCS (e.g., date foster child placed, date and reason foster child left placement, if applicable, and type of services received from DCS).

Safeguards for Foster Parents

•Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

•This is NOT part of the home study process, even though some of the information is similar.

•If you decide not to participate only basic descriptive information will be collected about you (e.g., age, race, family structure) from your DCS foster family file, but your name will not be linked to this information.

•If you do agree to participate, the information about you will be stored on computer with an ID number assigned to you by the research team. Only a few members of the research team will have access to your name or other identifying information.

•DCS will receive research results about all families combined, but neither your worker nor anyone else at DCS will get information about you as an individual or your particular family (Explain such combined information in terms of voting). Furthermore, DCS will not even have this aggregate information until after a child has been placed with you

•If you do not agree to be part of this study, it will not affect your status as foster parents in any way, nor any services you may receive from the state of Tennessee or the University of Tennessee.

•If you agree to participate and then change your mind, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without DCS being notified. Also, except for basic demographic information (e.g., age, race, family structure) the information about you will be destroyed. Not being part of the study will not affect your status or services at DCS or any other State agency.

Foster Parent Benefits

•As a token of our appreciation, your family will be offered a $25 Wal-Mart gift certificate for completion of the entire set of questionnaires during MAPP training, another $25 Wal-Mart gift certificate for completion of the first set of questionnaires about your foster child, and another $25 Wal-Mart gift certificate for completion of the second set of questionnaires about your foster child.

•Being part of the study will give you the opportunity to help us help foster children and foster families. We hope that you will agree to help us in our efforts to improve the services provided for foster parents and foster children. We will send a summary of results to anyone who is interested.

Summary

•We are asking you to complete a series of questionnaires during MAPP training, and then again twice after you have a child placed.

•We are asking your permission to collect some information from your DCS records, and some information from your worker.

•The information we collect will not be given to DCS, and it will not be used by DCS to make decisions about you.

•Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your decision to participate or not will not influence any services you receive from the state of Tennessee or the University of Tennessee.

•Your family will be offered a $25 Wal-Mart gift certificate for completion of each of the three sets of questionnaires.

•Your participation will be greatly appreciated, and your participation will give you the opportunity to help us help foster children and foster families.

Appendix F. Foster Parent Background Information

FOSTER PARENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Name: _____ / _____ / _____
   Last First MI

2. Were you ever a foster parent before you started MAPP training?

   (0) No
   (1) Yes

3. Gender:

   (0) Male
   (1) Female

4. Date of Birth: __ __ / __ __ / __ __
   Month Day Year

5. Are you currently (circle one):

   (1) Married
   (2) Separated
   (3) Divorced
   (4) Widowed
   (5) Never married
   (6) Other (please specify) _____

6. What is the **HIGHEST** degree you received (circle one)?

   (0) Less than high school
   (1) High school diploma (or equivalency)
   (2) Some college, no degree
   (3) Associate, two-year, junior college degree
   (4) Bachelor's degree
   (5) Advanced degree (please specify)_____
   (6) Other (please specify) _____

7. Race (circle one):

   (1) Black/African-American
   (2) White/Caucasian
   (3) Other (specify) _____

8. If you **DO NOT** wish do participate in this research study would you please indicate why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

1. Location of MAPP group (circle one):

   (0) Davidson County
   (1) Hamilton County
   (2) Knox County

2. End Date of MAPP Group: __ __ / __ __ / __ __
   Month Day Year

3. Participant Status

   (1) Eligible participant
   (2) Eligible non-participant
   (3) Other (specify)_____

4. Approval Status

   (1) Approved
   (2) Not approved
   (3) Pending approval
   (3) Other (specify)_____

5. Foster Family ID Number _____

Appendix G. Foster Parent Demographic Information

Name (please print) _____ / _____ / _____
Last First MI

1. If you are married, when were you married?

__ __ / __ __ / __ __

2. How many times have you been married, **excluding** your current marriage?

___

3. Please list your religion/denomination.

_____

4. Do you belong to a place of worship?

(0) no
(1) yes

5. Are you employed now?

(0) no
(1) yes, part-time
(2) yes, full-time

6. What kind of work do you do (did you do on your last regular job)? What is (was) your main occupation called?

_____

7. Do you have a pet?

(0) no
(1) yes

8. In what type of home do you live?

(1) apartment
(2) duplex
(3) single-family house
(4) mobile home
(5) other

9. Please list all the people living in your household. Include their relationship to you and their age. For example, if your 16-year-old son were living with you, you'd write son and 16 on the lines below.

Relationship	Age
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___

10. Now list any child or children not living with you.

Relationship	Age
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___
_____	___

11. What was your total family income last year before taxes? This should include wages and salaries, net income from business or farm, pensions, dividends, interest, rent, and any other money income received by all those people in the household who are related to you.

(1) Less than 5,000
(2) 5,000 to 9,999
(3) 10,000 to 14,999
(4) 15,000 to 19,999
(5) 20,000 to 24,999
(6) 25,000 to 34,999
(7) 35,000 to 44,999
(8) 45,000 to 54,999
(9) 55,000 to 74,999
(10) 75,000 to 99,999
(11) 100,000 and over

Appendix H. Social Support Behavior Scale

SOCIAL SUPPORT BEHAVIORS SCALE (SSB)

People help each other out in a lot of different ways. Suppose you had some kind of problem (were upset about something, needed help with a practical problem, were broke, or needed some advice or guidance), how **likely** would (a) members of your **family**, and (b) your **friends** be to help you out in each of the specific ways listed below. We realize you may rarely need this kind of help, but **if you did** would your family and friends help in the ways indicated. Try to base your answers on your past experience with these people. Use the scale below, and circle one number under family, and one under friends, in each row.

1 = **No one** would do this
2 = **Someone might** do this
3 = **Some** family member/friend would **probably** do this
4 = **Some** family member/friend would **certainly** do this
5 = **Most** family members/friends would **certainly** do this

	(a) Family	(b) Friends
1. Would suggest doing something, just to take my mind off my problems.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Would visit with me, or invite me over.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Would comfort me if I was upset.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Would give me a ride if I needed one.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Would have lunch or dinner with me.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Would look after my belongings (house, pets, etc.) for a while.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Would loan me a car if I needed one.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Would joke around or suggest doing something to cheer me up.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. Would go to a movie or concert with me.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10. Would suggest how I could find out more about a situation.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11. Would help me out with a move or other big chore.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12. Would listen if I needed to talk about my feelings.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

1 = **No one** would do this
2 = **Someone might** do this
3 = **Some** family member/friend would **probably** do this
4 = **Some** family member/friend would **certainly** do this
5 = **Most** family members/friends would **certainly** do this

	(a) Family	(b) Friends
13. Would have a good time with me.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. Would pay for my lunch if I was broke.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. Would suggest a way I might do something.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16. Would give me encouragement to do something difficult.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. Would give me advice about what to do.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. Would chat with me.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
19. Would help me figure out what I wanted to do.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
20. Would show me that they understood how I was feeling.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
21. Would buy me a drink if I was short of money.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
22. Would help me decide what to do.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
23. Would give me a hug, or otherwise show me I was cared about.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
24. Would call me just to see how I was doing.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
25. Would help me figure out what was going on.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
26. Would help me out with some necessary purchase.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
27. Would not pass judgment on me.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
28. Would tell me who to talk to for help.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
29. Would loan me money for an indefinite period.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
30. Would be sympathetic if I was upset.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
31. Would stick by me in a crunch.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

1 = **No one** would do this
2 = **Someone might** do this
3 = **Some** family member/friend would **probably** do this
4 = **Some** family member/friend would **certainly** do this
5 = **Most** family members/friends would **certainly** do this

	(a) Family	(b) Friends
32. Would buy me clothes if I was short of money.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
33. Would tell me about the available choices and options.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
34. Would loan me tools, equipment or appliances if I needed them.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
35. Would give me reasons why I should or should not do something.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
36. Would show affection for me.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
37. Would show me how to do something I didn't know how to do.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
38. Would bring me little presents of things I needed.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
39. Would tell me the best way to get something done.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
40. Would talk to other people, to arrange something for me.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
41. Would loan me money and want to "forget about it."	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
42. Would tell me what to do.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
43. Would offer me a place to stay for a while.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
44. Would help me think about a problem.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
45. Would loan me a fairly large sum of money (say the equivalent of a month's rent or mortgage).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix I. Foster Family Willingness Information

1. Many of the children needing foster care or adoption have had some inappropriate sexual experiences. For example, they may have observed older children or adults involved in sex or they may have been sexually abused. Could you parent the following children:

	Could Parent Without Help	Could Parent With Help	Could Not Parent
Child who masturbates			
Teenager who was or is sexually active			
Child whose mother was or is involved in prostitution			
Child of any age who has been sexually abused			
Child who wants to talk to you about sex			
Child who talks to your children about sex			
Child who expresses interest in homosexual relationships			

2. What type of child do you prefer to foster

   (1) boy
   (2) girl
   (3) boy or girl

3. Are you willing to take a sibling group?

   (0) no
   (1) yes

4. Indicate as honestly as possible your level of acceptance of a child who:

	Most Acceptable	Willing To Discuss	Least Acceptable
Sets fires			
Bangs his/her head			
Withdraws totally			
Acts out sexually			
Has unruly behavior			
Has been sexually abused			
Has destructive behavior			
Has trouble behaving in school			
Lies or steals			
Wets the bed			
Has been deprived			
Has been physically abused			

Appendix J. Tables

Table 1. Comparison of Study Participants and Non-respondents

	Mothers (n = 216)				Fathers (n = 146)			
	B	Wald	p	OR	B	Wald	p	OR
Indiv-level vars								
Education	.16	1.90	.168	1.17	.05	.13	.721	1.05
Race	.89	4.84	.028	2.43	.75	2.12	.145	2.12
Fostering exp.	-.20	.12	.731	.82	-.54	.50	.479	.59
Age	-.02	.81	.370	.98	<-.01	.11	.746	.99
Family-level vars								
Married	-1.08	6.03	.014	.34	1.58	2.69	.101	4.83
Interest								
Foster	.25	1.01	.316	1.29	.43	2.21	.137	1.53
Foster & Adopt	.74	7.61	.006	2.10	.62	4.74	.029	1.85
Adopt	-.99	11.20	.001	.37	-1.04	10.73	.001	.35
County								
D	.59	4.50	.034	1.81	.52	2.09	.148	1.68
H	-.45	2.37	.123	.64	-.15	.16	.690	.86
K	-.14	.31	.575	.87	-.37	1.38	.239	.69
Total	$X^2(11) = 38.10$, $p < .001$				$X^2(11) = 21.60$, $p = .010$			

Table 2. Foster Families' Characteristics

Characteristics	Total Families (n=153) %
Married	61.4
Family Type	
Two-Parent	61.4
Single-Mother	37.3
Single-Father	1.3
Type of Home	
Apartment	12.1
Duplex	5.4
Single Family	73.2
Mobile Home	6.0
Other	3.4
Yearly Family Income	
< 5,000	1.4
5,000 – 9,999	1.4
10,000 – 14,999	4.1
15,000 – 19,999	7.4
20,000 – 24,999	11.5
25,000 – 34,999	18.2
35,000 – 44,999	18.2
45,000 – 54,999	12.2
55,000 – 74,999	16.2
75,000 – 99,999	4.7
≥ 100,000	4.7
Parenting Experience	56.9
Number of Children In Home	
0	56.3
1	19.2
2	13.9
3	6.0
≥ 4	4.7
A parent not working full-time	28.1
Belongs to Place of Worship	78.4
Interest	
Fostering	51.6
Fostering & Adoption	41.2
Adoption	7.2
Approval status	
Approved	73.2
Did not complete	18.3
Rejected	8.5
Child placed (as of Aug. 2000)	65.4

Note. For type of home, yearly income, number of children, parent not working full-time and place of worship membership, data were missing for 4 (2.6%), 5 (3.3%), 2 (1.3%), 5 (3.3%), 5 (3.3%) of families, respectively, but there were no missing data for other variables.

Table 3. Foster Parents' Characteristics

	Total Families (n=153)	
Characteristics	Mothers (n=151) %	Fathers (n=96) %
Race		
African-American	27.1	13.5
White	70.9	85.4
Other	2.0	1.0
Highest Degree		
<HS	2.6	7.3
HS/GED	40.4	34.4
College, No Degree	13.9	9.4
Two-Year Degree	13.9	19.8
Bachelor's Degree	18.5	21.9
Advanced Degree	10.6	7.3
Employment status		
No	16.1	7.4
Part-Time	8.7	4.3
Full-Time	75.2	88.3
Employed in helping profession	39.9	14.0
Previous foster parent experience	9.3	6.3
	M (SD)	M (SD)
Age	38.13 (8.92)	37.95 (8.22)
Social Support Behaviors Scale (SSB)		
Family subscale	4.35 (.62)	4.37 (.56)
Friends subscale	4.17 (.66)	4.01 (.76)
Number of resources	6.53 (1.72)	6.99 (1.50)

Note. For employment status data were missing for 2 (1.3%) mothers and 2 (2.1%) fathers. For employed in helping profession data were missing for 8 (5.3%) mothers and 10 (10.4%) fathers. No data were missing for other variables.

Table 4. Acceptance of Sibling Groups and Children Regardless of Gender

	Total Families (n=153) %
Accept Sibling Groups	
No	29.3
Yes	70.7
Gender preference	
Male	7.0
Female	22.4
Either	70.6

Note. For sibling groups, data were missing for 13 (8.5%) families. For gender preference, data were missing for 10 (6.5%) families.

Table 5. Acceptance of Physically Abused, Deprived, and Sexually Abused Children

Type of foster child	Total Families (n=153) %
Has been physically abused	
Least Acceptable	2.1
Willing to Discuss	34.5
Most Acceptable	63.4
Has been deprived	
Least Acceptable	1.4
Willing to Discuss	27.1
Most Acceptable	71.4
Has been sexually abused	
Least Acceptable	7.0
Willing to Discuss	60.6
Most Acceptable	32.4

Note. For "sexually abused" and "physically abused," data were missing for 11 foster families (7.2%). For "deprived," data were missing for 13 foster families (8.5%).

Table 6. Behavior Acceptability Scale (BAS) Items

Behavior	Total Families (n=153) %
Sets fires	
Least Acceptable	73.2
Willing to Discuss	24.6
Most Acceptable	2.1
Bangs his/her head	
Least Acceptable	20.4
Willing to Discuss	55.6
Most Acceptable	23.9
Withdraws totally	
Least Acceptable	9.9
Willing to Discuss	52.8
Most Acceptable	37.3
Acts out sexually	
Least Acceptable	30.3
Willing to Discuss	62.0
Most Acceptable	7.7
Has unruly behavior	
Least Acceptable	10.6
Willing to Discuss	64.5
Most Acceptable	24.8
Has destructive behavior	
Least Acceptable	31.9
Willing to Discuss	57.4
Most Acceptable	10.6
Has trouble behaving in school	
Least Acceptable	2.8
Willing to Discuss	52.5
Most Acceptable	44.7
Lies or steals	
Least Acceptable	20.7
Willing to Discuss	59.3
Most Acceptable	20.0
Wets the bed	
Least Acceptable	5.7
Willing to Discuss	35.5
Most Acceptable	58.9

Note. For "sets fires," "bangs head," "withdraws totally," and "sexually acts out," data were missing for 11 foster families (7.2%). For "unruly behavior," "destructive behavior," "trouble behaving at school," and "wets bed," data were missing for 12 foster families (7.8%). For "lies or steals," data were missing for 13 foster families (8.5%).

Table 7. Relationships Among Dependent Variables

Dependent Variable	1 Gender pref.	2 Sibling group	3 Sexually abused	4 Deprived	5 Physically abused	6 BAS (items 7-15)	7 Sets fire	8 Bangs head	9 Withdraws	10 Acts out sexually	11 Unruly	12 Destructive	13 School behavior	14 Lies or steals	15 Wets bed
1		.27 **	.05	-.08	-.05	.13	.09	.17 *	.09	.06	.10	.12	.13	.05	-.02
2			.08	-.03	-.03	.11	.11	.07	-.08	.09	.003	.15	.04	.24 **	.07
3				.22 **	.42 **	.47 **	.14	.38 **	.29 **	.37 **	.30 **	.37 **	.38 **	.30 **	.29 **
4					.72 **	.40 **	.20 *	.19 *	.39 **	.07	.25 **	.21 *	.34 **	.25 **	.55 **
5						.46 **	.18 *	.28 **	.34 **	.06	.30 **	.27 **	.48 **	.31 **	.56 **
6							.53 **	.77 **	.66 **	.63 **	.72 **	.65 **	.74 **	.69 **	.64 **
7								.37 **	.20 **	.30 **	.30 **	.29 **	.28 **	.34 **	.20 *
8									.53 **	.46 **	.52 **	.40 **	.46 **	.39 **	.41 **
9										.27 **	.44 **	.30 **	.37 **	.32 **	.38 **
10											.44 **	.42 **	.37 **	.33 **	.24 **
11												.38 **	.57 **	.43 **	.29 **
12													.37 **	.39 **	.36 **
13														.48 **	.49 **
14															.44 **

* Statistically significant at p = .05 level
** Statistically significant at p = .01 level

Table 8. Number of Resources and Acceptance of Individual Behaviors (Mothers)

Behavior	X^2	Link function	B	Wald	p
Sets fire	3.14	NLOG	.18	3.18	.075
Bangs head	15.12	PROBIT	.23	14.60	<.001
Withdraws totally	4.74	PROBIT	.13	4.74	.030
Sexually acts out	3.76	PROBIT	.12	3.71	.054
Unruly behavior	6.88	PROBIT	.16	6.77	.009
Destructive behavior	2.31	PROBIT	.09	2.28	.131
Trouble behaving in school	9.53	CLOG	.21	8.47	.004
Lies or steals	3.41	PROBIT	.11	3.39	.065
Wets bed	4.16	CLOG	.15	3.66	.056

Note: Abbreviations for link functions are NLOG (Negative log-log) and CLOG (Complementary log-log).

Table 9. Number of Resources and Acceptance of Individual Behaviors (Fathers)

Behavior	X^2	Link function	B	Wald	p
Sets fire	.01	NLOG	.01	.01	.915
Bangs head	4.66	PROBIT	.17	4.56	.033
Withdraws totally	4.82	CLOG	.22	5.73	.017
Sexually acts out	.87	PROBIT	.08	.86	.355
Unruly behavior	2.30	CLOG	.14	2.52	.112
Destructive behavior	2.41	PROBIT	.13	2.39	.122
Trouble behaving in school	5.89	CLOG	.26	6.35	.012
Lies or steals	.60	PROBIT	.06	.60	.440
Wets bed	7.65	CLOG	.29	7.78	.005

Note: Abbreviations for link functions are NLOG (Negative log-log) and CLOG (Complementary log-log).

Table 10. Number of Resources and Acceptance of Sibling Groups and Children Regardless of Gender

	Mothers					Fathers				
	n	B	Wald	p	OR	n	B	Wald	p	OR
Acceptance of sibling groups	138	<-.01	<.01	.980	.99	88	-.01	<.01	.936	.99
Acceptance of child regardless of gender	141	.23	4.28	.039	1.26	89	.07	.20	.653	1.08

Table 11. Predicting Acceptability of Physically Abused, Deprived, and Sexually Abused Children (Mothers)

Type of child	n	X^2	Link function	B	Wald	p
Physically abused	140	6.19	CLOG	.21	5.77	.016
Deprived	138	5.48	CLOG	.23	5.51	.019
Sexually abused	140	3.39	CLOG	.12	3.23	.072

Note: Abbreviation for link function CLOG is Complementary log-log.

Table 12. Predicting Acceptability of Physically Abused, Deprived, and Sexually Abused Children (Fathers)

Type of child	n	X^2	Link function	B	Wald	p
Physically abused	90	10.86	CLOG	.38	10.09	.001
Deprived	88	6.65	CLOG	.33	7.96	.005
Sexually abused	90	1.99	CLOG	.13	2.10	.147

Note: Abbreviation for link function CLOG is Complementary log-log.

Table 13. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children with Behavioral Problems

	Mothers (n = 140)				Fathers (n = 90)			
	B	r	t	p	B	r	t	P
Indiv-level vars								
Education	-.17	-.07	-.76	.449	.02	.01	.08	.941
Race	1.95	.25	2.71	.008	1.96	.20	1.76	.083
Fostering exp.	2.18	.18	2.12	.036	2.50	.17	1.58	.119
Social support (family)	1.04	.18	1.84	.068	.95	.13	1.13	.263
Social support (friends)	.39	.07	.73	.464	.05	.01	.09	.931
Employed in helping prof.	1.01	.14	1.66	.099	2.01	.19	1.72	.089
Family-level vars								
Income	.09	.06	.50	.617	.29	.13	1.09	.277
Married	.19	.03	.24	.808	-1.61	-.07	-.58	.565
A parent not working full-time	.06	.01	.07	.941	.24	.03	.24	.809
Belong to place of worship	.71	.08	.99	.323	.84	.10	.87	.389
Parenting exp.	-.54	-.08	-.880	.380	-.48	-.06	-.56	.580
Total	R^2 = .21 (R^2_{adj} = .14) $F(11,128)$ = 3.07, p = .001				R^2 = .18 (R^2_{adj} = .07) $F(11,78)$ = 1.59, p = .117			

Table 14. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Set Fires

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	-.07	.28	.599	-.01	. <-.01	.949
Race	1.46	6.54	.011	.34	.24	.622
Fostering experience	.97	3.24	.072	1.08	2.39	.122
Social support (family)	-.38	1.17	.280	.24	.27	.601
Social support (friends)	1.36	9.92	.002	.06	.03	.864
Employed in helping profession	-.25	.43	.512	.51	.85	.356
Family-level vars						
Income	-.11	.81	.367	.10	.55	.458
Married	.77	2.48	.115	-1.25	1.24	.266
A parent not working full-time	-1.48	6.90	.009	-.23	.18	.674
Belonging to place of worship	.42	.78	.376	-.25	.25	.620
Parenting experience	-.21	.33	.568	-.39	.72	.396
Total	$X^2(11) = 29.43$, $p = .002$ Link func.: Negative Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 7.55$, $p = .753$ Link func.: Negative Log-Log		

Table 15. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Bangs his/her Head

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	.01	.02	.903	.01	.01	.905
Race	.81	9.93	.002	.67	3.40	.065
Fostering experience	.18	.25	.618	.13	.07	.799
Social support (family)	.19	.93	.335	.37	1.80	.179
Social support (friends)	.03	.02	.883	-.10	.24	.622
Employed in helping profession	.40	3.49	.062	.88	5.03	.025
Family-level vars						
Income	.05	.53	.467	.10	1.44	.230
Married	.06	.06	.813	.19	.04	.836
A parent not working full-time	.08	.09	.770	-.07	.05	.818
Belonging to place of worship	-.12	.22	.643	-.15	.22	.640
Parenting experience	.12	.31	.576	.28	.98	.323
Total	$X^2(11) = 25.13$, $p = .009$ Link func.: Probit			$X^2(11) = 15.22$, $p = .173$ Link func.: Probit		

Table 16. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Withdraw Totally

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	.01	.01	.946	-.02	.03	.867
Race	.45	2.46	.117	.88	4.90	.027
Fostering experience	.19	.18	.670	.19	.09	.764
Social support (family)	.54	5.82	.016	.33	1.17	.279
Social support (friends)	-.04	.04	.837	.11	.24	.627
Employed in helping profession	.19	.58	.445	1.08	3.75	.053
Family-level vars						
Income	-.13	3.15	.076	<.01	<.01	.997
Married	.41	1.72	.190	.87	.64	.422
A parent not working full-time	-.03	.01	.910	.14	.13	.722
Belonging to place of worship	.46	2.74	.098	.30	.72	.397
Parenting experience	.07	.09	.771	.04	.02	.897
Total	$X^2(11) = 15.58$, $p = .158$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 12.43$, $p = .332$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log		

Table 17. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Sexually Acts Out

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	-.04	.19	.664	.03	.10	.750
Race	1.06	11.40	.001	.58	2.33	.127
Fostering experience	1.06	5.57	.018	.94	3.07	.080
Social support (family)	.62	5.44	.020	-.08	.08	.780
Social support (friends)	-.01	<.01	.955	.13	.41	.524
Employed in helping profession	.05	.04	.838	.34	.74	.388
Family-level vars						
Income	.05	.44	.507	.02	.07	.786
Married	-.55	2.92	.087	-.11	.01	.909
A parent not working full-time	.02	<.01	.961	.02	<.01	.956
Belonging to place of worship	-.12	.16	.689	-.09	.08	.781
Parenting experience	-.40	2.62	.106	-.29	1.02	.312
Total	$X^2(11) = 32.31$, $p = .001$ Link func.: Negative Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 9.73$, $p = .555$ Link func.: Probit		

Table 18. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Display Unruly Behavior

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	-.17	3.53	.060	.06	.26	.607
Race	.57	3.87	.049	.90	3.13	.077
Fostering experience	.67	2.51	.113	1.10	2.69	.101
Social support (family)	.70	7.98	.005	.98	5.69	.017
Social support (friends)	-.03	.02	.880	-.13	.27	.606
Employed in helping profession	.18	.57	.452	.91	3.44	.064
Family-level vars						
Income	.15	3.52	.061	.05	.24	.627
Married	-.02	<.01	.948	-1.10	.65	.419
A parent not working full-time	-.22	.50	.482	-.01	<.01	.981
Belonging to place of worship	.21	.53	.467	.32	.70	.403
Parenting experience	-.33	1.85	.174	-.44	1.69	.193
Total	$X^2(11) = 32.49$, $p = .001$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 21.50$, $p = .029$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log		

Table 19. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Display Destructive Behavior

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	-.19	5.81	.016	-.02	.05	.820
Race	.20	.61	.435	.05	.02	.903
Fostering experience	.80	4.73	.030	1.16	4.71	.030
Social support (family)	-.09	.20	.656	.03	.01	.908
Social support (friends)	.22	1.34	.247	.11	.32	.575
Employed in helping profession	.25	1.31	.253	-.11	.07	.785
Family-level vars						
Income	.12	3.41	.065	.19	4.46	.035
Married	-.23	.68	.411	.02	<.01	.987
A parent not working full-time	.28	1.11	.291	.11	.11	.736
Belonging to place of worship	.22	.71	.400	.30	.84	.361
Parenting experience	-.35	2.58	.108	-.25	.76	.384
Total	$X^2(11) = 18.28$, $p = .075$ Link func.: Probit			$X^2(11) = 13.91$, $p = .238$ Link func.: Probit		

Table 20. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Have Trouble Behaving at School

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	.09	.87	.351	.01	<.01	.947
Race	.51	2.88	.089	1.48	7.87	.005
Fostering experience	.27	.32	.573	.78	1.02	.314
Social support (family)	.29	1.52	.217	.02	<.01	.951
Social support (friends)	.26	1.33	.248	.15	.34	.563
Employed in helping profession	.59	4.57	.033	1.58	5.02	.025
Family-level vars						
Income	-.01	.03	.869	.11	.93	.334
Married	.14	.17	.678	.22	.03	.853
A parent not working full-time	.13	.16	.692	.06	.02	.888
Belonging to place of worship	.58	3.76	.053	.70	3.15	.076
Parenting experience	-.61	5.05	.025	-.42	1.20	.273
Total	$X^2(11) = 28.65$, $p = .003$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 26.06$, $p = .006$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log		

Table 21. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Lie or Steal

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	.04	.28	.594	.03	.08	.773
Race	-.05	.03	.853	.02	<.01	.952
Fostering experience	.58	2.53	.112	.75	2.05	.152
Social support (family)	.53	6.55	.011	.41	2.10	.147
Social support (friends)	.16	.73	.394	-.02	.01	.920
Employed in helping profession	.08	.15	.700	.24	.42	.519
Family-level vars						
Income	-.03	.28	.599	<-.01	<.01	.981
Married	.30	1.17	.279	-1.53	2.46	.116
A parent not working full-time	-.08	.10	.755	-.11	.12	.727
Belonging to place of worship	.21	.71	.399	.50	2.54	.111
Parenting experience	-.10	.21	.646	-.07	.06	.801
Total	$X^2(11) = 18.69$, $p = .067$ Link func.: Probit			$X^2(11) = 9.43$, $p = .583$ Link func.: Probit		

Table 22. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Children Who Wet the Bed

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	-.08	.50	.478	-.06	.20	.658
Race	.45	1.83	.176	.97	4.85	.028
Fostering experience	1.18	2.44	.119	.54	.32	.573
Social support (family)	.08	.09	.770	.32	.86	.353
Social support (friends)	-.01	<.01	.971	-.11	.15	.695
Employed in helping profession	.55	3.13	.077	.94	2.13	.144
Family-level vars						
Income	.12	1.86	.173	.19	2.37	.124
Married	-.47	1.53	.215	-.74	.42	.516
A parent not working full-time	.09	.06	.806	.53	1.20	.273
Belonging to place of worship	.77	6.36	.012	1.07	7.67	.006
Parenting experience	.13	.18	.668	.03	.01	.932
Total	$X^2(11) = 20.64$, $p = .037$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 25.57$, $p = .008$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log		

Table 23. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Sibling Groups

	Mothers (n = 138)				Fathers (n = 88)			
	B	Wald	P	OR	B	Wald	p	OR
Indiv-level vars								
Education	-.19	1.36	.243	.83	.01	<.01	.953	1.01
Race	.38	.44	.505	1.46	-.61	.49	.485	.54
Fostering exp.	-.44	.37	.543	.65	.19	.04	.840	1.21
Social support (family)	-.20	.26	.612	.82	-.17	.12	.733	.84
Social support (friends)	1.05	7.08	.008	2.84	.18	.24	.626	1.20
Employed in helping prof.	-.20	.20	.652	.82	.81	.79	.376	2.24
Family-level vars								
Income	-.17	1.62	.203	.85	-.03	.04	.833	.97
Married	.39	.48	.488	1.48	1.37	.68	.411	3.92
A parent not working full-time	-.54	1.05	.305	.58	-.50	.64	.424	.61
Belong to place of worship	-.26	.211	.646	.77	.24	.14	.710	1.27
Parenting exp.	-.27	.37	.542	.76	-.06	.01	.917	.94
Total	$X^2(11) = 15.28$, $p = .170$				$X^2(11) = 3.15$, $p = .989$			

Table 24. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Child Regardless of Gender

	Mothers (n = 141)				Fathers (n = 89)			
	B	Wald	p	OR	B	Wald	p	OR
Indiv-level vars								
Education	-.27	2.52	.113	.77	.23	1.11	.292	1.26
Race	1.36	6.79	.009	3.89	.41	.24	.623	1.51
Fostering exp.	-.10	.02	.892	.91	-.27	.05	.830	.76
Social support (family)	-.27	.41	.524	.77	-.34	.19	.661	.71
Social support (friends)	.22	.32	.574	1.25	-.25	.24	.623	.78
Employed in helping prof.	<.01	<.01	1.00	1.00	-1.41	2.31	.129	.25
Family-level vars								
Income	-.03	.05	.816	.97	.06	.08	.773	1.06
Married	.94	2.56	.110	1.25	10.96	.19	.660	57765
A parent not working full-time	.21	.14	.708	1.23	.77	.98	.323	2.16
Belong to place of worship	.12	.05	.822	1.13	-1.18	1.43	.231	.31
Parenting exp.	-1.12	5.61	.018	.328	-2.23	5.29	.021	.11
Total	$X^2(11) = 24.73$, $p = .010$				$X^2(11) = 19.97$, $p = .046$			

Table 25. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Physically Abused Children

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	.10	.74	.389	-.03	.03	.861
Race	.32	.81	.367	1.89	12.85	<.001
Fostering experience	excluded from analysis			excluded from analysis		
Social support (family)	-.17	.33	.567	.34	.66	.42
Social support (friends)	.34	1.76	.185	.03	.01	.923
Employed in helping profession	.35	1.11	.292	1.96	4.88	.027
Family-level vars						
Income	-.02	.04	.843	.16	1.56	.211
Married	-.02	<.01	.953	-.06	<.01	.962
A parent not working full-time	-.12	.11	.740	-.13	.07	.795
Belonging to place of worship	1.06	11.35	.001	1.51	11.62	.001
Parenting experience	.17	.30	.583	<.01	<.01	.992
Total	$X^2(11) = 20.57$, $p = .024$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 35.03$, $p < .001$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log		

Table 26. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Deprived Children

	Mothers (n = 138)			Fathers (n = 88)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	-.01	.01	.935	<.01	<.01	.984
Race	.07	.03	.874	.75	1.88	.170
Fostering experience	excluded from analysis			.85	.61	.436
Social support (family)	.26	.67	.412	.56	1.93	.165
Social support (friends)	.06	.04	.847	-.01	<.01	.980
Employed in helping profession	.28	.55	.460	1.09	1.88	.170
Family-level vars						
Income	.15	1.93	.165	.19	1.63	.202
Married	-.61	1.63	.202	-.65	.25	.616
A parent not working full-time	-.23	.27	.601	-.58	1.05	.307
Belonging to place of worship	1.33	14.26	<.001	1.72	13.67	<.001
Parenting experience	.59	2.67	.102	.26	.27	.601
Total	$X^2(11) = 23.90$, $p = .008$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 27.11$, $p = .004$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log		

Table 27. Correlates of Foster Families' Acceptance of Sexually Abused Children

	Mothers (n = 140)			Fathers (n = 90)		
	B	Wald	p	B	Wald	p
Indiv-level vars						
Education	.05	.36	.549	-.13	1.37	.243
Race	.02	.01	.933	.37	.77	.379
Fostering experience	.03	.21	.648	1.45	3.56	.059
Social support (family)	.05	.04	.840	-.02	<.01	.951
Social support (friends)	.07	.12	.726	-.12	.28	.597
Employed in helping profession	.60	5.91	.015	.53	1.28	.259
Family-level vars						
Income	.03	.21	.648	.04	.12	.730
Married	-.17	.31	.576	-1.23	1.16	.282
A parent not working full-time	.24	.63	.427	.04	.01	.907
Belonging to place of worship	.51	3.32	.068	1.23	8.63	.003
Parenting experience	-.53	4.76	.029	-.64	3.56	.059
Total	$X^2(11) = 20.73$, $p = .036$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log			$X^2(11) = 22.59$, $p = .020$ Link func.: Comp. Log-Log		

Vita

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