

THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE GENDER  
EFFECTS OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS, CHILDREN'S  
PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS,  
CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD READING,  
CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPTS AS READERS AND  
CHILDREN'S READING COMPREHENSION

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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JOANNE MARIE LEGGE







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AS READERS AND CHILDREN'S READING COMPREHENSION

By

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the interrelationships among parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension. The effects of gender on these variables were also examined. Relationships among these variables provided support for parents and teachers to create positive, realistic expectations, in order to promote maximum reading comprehension.

Scores obtained from forty children and their parents and or guardians, on instruments measuring the above variables were correlated. As well, analysis of variance tests were performed to determine gender effects for parental expectations, on children's perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading, self-concepts as readers and reading comprehension. An analysis of variance was also used to test for gender effects on children's perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading, self-concepts as readers and reading comprehension.

Significant relationships were found between parental expectations and children's reading comprehension, children's perceptions of parental expectations and their self-concepts

as readers as well as between children's self-concepts as readers and their reading comprehension. There were no significant relationships between a) mother's or father's expectations for children's reading and children's reading comprehension, b) parent's, mother's or father's expectations for children's reading and children's attitudes toward reading, c) parent's, mother's or father's expectations for children's reading and children's self-concepts as readers, or d) children's attitudes toward reading and children's reading comprehension. However, significant relationships existed between specific variables within the overall measures. Gender was found to have a significant effect only on parental expectations for children's reading comprehension and children's self-concepts as readers. Parents held higher expectations for females' reading comprehension than for males'. Fathers' expectations affected females' self-concepts as readers more than did mother's expectations.

Children perceived what their parents expected for them in reading. Their perceptions of parental expectations were related to their self-concepts as readers. Children's self-concepts as readers were related to their reading comprehension. Consequently, this study supports the need for parents to create positive, realistic expectations and to clearly communicate them to children.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

A primary goal for all teachers of reading and concerned parents should be to create literacy-rich, positive and risk-taking contexts which will help produce a generation of children who would aspire to become life-time readers.

Traditionally, reading has been considered a skill best acquired through formal instruction (i.e., phonics drills and work-sheets emphasising isolated reading skills). Some researchers (Aspy & Roebuck, 1982; Athey, 1985; Coombs, 1982) have challenged the position that reading is an entirely cognitive task, best mastered through a rigid skills-oriented curriculum. Advocates of affective education have maintained that factors such as children's attitudes toward learning, self-concepts as learners and their expectations for success were important facets of the learning process and must be included in educational planning and practise. Carkhuff (1982) suggested that people who developed their affective and interpersonal skills were most effective at home, school, and work. He further stated: "To abandon affective education would be to abandon our humanity and thus, our unique contribution to productivity" (p.484).

Unfortunately, school environments are often limited in



providing individualized affective education such as attitude or self-concept development, because of factors such as class size, curriculum structure or limited scheduling time. Researchers, such as, Askov & Fishbach (1973) contended that there was a problem with promoting affective education because children were unique and developed individual feelings, self-concepts, expectations and attitudes. Thus, developing effective programs and instructional strategies to change, maintain or improve children's affective qualities may not be a viable, or a feasible proposition to implement into the school curricula. Nevertheless, some researchers (Briggs, 1987; Ignoffo, 1988; Phillips, 1987) have suggested that children who have a positive attitude toward reading, feel confident as readers, and expect to become effective readers are, in fact, good readers. A positive home and school environment which promotes the development of all aspects of the learner (i.e., positive self-images and parental expectations, attitudes and skills) and literacy development (i.e., positive feed-back and response and exposure to print) is largely responsible for the children's sense of success and further achievement.

Children's attitudes toward reading and their self-concepts as readers have a long history of research. The results of numerous studies (Douglas, 1964; Keeves, 1974; Stevenson & Newman, 1986) provided evidence that attitude and

self-concept were as much a part of the reading process as decoding words. Theorists, in trying to understand the effects of self-concept and attitude on the reading process, discovered that positive attitudes and self-concepts were often created as a result of prior reading experience (Lawrence, 1981; Briggs, 1987). But often these attitudes depended on how children's parents perceived reading, and the extent to which they manifested their expectations. This was especially true for females. Female children were more likely to conform to their perceptions of others expectations whereas male children were more inclined to seek independence and autonomy (Stevenson et al., 1986).

Smith (1971) posited that the home environment is largely responsible for the values and attitudes children form about academic tasks. She stated, "Children learn what they are taught, and parents are a child's first teacher. When the home places no value on academic success, neither does the child" (p. 11). The home environment instills basic values and attitudes toward school, including the value of academic tasks such as reading, as well as attitudes toward school.

Entwisle and Hyduk (1978) supported Smith's (1971) ideas. They believed, "... the ideas children have about their own ability and the ideas others have about the children's abilities exert powerful influences on a child's performance" (p. 2).

Smith (1971) demonstrated the effects of parental behaviours and home environments on reading achievement in a project called School and Home-Focus on Achievement. The project was launched in Parkland School, Flint, Michigan to improve home and school relations and to help struggling readers achieve success. Within months, the project was integrated into other schools at the request of the parents because of the apparent success the Parkland children were experiencing in reading. The Federal and State Governments decided to administer standardized tests to the participating school populations to see whether the program was effective. Over a five-month period, the children who participated in the project showed overall gains of 5.4 months in reading, whereas the control group showed an increase of 2.7 months. Nine years later, the third-graders at Parkland School, which was once considered to be the lowest achieving school in the system, scored 4.1 months above the national average on a standardized test of achievement. Smith believed that the children's success in reading resulted partly from changing the parent's expectations for their children, from negative feelings of failure and low expectations to positive feelings of self-worth, and expectations of success for their children. She also mentioned a notable change in the amount of parental involvement with school work, ranging from school visits and time spent on educational activities such as reading and

playing strategic games to spending time with the children.

Lehr (1982) supported Smith's (1971) ideas. Lehr suggested that if parents perceived reading to be important, than their children probably would too.

Japan has one of the highest literacy rates in the world, which in part is probably due to the fact that Japanese parents are actively involved in the education of their preschool children. Japanese parents set aside a weekly reading hour in which family members read a book, magazine, or other reading material, of their choice. Mothers also spend twenty minutes a day listening to their children read. Ninety percent of Japanese two-year-olds have their own books and are read to regularly at home. Approximately one percent of Japan's children suffer from reading-related problems. As a result of parental expectations and home environments, Japanese children are usually ready to read by four and one half years of age (Sheridan, 1981).

In a longitudinal study of early readers and non-early readers, Durkin (1966) cited several fundamental aspects of children's home environments which seemed to promote or aggravate reading achievement. She found that the attitudes of parents of early readers toward reading-related activities were more positive than the attitudes of parents of early non-readers. The parents of the early non-readers believed that reading should be taught by a trained professional and they

were apprehensive about participating in literacy acts such as reading aloud or helping children figure out words. By failing to participate in acts of literacy, the parents conveyed a message which suggested that reading was not valued or accepted as a worthwhile task. The early readers came from homes where parents read to their children and demonstrated in their own life that reading was a rich source of information and contentment. She concluded that parent-child relationships appeared to be of singular importance to early reading achievement.

Boocock (1972) shared these beliefs. In an attempt to synthesize the social factors related to learning, she found that the related literature suggested that high-achieving children internalized adult values and expectations through role modelling. The parents of these children also provided attention and affection which were linked to the children's academic performance with the underlying threat of withdrawal of affection and attention if the children's behaviours were unsatisfactory. Boocock posited:

It is clear that high achieving children tend to come from families who have high expectations for them and who consequently are likely to set standards and to make greater demands at an earlier age (p. 60). Parents of school achievers not only expect more and communicate this to the children,

but they also teach them behaviours needed to fulfil their expectations (p. 76).

Becher (1986) in a review of research on parental involvement identified parental behaviours and aspects of the home environment which have been associated with the development of children's academic achievement and competence. Parents of high-achieving children held higher educational expectations and aspirations for their children, exerted more pressure for achievement, provided more academic guidance and exhibited a higher level of general interest in their children than parents of underachievers. High-achievers had parents who perceived themselves as teachers, and who acted as models of learning and achievement. After reviewing the literature on parental expectations and children's school and occupational success, she stated, " Parental expectations that are high but not completely out of line with the child's current skills are associated with high levels of performance on cognitive tasks" (p. 292).

Children imitate and later adopt the behaviours exhibited by parents and significant others as a part of their own repertoire (Parsons, 1983). The expectations that children hold for themselves develop and grow from their life experiences. The attitudes and values about literacy, as expressed by members of the child's environment, help to nurture or hinder literacy development (Goodman, 1980).

Accordingly, a better understanding of the influence of parental expectations on children as whole beings can inevitably be used to help parents and teachers enrich the quality of the behaviour, home environment, and interaction they provide to help ensure that their children become life-time readers. Therefore, further research into the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension is warranted.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As school curriculums adapt to meet the needs of a changing society, (i.e., implementing computer science and family life programs) there seems to be less time for teachers to adequately attend to the needs of children in order to ensure that each child develops to his or her fullest potential.

Weiser (1974) reported that teachers have about three minutes per day to spend on reading with each child, in a class of thirty children. In 1974, this was certainly an inadequate amount of time to instruct able beginning readers, not to mention those children who come to school without a

background in reading-related experiences, or those who simply experience difficulty with reading.

Since the ability to read and to comprehend what one has read is a prerequisite to succeed in most other school curricula, reading teachers need to understand the variables (i.e., developing a positive self concept toward reading and developing strategies to bring new meaning to words) which are conducive to reading achievement and access all possible resources to help enhance these variables.

Fortunately, in recent years teachers have been using parents as valuable resources to help give children every opportunity to succeed in reading by promoting reading aloud to children before they enter school and setting up take home reading programs. However, a greater understanding of parent-child factors which influence children's ability to read would help promote home-school environments which provide the best opportunities for children to succeed in reading. According to the research, parental expectations and behaviours are related to children's attitudes and self-concepts toward academic tasks and academic achievement. Further research is required in this area.

If a strong interrelationship exists between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension, it would



imply that parents need to maintain positive, realistic expectations for their children's reading. Parents would also need to demonstrate behaviours which would lead to better parent-child relationships with regard to reading-related activities, and entice their children to aspire to parental expectations and set positive, realistic expectations for reading themselves. Additionally, parents and teachers would need to capitalize on every opportunity to foster the development of children's attitudes toward reading and their self-concepts as readers.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension. The effects of gender on these variables were also examined. The study helped to detail the role of parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, and children's self-concepts as readers on children's reading comprehension.

The following questions were addressed in the

investigation:

1. Are parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, and children's self-concepts scores related to reading comprehension scores in grade two children?

2. Are there interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension in grade two children?

3. Do mothers differ from fathers in the expectations they hold for female children?

4. Do mothers differ from fathers in the expectations they hold for male children?

5. Do grade two female children differ from grade two male children in their perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading, self-concepts as readers and reading comprehension?

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A primary concern for all parents and teachers of school-aged-children is to help children achieve their fullest potential with respect to the school-related agenda. Parents

and teachers who are conscientious of their children's education would benefit from suggestions which would help their children achieve maximum results. If interrelationships were found to exist among parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts and children's reading comprehension, then the need for parents and teachers to create environments which attend to the affective needs of their children is crucial. Should significant results exist, parents may need to assess their expectations and behaviours to decide if they are contributing to their children's reading. On the basis of such evidence, parents may need to decide whether to maintain or alter their expectations and behaviours to provide every opportunity for their children to meet their expectations. As well, if these relationships are confirmed to be important, parents and teachers could capitalize on every opportunity, both at home and in the classroom, which would enhance children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading and children's self-concepts as readers to help improve their children's reading comprehension.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations are inherent in every investigation. The limitations of this investigation include the following:

1. The sample was comprised of grade two children and their parents. The results cannot be generalized with respect to other primary grades.

2. All of the participants in this study resided in a metropolitan area. The results cannot be generalized to other school systems, districts or rural areas.

3. Two of the instruments used for the purposes of this investigation are not standardized, nor have they proven reliability or validity. The scores obtained using these instruments must be analyzed bearing this in mind.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this review was to explore the interrelationships among parental expectations, children's reading achievement and development as readers (i.e., parental expectation for attitude or self-concept toward reading). The relationship between parental expectations and children's academic achievement was initially examined because children entering grade school appeared to display differences in; a) the values that they attached to intellectual and academic achievement, b) their expectations of success in these activities, c) the standards that they used to judge their effort, and d) the strategies that they employed in their attempts to attain achievement goals (Crandall, Dewey, Katkovsky, Preston, 1964). An examination of the literature suggested that parental expectations influenced children's general achievement, (Hess, Holloway, Dickson, & Price 1984; Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991) reading achievement (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1982; Entwisle & Baker, 1983; Thompson, Alexander, & Entwisle, 1987), attitudes toward academic achievement (Douglas, 1964; Keeves, 1978; Stevenson, et al., 1986) and concepts of themselves as learners (Parsons, Alder, & Kaczala, 1982; Phillips, 1984; Dillabough, 1990). Mother's expectations

appeared to be more influential than fathers, female children were more impressed by expectations than males (Thompson et al., 1988; Stevenson et al., 1986), and parental attitudes toward learning seemed to be more influential in the early grades (Entwisle et al., 1983; Entwisle et al., 1982). Also, parents held higher expectations for female children than they did for male children (Entwisle et al., 1982; Stevenson et al., 1986). Female children had higher expectations for their reading achievement than did male children (Entwisle, Alexander, Pallas, Cadigan, 1987; Stevenson et al., 1986). Finally, male children overestimated their academic competence while female children set low expectations for their abilities (Ladd & Price, 1986).

In reviewing the literature, it became evident that there would be drawbacks in attempting to study the interrelations among parental expectations and other variables (i.e., children's reading achievement or attitudes toward reading). The research surrounding parental expectations, and how expectations affected children's attitudes, self-concepts and reading achievement, was diverse. The diversity occurred for several reasons. First, there were many definitions of expectation. Parental expectations were defined as ambition for children's future occupation, expected success in school subjects like mathematics, science, or reading, prediction of report card marks, or the level of formal education children

were capable of attaining. Second, children's measured success included variables such as grade point average, or teacher-assigned marks. However diverse, the research consistently showed a positive relationship between parental expectations and children's academic success, educational attainment and occupational choices.

Other difficulties occurred because there was very little, if any, research concerning certain aspects of parental expectations and children's reading development (i.e., parental expectations and the development of children's attitude toward reading). Some areas of this literature review (i.e., parental expectations and children's reading achievement and parental expectations and children's attitude toward reading) contained dated research because current research into some areas was not available.

Other areas of the research were investigated relatively recently (i.e., children's perceptions of parental expectations) and, therefore, a strong theoretical basis for the relationships among children's perceptions of parental expectations and children's reading could not be determined.

#### **PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND GENERAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Research has clearly supported the importance of

expectancy for achievement-related behaviours such as task choice, intensity of effort expended and actual achievement (Crandall, 1969; Parsons, 1983; & Smith, 1971).

Crandall et al. (1964) performed one of the first major research projects to explore the theory that parents are identification models and reinforcers of young children's academic behaviours. One study in the project attempted to explore the relationship between parental attitudes and behaviours, and their early-grade-school-age children's performance. From the study of a sample of forty children and their parents the researchers concluded that parental attitudes and behaviours were moderately correlated to their children's academic performance. The findings also indicated that the mother's attitudes and beliefs were more predictive than the father's of the academic success of the children.

Woelfel and Haller (1971) conducted another study in which significant others' expectations (i.e., how much education they felt the child would actually aspire to) were shown to be related to children's academic achievement and occupational aspirations. The sample was compiled of one-thousand, three-hundred and fifty-eight significant others and one-hundred high school seniors. The significant others included any persons whom the students felt influenced their behaviour. The results showed a moderate relationship of .23 between the significant others expectations for the student



and the students' actual academic achievement.

Gigliotti and Brookover (1975) hypothesized that children's perceptions of parental expectations, (i.e., an awareness by the student of environmental valuation and beliefs), sense of control, (i.e., self control over the expectations parents held for them), community support, and stability were positively related to the children's academic development. Their study included a sample of one-thousand, three-hundred and nineteen elementary students, forty-nine teachers, ten principals, and ten schools. High to low-economic status children were represented. The children were interviewed and asked to assess what level of academic success, including reading success, that they felt their parents, teachers and principals believed to be normal and probable for them. The results indicated a high relationship between the children's perceptions of others' expectations and the children's actual academic performance. In other words, children who felt that their parents, teachers and principals held high educational expectations for them, held records of high academic achievement. The significance of the relationship between parental expectations and reading achievement was not given.

Other studies focused on maternal expectancies and achievement-related behaviours. Hess, Koshiwagi, Azuma, Price, and Dickson (1980) examined when mothers expected their

children to master a number of specific tasks. The sample included fifty Japanese mothers and sixty American mothers, whose children ranged in age from three-years, eight-months to eight-years-old. The results indicated that mothers' expectations for early development of school-related skills were significantly correlated with children's cognitive development in both countries. Hess et al. concluded that parents who expected their children to develop cognitive skills early, had children who did.

Hess et al. (1984) found further support for the relationship between mother's expectations and children's academic abilities. They examined whether or not maternal variables (i.e., expectations for achievement) would be useful for predicting children's readiness for school at age five and six and academic performance at age twelve. Sixty-seven families, representing high to low-economic status, were represented. The results of the data showed that one of the most predominant variables which helped predict school readiness was the mother's expectation for academic success. In addition, expectations for success at the preschool phase of the study were predictive of school achievement in the sixth-grade.

Seginer (1986) explored the paths through which achievement-supporting behaviours mediated educational expectations in a sample of one-hundred and seven, fifth-grade

boys. The data showed that mother's educational expectations were strongly related to their son's academic performance.

Gnolnick, Ryan, and Deci (1991) studied the relationships among children's perceptions of parental expectation, their academic motivation and performance in school. The sample was composed of four-hundred and fifty-six children in grade three through to grade six, two-hundred and forty-eight mothers, and one-hundred and eighty-eight fathers. The data revealed that children's perceived competence on academic tasks was significantly related to how much support both parents provided for autonomy, and the amount of parental involvement in academic work. The children's perceived competence was also positively related to grades, achievement and teacher ratings.

#### **EXPECTANCY AND READING ACHIEVEMENT**

Some studies have researched the relationship between parental expectations and specific academic abilities, such as mathematics, science and reading.

Walberg and Marjoribanks (1974) investigated the relationship between reading achievement and intervening environmental factors such as literacy acts in the home, parental aspirations and expectations. The study was conducted over a one year period. The investigation examined three-

thousand and five-hundred children from one-hundred and seventy-three British Schools. The school sample included sixty-six Infant Schools, fifty-four Junior Schools without Infants, forty-six Junior Schools with Infants and seven all-age-schools. The results indicated that the home environment and children's final reading scores had a small but significant relationship. The researchers suggested that a stimulating home environment for several consecutive years, at any time during the children's academic career, is likely to lead to some enhancement of cognitive ability.

Shipman, McKee and Bridgeman (1977) conducted a study which examined how stability and change in family structure and socioeconomic status, situational (i.e., parent's level of education and single parent households) and process variables (i.e., attitudes toward local schools and interactive patterns with the children) affected children's cognitive performance over a six year period. The sample included eighteen-hundred children from four to eight-years-old. The children ranged in age from two years prior to entrance in grade one through to completion of grade three. The sample represented children from predominately low-income urban and rural centres. The findings in the first year indicated that the strongest correlation between family process variables and the children's cognitive performance occurred for the mother's aspirations and expectations for her child's educational

attainment. The correlation for aspirations relating to reading was .39 and the correlation for expectations with reading achievement was .49. The data collected during the sixth-year of the study showed that the behaviours of mothers, who in the first year reported that they frequently read to or told stories to their children, had knowledge of their children's favourite books, and gave informative responses during interactions with their children were positively correlated to the children's subsequent academic achievement, including reading and *Raven Tests of Analytic Perceptual Ability*.

Entwisle and her associates (1978, 1982, 1983, 1988) have documented some of the most comprehensive data on expectancy and reading achievement. Entwisle et al. (1978) conducted a longitudinal study to research the development of children's expectations from first through third-grade. The sample included three cohorts of children which covered two school years for one cohort of middle-class children, one year for another cohort of middle-class children, and one year for a cohort of working-class children. The findings showed that middle-class parents' expectations were significantly related to their children's reading performance from first through third-grade.

In 1982, Entwisle and Hayduk reported on another longitudinal study of one-thousand, five-hundred and sixty-

seven first and second-graders from white middle-class schools, lower-class integrated schools and black lower-class schools. The researchers designed a heuristic model of the early school processes. Parental expectations were included as an important variable. The data revealed that white middle-class parents' expectations significantly related to the children's reading achievement marks. Another interesting finding showed that white middle-class parents' expectations for reading were related to their children's own expectations for reading. Entwistle and Hayduk suggested that the correlations may be significant because parents who held high expectations often demonstrated behaviours (i.e., supervised homework) which helped their children improve their performance to meet parental expectations. The data on lower-class integrated and black lower-class schools indicated no significant relationships between reading and parental expectations.

These findings for the class variable were again confirmed by Entwistle and Baker (1983). In an attempt to evaluate gender-specific socialization processes with respect to children's and parent's expectations in grades one, two and three, one-thousand and one-hundred children from grade one to grade three were studied. The results corroborated earlier findings that middle-class parents' expectations affected their children's reading performance in first through to

third-grade. Lower-class families' expectations were shown to be related to their children's reading achievement, but the significance of the relationship was less than that for middle-class families.

Thompson et al. (1988) hypothesized that background and family structures influenced parental assessments of their children's abilities and expectations for success, and that these variables were related to children's reading marks. Eight-hundred and twenty-five families were interviewed. The results showed that the expectations of parents in mother-father families and mother-father extended families were significant predictors of reading in black families. In mother extended families, where a significant other was present, the mother's and significant other's expectations were significantly related to children's reading achievement for both black and white families.

#### **PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND ATTITUDE DEVELOPMENT**

Douglas (1964) claimed that an eight-year-old child could be greatly influenced by his or her parent's attitudes toward school, so much so, that his or her attitudes toward school would be directly affected by the parent's attitudes. In 1964, Douglas conducted a longitudinal study to monitor the

educational development of a large sample of (3500) British children from the beginning of their academic career to the time when they wrote the 11+ examination, which is similar to an entrance examination for secondary education. The results of the study showed Douglas' claims about attitude development to be true. At both eight and eleven-years-of-age, the children whose parents showed a high level of interest toward school (i.e., frequent contact with teachers, and discussions about school work) had high achievement scores. The lower scores were made by children whose parents showed little interest in education. An overview of the results indicated that the parent's level of interest in education was the most influential factor related to student achievement.

Mothers' aspirations and attitudes also appeared to be related to the type of secondary education that their children aspired to, particularly if their children's ability failed to meet the standard requirements of the school which the mothers wished their children to attend. For example, forty-two percent of the children who attended grammar school without having met the standard requirements, attended the school because their mother's wanted them to. Based on these data, Douglas concluded that children's capacity to succeed in school was largely dependent on the encouragement he or she received at home.

Keeves (1974) who studied two-hundred and fifteen



children enrolled in the mathematics and science programs at the secondary level got similar results. He hypothesised that home and school environments and peer groups could influence children's attitudes towards mathematics and science. The data indicated that the major factor related to final achievement was initial achievement, but both the attitudes of the home and the initial attitudes of the children were significantly related to their mathematics and science achievement.

Finally, Stevenson et al. (1986) sought to evaluate whether parents' and teachers' ratings of general cognitive ability or early achievement were predictive of children's achievement attitudes in the tenth-grade. Data were collected on two-hundred and fifty children before they entered kindergarten. Subsequent testing was carried out through grades one, two, three, five and ten. The results showed that the female children's attitudes toward mathematics were accounted for by prior achievement, and by their mother's and teacher's ratings (i.e., their expectations of their children's cognitive skills). The male children's attitudes toward mathematics were affected solely by performance. A possible explanation for this discrepancy between males and females will be addressed later.

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS, CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL  
EXPECTATIONS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONCEPT  
TOWARD ACADEMIC TASKS

Recently, researchers have found an important link between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's own academic self-concepts, and their expectations for academic success.

Singh (1972) examined children's self-concept of ability and school achievement using a sample of one-thousand, two-hundred and nineteen, seventh-grade children. Singh found a small but significant relationship between children's perception of parental evaluations and their self-concept of academic ability.

Weiss (1974) studied the relationship between measures of the home environment and scores on achievement and self-concept tests. Forty-nine, fifth-grade children took part in the study. The results indicated that the environmental process variables, (i.e., the child's home environment) were significantly related to self-concept, and that a particularly pronounced relationship existed toward environmental process variables and achievement motivation.

Parsons, Adler and Kaczala (1982) assessed the magnitude of parental influence on children's academic expectancies and concepts of ability. The results showed that children's self-

concepts, perceptions of task difficulty, and expectations were significantly related to children's perceptions of their parent's beliefs and expectations, and their parent's actual estimate of their ability. Parents who believed that their children would experience difficulty with mathematics and who would fail to become good at mathematics had children who possessed low self-concepts about their mathematics ability, and had low expectations for future success in mathematics. Through further testing, Parsons et al. discovered that children's academic self-concept and perception of task difficulty were more directly related to their parent's beliefs about their mathematics aptitude than their past mathematics performances. The source of the data was taken from twenty-two, fifth through eleventh-grade-classes in middle to upper middle-class schools.

Sameroff and Seifer (1983) in a study of familial risks and disorders, suggested that children's self-perceptions and competencies may partly depend on their parent's attitudes and perceptions of the children's abilities. Factors such as parental attitudes, beliefs and values for raising children were shown to make an independent contribution to the development of children's competencies.

Ladd et al. (1986) hypothesised that parent's perceived difficulty with specific socialization tasks (i.e., promoting children's cognitive and social skills) may be related to

children's perceived and actual competence in the corresponding domains. Data obtained from a sample of one-hundred and four, third and fifth-grade children and their parents, showed a relationship between children's perceived competence of their parents' expectations and their actual competence. As well, a relationship existed between parent's perceived difficulty of cognitive tasks and the children's actual competence scores as recorded by the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*. The relationship was strongest for the children in third-grade and declined slightly as the children progressed to grades four and five. The children's level of perceived and actual competence appeared to act as a source of information which the parents either consciously or subconsciously used when they assessed the difficulties of a task. Significantly lower levels of perceived difficulty were found for children whose perceived and actual competence were uniformly high.

Entwistle et al. (1987) supported the theory that parental expectations, both actual expectations and those perceived by the child, were related to children's evaluation of themselves as learners. Entwistle et al. attempted to determine the factors which were related to first-graders academic self-concept. They were especially concerned with the extent to which the evaluations of significant others differ from self-evaluation. The sample, eight-hundred and twenty-five children, eight-hundred mothers and twenty schools

represented black and white children from lower to upper middle-class families. The study was conducted over one school year. The results of the data indicated that for female children, the parental expectations during the beginning of the school year influenced their general academic self-concept. As the school year progressed, the data revealed that the parent's expectations for the children's ability in reading, mathematics and conduct became increasingly significantly related to female children's perception of academic self. The males academic self-concept seemed to be unaffected by parental expectations. A possible explanation for this will be discussed later. However, it should be noted that after a year of schooling, the females also relied on their previous marks, in addition to parental expectations when, forming opinions about their academic selves.

Phillips (1987) tried to determine whether young children can feel academically incompetent, and if so, provide preliminary insights into the parent's influence on their children's early self-perceptions of ability. The study was based on eighty-one middle to upper-class, third-grade children, and their mothers and fathers. The data indicated that the children's self-perceptions of their ability, expectancy, effort and standards for success were significantly related to the parent's expectations of the children's abilities, and the pressures to succeed which the

children felt from the parents. Children who had low self-concepts about their academic competence felt that their parents judged their abilities unfavourably, and expected less of them in academically related work than did children with high academic self-concepts. Phillips concluded that parents who had children with low self-perceptions of their own ability usually held negative perceptions of their children's ability. Parents who had positive perceptions of how their children would perform academically usually had children who, in fact, did perform well, and who had a positive perceptions of themselves self as learners.

Dillabough (1990) corroborated Phillips (1987) findings. She investigated the prediction of self-perceived competence in school age children across academic, social, athletic, and behavioral domains, using parent's and teacher's expectations, children's expectations, children's perceptions of parent's and teacher's expectations, academic perceptions, and socioeconomic status as prediction variables. The sample comprised one-hundred and forty, fifth and sixth-grade students, and their parents and teachers. The sample represented lower to middle-class children from rural and suburban schools. The analysis of the data showed that the children's perceptions of parent's academic expectations was related to the children's self-perception of academic competence. As well, the expectations which parents actually

held for their children were moderately related to the children's self-perception of academic competence.

#### GENDER EFFECTS: CHILDREN

The literature revealed numerous gender effects for children's self-concepts, children's attitudes, children's expectations for themselves and their academic achievement.

Male children's expectations for success were less affected by parental expectations than females. The males own expectations for success seemed to be affected by their achievement-related behaviours as early as grade one (Dweck, 1975). Based on these data, Dweck suggested that teachers must encourage and help the children, especially the boys, believe that their "failure", which is inevitable, to some degree in some aspect of life (i.e., social, academic or conduct) is attributed to factors over which he or she has control. Therefore, children need to believe they have the power to turn their failure into success. Failure which is attributed to children's ability, can only produce negative ramifications. Dweck's suggestion is also applicable to parents.

Stipek and Hoffman (1980) found that high-achieving females had lower expectations for success than low or

average-achieving females. Stipek et al. explained this finding by suggesting that high-achieving females were more anxious than low or average-achieving females in academic settings. Because an expectancy statement represents a public commitment to a certain standard of performance, high-achievers tended to make low expectations for themselves because low expectations could be more easily achieved. If the high-achievers had made high expectations they took the risk of performing at a lower level than was set as a standard. Hence, high-achieving girls who tended to be anxious and who sought adult approval set low expectations to help ensure success.

Another interesting finding showed that males tended to over estimate their competence while females often underestimated their ability (Ladd et al., 1986). Females were more likely to have lower expectations than males even though females' performance equalled and often surpassed males' performance in elementary school. The researchers suggested that differential socialization of males and females is largely responsible for these discrepancies.

Some findings suggested that females held high expectations for their reading performance, and developed a positive attitude toward reading (Stevenson et al., 1986; Entwisle et al., 1983). Entwisle et al. (1986) suggested that female children's high expectations and positive attitudes



toward reading are justified because they generally scored better marks in reading than did their male counterparts.

Stevenson et al's. (1986) and Entwisle et al's. (1987) research showed that the influence of parental expectations on the formation of children's academic self-images and attitudes were not as strong for males as it was for females. As well, mother's ratings of their children's performance were rarely related to the male's attitude in mathematics or reading (Stevenson et al., 1986). The researchers suggested that the finding that parents influence the development of female's academic self-images more than male's was consistent with the popular sex stereotypes, such as males seem more likely to seek independence and autonomy than females, therefore they care less about how others felt about them. Females were more likely to conform to their perceptions of other's expectations for them.

#### **GENDER EFFECTS: PARENTS**

Gender effects can also be studied in parental expectations. Mother's attitudes, behaviours and expectations appeared to be more predictive of children's achievement than father's. (Crandall et al., 1964; Shipman et al., 1977; Parsons et al., 1982; Seginer, 1986 ).

Hess et al. (1984) also found that one of the most predominant variables related to school readiness seemed to be a mother's predictions for her child's readiness. As well, the mother's expectations for success at the preschool level were predictive at a significant level for children's school achievement in the sixth-grade.

Gender effects were also prevalent in the expectations parents held for male and female children. Parents expected that females would do better in reading than males, but males were expected to do better in mathematics and science. (Entwisle et al., 1982; Stevenson et al., 1986)

However, one study of three-thousand and five-hundred British children, which reported a positive relation between parental expectations and children's final reading achievement, noted that the magnitude of the relationship was not affected by gender (Walberg et al., 1974).

#### **THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ATTITUDE, SELF-CONCEPT AND READING ACHIEVEMENT**

It has been demonstrated that parental expectations and children's perceptions of these expectations have a strong relationship to children's academic self-concepts, attitudes toward achievement and academic successes, either generally,

or in specific subjects such as reading or mathematics.

To take these data one step further would be to question whether or not children's self-concepts or attitudes influence their success in academic tasks. For all intents and purposes, the answer to this question will be addressed by considering reading as an essential source of academic achievement.

The literature governing the research pertaining to attitude and reading development supported the theory that positive attitudes toward reading tasks (i.e., reading print for pleasure or informational purposes) were essential for the mastery of reading skills (i.e., comprehension and word recognition) and achievement. Nurturing children's attitudes toward reading has been considered an important aim of the reading process. Some have suggested that attitude determined the children's scholastic fate (Bettelheim & Zelam, 1981; Heilman, 1972).

In an article, *Teaching Reading*, Alexander (1983) stated that "... if attitude, the first prerequisite for reading, is not positive, then it is likely the others (i.e., motivation, attention, comprehension, and acceptance), will not occur at all or will occur haphazardly" (p. 6.).

Athley and Holmes (1976) claimed that one's attitudes, values, and beliefs were as important to the reading process as cognitive strategies, like word identification. In fact, cognitive and affective domains are believed to be so

intertwined, that cognitive processes such as reading are dependent, to an extent, on affective behaviours such as attitude. Even though theorists of reading consider the reading process to be a form of information processing, most assume that affective processes such as attitudes operate at the same time.

Briggs (1987) contended that attitudes vary among individuals and caused them to respond favourably or unfavourably to any given situation. Therefore, he believed attitudes guided behaviour, and affected the amount of progress which was made toward educational goals, like learning to read or write, and participation in educational activities, such as book sharing experiences. Briggs posited that positive attitudes elicited motivational stimulus, which helped to promote and sustain learning. Negative attitudes resulted in a lack of effort and motivation. Hence, an abundance of avoidance behaviours, and other unacceptable classroom behaviours, developed. Although Briggs did not elaborate on this point, one can infer that if children have poor attitudes toward reading, they may refrain from interactions with print, or display frustration when asked to participate in reading-related activities.

According to reading researchers, the development of a positive self-concept is also an equally important factor for success in reading-related activities. Wooster and Carson

(1982) set up a remedial program which was designed to help improve the social and communicative skills of twenty-six children who had difficulty functioning in the regular classroom. The results of administering the Piers and Harris' (1969) *Children's Self-Concept Scale* showed that the remedial group displayed dissatisfaction with aspects of self such as their social behaviour and academic status. After participating in the program for two terms, the children showed dramatic improvement in both self-concept and reading ability.

In a study of three-hundred and seventy-four readers from twenty-seven schools, Lawrence (1985) found that children in reading remedial classes who participated in activities such as counselling or drama to improve their self-esteem produced higher gains in reading than did the control group.

Research has shown that an improvement in reading can be achieved through counselling (i.e., improving self-concept) and that the level of improvement which can be reached may be greater than that produced by a regular reading program or remedial teaching (Cant & Spackman, 1985). Cant et al., (1985) tested thirty-nine, ten-year-olds for their level of self-esteem using the Battle's (1977) *Canadian Self-Esteem Inventory*. From the scores obtained on these tests, a control and experimental group were formed. The experimental group received twenty minutes of counselling using the techniques

employed by Ryan's (1975) *Help Model*. The sessions lasted for three months. By the end of the program the experimental group scored higher on tests of self-esteem and reading than did the control group.

Brown (1992) using a sample of grade two children from an urban centre, studied the relationships among self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension. Brown found that reader self-concept and total academic self-concept were related to the children's overall reading comprehension.

Ignoffo (1988) stressed the importance of troubled readers changing their attitudes and self-concepts of their reading potential, and developing a positive sense of self-worth. She suggested that any remedial program which did not acknowledge self-confidence improvement was doomed to fail from the start because children, who believe that they are unable to learn to read, sabotage any chance for reading improvement.

Finally, Lawrence (1981) stated: "The child who has experienced regular failure comes to lack confidence as a person" (p. 248). If in fact this statement is true, it is an important consideration for reading teachers. The research has shown that reading behaviour improved as self-esteem improved. Therefore, it would be wise to try and improve or maintain children's concepts of themselves by employing more formal teaching methods to help ensure that every child has a

positive self-concept as a reader and a positive attitude toward reading.

#### SUMMARY

Children who become life-time readers come from contexts where literacy was valued, practised, expected and enjoyed by their significant others. Avid readers develop a positive attitude toward reading and perceive themselves as effective and competent readers.

The literature indicated that parents who expected their children to become good readers and competent in academic tasks usually had children who were. These parents displayed behaviours (i.e., helped with homework and read to children) which helped to foster and ensure that their children had positive attitudes and self-concepts toward academic tasks (i.e., reading) and established high expectations for themselves.

Children were sensitive to the expectations and attitudes which parents and significant others attached to academic tasks. Females seemed more inclined to try and satisfy the expectations of others and adopt the attitudes and values of others more readily than did males. Although males appeared to seek autonomy more readily than females, all children at some

point in their lives have internalized the values, attitudes, and expectations of others, and then attempt to model that behaviour.

This study will explore the interrelationships among parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension. If significant relationships are found, suggestions which implicate parents and teachers will be addressed to help promote and enrich home and school contexts where children can aspire to become life-time readers.

Since the research literature regarding parental expectations is often dated (i.e. fathers expectations for children's academic behaviours has rarely been studied), fathers' roles regarding children's academic behaviours in modern society is not reflected. This study will explore fathers' expectations for their children's reading behaviours. If significant relationships are found between fathers' expectations and children's reading behaviours, recommendations will be made as to how fathers can foster home environments and expectations which are conducive to the positive development of their children's reading behaviours.

Further, there are few studies pertaining to parental expectations and children's reading behaviours at the primary level (i.e. Walberg et al., 1974; Shipman et al., 1977;



Entwistle et al's., 1978, 1982, 1983, 1988) . Since reading skills and behaviours are influenced by parents at a very early age (i.e. Durkin, 1966; Lehr, 1982) it is imperative to study primary school aged children to better understand parental expectations in relation to children's reading development at an early age.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the interrelationships among parental expectations for children's reading, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers, and reading comprehension in grade two. As well, the effects of parents' and children's gender on these variables were examined. If positive and significant relationships were found among these variables, they were addressed as factors which could help children improve, maintain or enhance their reading status. In this chapter, the hypotheses, samples, procedures, instruments to gather data, analyses of the data and limitations of the study were described.

#### HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses of the study came from and were supported by the related research presented in chapter two. The hypotheses were tested as null hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between parental expectations and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between mothers' expectations and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between fathers' expectations and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between parental expectations and children's attitudes toward reading of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between mothers' expectations and children's attitudes toward reading of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between fathers' expectations and children's attitudes toward reading of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 7: The relationship between parental

expectations and children's self-concepts as readers of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 8: The relationship between mothers' expectations and children's self-concepts as readers of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 9: The relationship between fathers' expectations and children's self-concepts as readers of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 10: The relationship between children's perceptions of their parent's expectations and self-concepts as readers of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 11: The relationship between children's attitudes toward reading and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 12: The relationship between children's self-concepts as readers and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 13: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two female children's reading

comprehension.

Hypothesis 14: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's reading comprehension.

Hypothesis 15: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two female children's perceptions of parental expectations.

Hypothesis 16: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's perceptions of parental expectations.

Hypothesis 17: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two female children's attitudes toward reading.

Hypothesis 18: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's attitudes toward reading.

Hypothesis 19: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two female children's self-concepts as readers.

Hypothesis 20: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's self-concepts as readers.

Hypothesis 21: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's reading comprehension.

Hypothesis 22: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's perceptions of parental expectations.

Hypothesis 23: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's attitudes toward reading.

Hypothesis 24: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's self-concepts as readers.

#### **SAMPLE**

The sample used in this study included three cohorts of grade two children from three urban schools. Forty children and their parents were surveyed.

## PROCEDURES

Prior to this investigation a letter requesting permission to conduct this study was put forth to the Ethics Committee at Memorial University of Newfoundland (Appendix A). As well, permission to conduct the study was obtained from both the Avalon Consolidated School Board and the school administrators (Appendix B and C). The parent(s) or guardian(s) and teachers of the children in the study were issued a letter explaining the intent of the testing, a description of the testing procedures, confirmation of confidentiality and permission for their children to participate in the study was requested (Appendix D and E).

Parent(s) and guardian(s) were asked to complete a questionnaire and return it to the examiner through the mail. Mothers and fathers in two-parent homes were each asked to individually complete a survey in order to study any gender-related expectancies.

The children were tested over a two day period. Marsh's (1988) *Self Description Questionnaire-1* (adapted version): *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaires*, and MaKenna and Kear's (1990) *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* were administered during the first day. The *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test, Level B, Form 3* (1992), was

administered on the second day.

All of the instruments pertaining to the children were administered by the researcher. The children's and parent's scores on each instrument were tabulated, coded and then compared and contrasted to determine the interrelationships among parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading, self-concepts as readers and reading achievement. The effects of both parent's and children's gender on these variables were also examined.

#### ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

The *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna et al., 1990) was administered to measure children's attitudes toward reading. The test consisted of twenty items and took approximately twenty minutes to administer. The first ten items reflected academic reading attitudes and the second ten items reflected recreational reading attitudes. Each item was a brief, simply-worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield, the cartoon cat. Each Garfield pose depicted a different emotional state ranging from very positive to very negative. As McKenna et al., (1990) suggested in the instructions the test administrator assured the



children that there were no right or wrong answers, to encourage sincerity. A discussion of Garfield's different poses (very happy, a little happy, a little upset, very upset) was also recommended to ensure that the children clearly understood each of Garfield's moods before proceeding with the test. Each statement was read clearly and slowly twice. The children were asked to circle the picture of Garfield which best described how he or she felt. The survey was scored by counting four points for the "very happy Garfield", three points for the "a little happy Garfield", two points for the "a little upset Garfield", and one point for the "very upset Garfield". A composite score for all the items on the survey was used for statistical analyses.

#### CONCEPT OF SELF AS READER QUESTIONNAIRE

Marsh's 1988 *Self Description Questionnaire-1* (adapted version: *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*) was designed to determine children's sense of self-worth. The test examined five categories: cognitive competence, physical competence, peer acceptance, parental acceptance, and self acceptance.

The test was administered differently than in the recommended manner in that the children were required to answer only nine of the seventy-six questions. The

questionnaire took approximately fifteen minutes to administer. The only questions included were those which pertained to self as a reader. Each statement was read slowly and clearly twice. The children were encouraged to select the response which best described how they felt. The responses to the items on the original questionnaire included five choices a) false, b) mostly false, c) sometimes false/sometimes true, d) mostly true, and, e) true. These response choices were altered to a) YES, b) yes, c) sometimes, d) no and e) NO. The children were informed that "YES" meant that the statement was always true beyond doubt, "yes" meant that the statement was true most of the time, "sometimes" meant that the statement was sometimes true and sometimes false, "no" meant that the statement was mostly untrue and "NO" meant that the statement was never true. The alterations to the response choices were made to accommodate the cognitive needs of the sample.

The children were assured that there were no right or wrong answers and that everyone might have different answers. Oral discussion about how they felt about each statement was prohibited. Three sample questions were given prior to the actual test to help ensure that the children understood what was expected of them. The questionnaire was scored by counting five points for very positive responses, four points for positive responses, three points for sometimes, two points for negative responses and one point for very negative responses.

A composite score for all the items on the survey was used for statistical analyses.

#### CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

The *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* was designed by the researcher to measure children's perceptions of the expectations their parents held for them as readers (Appendix F). The questionnaire was compiled of fourteen items and took approximately fifteen minutes to administer. Each sentence was a brief statement regarding parental expectations. The responses to the statements included five choices a) YES, b) yes, c) sometimes, d) no and e) NO. The children were encouraged to select the response which best described how they felt. The statements were read clearly and slowly twice. The children were informed that "YES" meant that the statement was always true beyond doubt, "yes" meant that the statement was true most of the time, "sometimes" meant that the statement was sometimes true and sometimes false, "no" meant that the statement was mostly untrue and "NO" meant that the statement was never true.

The children were assured that there were no right or wrong answers and that everyone might have different answers.

Oral discussion about how they felt about each statement was prohibited. Three sample questions were given prior to the actual test to help ensure that the children understood what was expected of them. The questionnaire was scored by counting five points for very positive responses, four points for positive responses, three points for sometimes, two points for negative responses and one point for very negative responses. A composite score for all the items on the survey was used for statistical analyses.

**GATES MacGINITIE READING COMPREHENSION  
TEST, LEVEL B, FORM 3 (CANADIAN EDITION)**

The *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test, Level B, Form 3*, was designed to measure the children's reading comprehension ability in a group setting. The test measured the children's understanding of the relation of words and ideas in a textual passage. The first passages were simple sentences but as the test progressed, the passages involved longer sentences and more complex verbal relationships. After each passage was read the children were required to select the picture, from a group of four, that best illustrated the passage or that answered a question about the passage. The children began the test at item one and proceeded at their own

pace for thirty-five minutes. The test included a total of forty items.

The test was scored by tabulating a raw score which was obtained by counting the number of correct items. The raw scores were used for statistical analyses.

#### PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S READING COMPREHENSION

The *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* was designed by the researcher to measure parent's expectations for their children's reading development and comprehension (Appendix G). The questionnaire was compiled of sixteen questions to which the parent(s) or guardian(s) responded a) true, b) sometimes, or c) false. The statements were simple sentences regarding what parent(s) or guardian(s) expected for their children's literacy development and reading comprehension. The questionnaires were sent home to the parents by the children. Each parent or guardian was asked to complete and return the questionnaire within one week via Canadian Postal Services. An envelope, mailing address and postage stamp were supplied. In two-parent households, each parent was asked to complete the questionnaire without consulting with his or her spouse. The data received by mothers was compared to that of fathers to test whether there

were gender effects in parental expectations.

The questionnaire was scored by counting three points for positive responses, two points for sometimes, and one point for negative responses. A composite score for all the items on the survey was used for statistical analyses.

#### **ANALYSES OF THE DATA**

The analyses of data included the raw scores from the test, survey and questionnaires for each participant along with their sex-identity. The interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's self concepts as readers, children's attitudes toward reading, and children's reading achievement were measured through regular correlational analysis and were accepted if significance was achieved at the .01 level. The effects of gender on these variables were measured through an analysis of variance and was accepted if significance was achieved at the .05 level.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The results of the study cannot be used to make

generalizations about a population of young readers. Two instruments, the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, and the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* were designed to measure the variables pertaining to this researcher's study, without previously having been tested for validity or reliability.

The sample also limits wide application of the findings because it reflected mostly white middle-class children and their families.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND ANALYSES

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the data collected during the investigation, in order to determine if the hypotheses stated in chapter three were supported.

To obtain a reliability coefficient, reliability analyses were administered on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*, the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, the *Children's Perception of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* and the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*. A reliability coefficient for the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Tests, Level B, Form 3* was provided by the publisher.

Regular correlational analyses, using the Pearson Product-Moment Method, were employed to determine relationships among measures of parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading achievement. Correlational coefficients were also established between the parent's and children's responses to the items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*, the *Children's Perceptions*



*of Parental Expectations Questionnaire, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, and the Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire.*

The effects of gender on parental expectations and the effects of gender on children's perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading, self-concepts as readers and reading achievement were established using a one-way analysis of variance.

#### RELIABILITY ANALYSES

Reliability analyses were used to determine reliability coefficients for the items or questions on each instrument, with exception to the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test, Level 3, Form B*. The *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test, Level 3, Form B*, was published by Nelson Canada and had a reliability coefficient of .9400. Using the data collected in this investigation a correlation coefficient of .8777 was produced for the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*. A reliability coefficient of .9106 was produced for the data collected on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*.

Instruments to measure parental expectations for children's reading and children's perceptions of parental

expectations, were unavailable at the time of this study. Hence, for the purposes of this investigation, the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* were developed by the examiner. The items on each question were based on the findings and questions proposed in the literature review. The reliability coefficients were determined using the data collected in the study. A reliability coefficient of .7982 was produced for the mothers' *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and .7200 for the fathers' *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*. A reliability coefficient of .7886 was produced for the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*. The respective alphas and standardized item alphas for each questionnaire and survey are recorded in table one.

Table 1  
Reliability Analyses

INSTRUMENT	ALPHA	STANDARDIZED ALPHA
Gates MacGinitie	.9400	N/A
ERAS	.8777	.8813
CSR	.9106	.9086
PECRQ (M)	.7982	.7979
PECRQ (F)	.7200	.6655
CPPE	.7886	.8123

Note

GATES MacGINITIE = Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test, Level 3, Form B.

ERAS = Elementary Reading Attitude Survey.

CSR = Concept of Self as Reader

PECRQ (M) = Mothers' Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire.

PECRQ (F) = Fathers' Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire.

CPPEQ = Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire.

**PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHILDREN'S READING COMPREHENSION**

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between parental expectations and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

A positive correlational coefficient of .4616 was computed between parental expectations and reading

comprehension. The relationship was significant at the .01 level. There was a significant positive relationship between parental expectations for children's reading comprehension and the level of reading comprehension achieved by the children.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between mother's expectations and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .3669 was computed between mother's expectations and reading comprehension. The relationship was not significant.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between father's expectations and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .3910 was computed between father's expectations and reading comprehension. The relationship was not significant.

The Pearson Product-Moment Method was applied to determine if there were relationships between the parent's responses to specific items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and to the children's raw scores on the reading comprehension test. Specific items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* were shown to be correlated with the raw scores on the reading comprehension test. The correlational coefficients for these

items, and the levels significance, are reported in table two.

Table 2

Correlational Matrix - Children's  
Reading Comprehension

Parental Expectations for Children's Reading	M(r)	F(r)
I2	.5176*	----
I3	.7389*	.6794**
I8	.4610*	----
I12	.6038*	----
115	.4733**	.5199**

Note

I2= My child expects to become a good reader.

I3= My child does as well in reading as in other subjects.

I8 = My child enjoys reading.

I12 = My child does as well in reading as I expect him or her to do.

I15 = I expect my child to find reading easy.

M = Mother's responses

F = Father's Responses

N = 40

\* =  $p < .01$

\*\* =  $p < .001$

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD  
READING

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between parental expectations and children's attitudes toward reading of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .0754 was computed between

parental expectations and children's attitudes toward reading. The relationship was not significant.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between mother's expectations and children's attitudes toward reading of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of  $-.0771$  was computed between mother's expectations and children's attitudes toward reading. The relationship was not significant.

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between father's expectations and children's attitudes toward reading in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of  $-.0543$  was computed between father's expectations and children's attitudes toward reading. The relationship was not significant.

Despite the fact that these hypotheses were not supported in an analysis which included overall scores, when the Pearson Product-Moment Method was used to establish relationships between the mother's and father's responses to the items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and children's responses to the items on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*, significant correlations emerged between mother's, father's and children's responses to specific items.

Item one on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* stated, 'I expect my child to become a

good reader'. Correlation coefficients were computed between the mother's and father's responses to this item and the children's responses to three questions on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table three.

Table 3

Correlational Matrix - Parents' Expectations for Children's Reading: Item 1: I expect my child to become a good reader.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey	M(r)	F(r)
Q1	.5489*	----
Q6	.4691*	----
Q9	.6506**	.6500**

Note

Q1 = How do you feel about reading a book on a rainy Saturday?

Q6 = How do you feel about starting a new book?

Q9 = How do you feel about going to a book store?

M = Mother's responses

F = Father's Responses

N = 30 Mothers

N = 25 Fathers

\* =  $p < .01$

\*\* =  $P < .001$

Item three on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* stated, 'My child does as well in reading as in other subjects'. The mother's responses to this item were correlated with the children's responses to three questions on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table four.

Table 4

Correlation Matrix - Parents' Expectations for Children's Reading: Item 3: My child does as well in reading as in other subjects.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey	M(r)
Q6	.6944**
Q9	.5224*
Q17	.6914*

Note

Q6 = How do you feel about starting a new book?

Q9 = How do you feel about going to a book store?

Q17 = How do you feel about reading stories in class?

M = Mother's responses

N = 31

\* p < .01

\*\* p < .001

The mother's and father's responses to item fifteen on the *Parent's Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*, 'I expect my child to find reading easy', were correlated with the children's responses to seven questions on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table five.



Table 5

Correlation Matrix - Parents' Expectations for Children's Reading: Item 15: I expect my child to find reading easy.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey	M(r)	F(r)
Q5	----	-.5058*
Q6	.5519*	----
Q9	.6503*	----
Q11	----	-.5089*
Q15	.5442*	----
Q17	.4574*	----
Q20	.5086*	----

Note

Q5 = How do you feel about doing workbook pages?

Q6 = How do you feel about starting a new book?

Q9 = How do you feel about going to a book store?

Q11 = How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?

Q15 = How do you feel about learning from a book?

Q17 = How do you feel about stories you read in class?

Q20 = How do you feel about taking a reading test?

M = Mother's responses

F = Father's responses

N = 21

\* =  $p < .01$

\*\* =  $p < .001$

A correlational coefficient of .5625 emerged between the father's responses to item two on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*, 'My child expects to become a good reader', and the children's responses to question four, on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*, 'How do you feel about getting a book for a present, and was significant at the .01 level.

Item eleven on the *Parental Expectations for Children's*

*Reading Questionnaire* stated, 'It is important what I expect for my child in reading'. A correlational coefficient of .6500 emerged between the father's responses to this item and the children's responses to question six, on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*, 'How do you feel about starting a new book', and was significant at the .01 level.

#### PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPTS AS READERS

Hypothesis 7: The relationship between parental expectations and children's self-concepts as readers of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .2263 was computed between parental expectations and children's self-concepts as readers. The relationship was not significant.

Hypothesis 8: The relationship between mother's expectations and children's self-concepts as readers of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .0572 was computed between mother's expectations and children's self-concepts as readers. The relationship was not significant.

Hypothesis 9: The relationship between father's expectations and children's self-concepts as readers of grade

two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .0745 was computed between father's expectations and children's self-concepts as readers. The relationship was not significant.

Using the Pearson Product-Moment Method, relationships between the mother's and father's responses to specific items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and the children's responses to items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, were determined.

Item one on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire-1* stated, 'I get good marks in reading'. A correlational coefficient of .4381 was computed between the children's responses to this item and the combined raw scores on the mother's and father's *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and was significant at the .01 level. Parents who held high expectations for their children's reading had children who believed that they got good marks in reading.

The children's responses to item one on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* were also correlated with specific mother's and father's responses to several items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table six.

Table 6

Correlation Matrix - Concept of Self as Reader  
Item 1: I get good marks in reading.

Parental Expectations for Children's Reading	M (r)	F (r)
I1	.5249*	----
I2	----	.6380
I3	.6486**	----
I7	----	.5330*
I10	----	.5330*
I12	.7403**	.5644*

Note

I1 = I expect my child to become a good reader.

I2 = My child expects to become a good reader.

I3 = My child does as well in reading in other subjects.

I7 = My child expects that I think he or she is a good reader.

I10 = My child knows what I expect of him or her in reading.

I12 = My child does as well in reading as I expect.

M = Mother's Response

F = Father's Response

N = 28 Mothers

N = 23 Fathers

\* =  $p < .01$

\*\* =  $p < .001$

The children's responses to item three on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* which stated, 'I am a good reader', were correlated to the mother's and father's responses on three items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table seven.

Table 7

Correlation Matrix - Concept of Self as Reader:  
Item 3: I am a good reader.

Parental Expectations for Children's Reading	M (r)	F (r)
I2	----	.6313*
I3	.5235*	----
I12	.5208*	----

Note

I2 = My child expects to become a good reader.

I3 = My child does as well in reading as in other subjects.

I12 = My child does as well in reading as I expect.

M = Mother's responses

F = Father's response

N = 28 Mothers

N = 23 Fathers

\* =  $p < .01$

\*\* =  $p < .001$

The children's responses to item four on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* which stated, 'I am interested in reading', were correlated to several of the mother's responses to items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*. The correlational coefficients and significance levels are reported in table eight.

Table 8

Correlation Matrix - Concept of Self as Reader:  
Item 4: I am interested in reading.

Parental Expectations for Children's Reading	M (r)
I3	.5018*
I9	.4916*
I12	.5109*
15	.5662*

Note

- I3 = My child does as well in reading as in other subjects.  
 I9 = Being able to read is important for my child.  
 I12 = My child does as well in reading as I expect.  
 I15 = I expect my child to find reading easy.  
 M = Mother's responses  
 F = Father's responses  
 N = 28 Mothers  
 N = 23 Fathers  
 \* =  $P < .01$   
 \*\* =  $p < .001$

Item six on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* stated, 'Work in reading is easy for me'. The children's responses to this item were correlated with several of the mother's and father's responses to items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table nine.

Table 9

Correlation Matrix - Concept of Self as Reader:  
Item 6: Work in reading is easy for me.

Parental Expectations for Children's Reading	M (r)	F (r)
I1	----	.5649*
I2	----	.5649*
I3	.6841*	.6067*
I11	----	.5649*

Note

I1 = I expect my child to become a good reader.

I2 = My child expects to become a good reader.

I3 = My child does as well in reading as in other subjects.

I11 = It is important what I expect for my child in reading.

M = Mother's response

F = Father's response

N = 28 Mothers

N = 23 Fathers

\* =  $p < .01$

\*\* =  $p < .001$

Item eight on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* stated, 'I look forward to reading'. The children's responses to this item and the mother's responses to item fifteen on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* were correlated. Item fifteen on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* stated, 'I expect my child to find reading easy'. The correlational coefficient was computed as .4822 and significant at the .01 level.

Item two on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* stated, 'I enjoy reading'. The children's responses to this

item were correlated with the mother's and father's responses to item three on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* which stated, 'My child does as well in reading as in other subjects'. Correlational coefficients of .5665 were computed between the children's and mother's responses and .5539 between the children's and father's responses to these items. Each correlational coefficient was significant at the .01 level.

A significant correlation was also computed between the children's responses to item two on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, 'I enjoy reading', and the mother's responses to item twelve on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* which stated, 'My child does as well in reading as I expect'. The correlational coefficient between the responses to these two items was .5752 and was significant at the .01 level.

#### CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPTS AS READERS

Hypothesis 10: The relationship between children's perceptions of their parent's expectations and their self-concepts as readers of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .6170 was computed between



children's perceptions of parental expectations and their self-concepts as readers. The relationship was significant at the .001 level.

The Pearson Product-Moment Method was applied to compute correlational coefficients between the children's responses to the items on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* and their responses to the items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*.

The results of the Pearson Product-Moment Method showed that the children's responses to specific items on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* and their responses to specific items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* were significantly correlated.

Item one on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* stated, 'My parents expect me to become a good reader'. A correlational coefficient of .4680 emerged between the children's responses to this item and item one on, the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, 'I get good marks in reading', and was significant at the .01 level.

The children's responses to item one on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* were also correlated to the children's responses to item two on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*. Item two stated, 'I enjoy reading'. The correlational coefficient was computed at .4830 and was significant at the .01 level.

Item two on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* stated, 'My parents expect me to enjoy reading'. The children's responses to this item and their responses to item one on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, 'I get good marks in reading', showed a correlational coefficient of .4728 and was significant at the .01 level.

Item seven on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* stated, 'What my parents expect for me is important'. The children's responses to this item were correlated to three of the children's responses to items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table ten.

Table 10

Correlation Matrix - Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations: Item 7: What my parents expect for me is important.

Concept of Self as Reader	r
I1	.5774*
I2	.4733*
I3	.5019*

Note

I1 = I get good marks in reading.

I2 = I enjoy reading.

I3 = I am a good reader.

N = 30

\* =  $p < .01$

\*\* =  $p < .001$

Item nine on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* stated, 'I do as well in reading as my parents expect me to'. The children's responses to this item were correlated to the children's responses to four items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table eleven.

Table 11

Correlation Matrix - Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations: Item 9: I do as well in reading as my parents expect me to.

Concept of Self as Reader	r
I2	.6139*
I4	.6378**
I8	.5812**

Note

I2 = I like reading.

I4 = I am interested in reading.

I8 = I look forward to reading.

N = 30

\* =  $p < .01$ \*\* =  $p < .001$ 

**CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD READING AND  
READING COMPREHENSION**

Hypothesis 11: The relationship between children's attitudes toward reading and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .1523 was computed between children's attitude toward reading and children's reading comprehension. The relationship was not significant.

The Pearson Product-Moment Method, however, showed that the children's responses to two questions on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* were significantly correlated to their scores on the reading comprehension test.

A correlational coefficient of .5111 emerged between children who had high reading comprehension scores and children who enjoyed starting new books. The correlation was significant at the .001 level.

A correlational coefficient of .4392 was computed between children who scored well on the reading comprehension test and children who enjoyed visiting book stores. The relationship was significant at the .01 level.

#### CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPTS AS READERS AND READING COMPREHENSION

Hypothesis 12: The relationship between children's self-concepts as readers and reading comprehension of grade two children will be zero.

A correlational coefficient of .5427 was computed between children's self-concepts as readers and their reading

comprehension. The relationship was significant at the .001 level.

The Pearson Product-Moment Method showed that the children's responses to specific items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* were significantly correlated to their raw scores on the reading comprehension test. The correlational coefficients and levels of significance are reported in table twelve.

Table 12  
Correlation Matrix - Reading Comprehension

Concept of Self as Reader	r
I1	.6898*
I3	.6634**
I4	.4626*
I6	.5735**
I8	.4721*

Note

- I1 = I get good marks in reading.  
 I3 = I am a good reader.  
 I4 = I am interested in reading.  
 I6 = Work in reading is easy for me.  
 I8 = I look forward to reading.  
 N = 36  
 \* =  $p < .01$   
 \*\* =  $P < .001$

**CORRELATIONAL MATRIX: ALL VARIABLES**

A correlational matrix depicting the correlational coefficients and levels of significance between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension is reported in table thirteen. The table provides an overview of all of the significant and non-significant relationships computed using the Pearson Product-Moment Method.

Table 13  
Correlational Matrix - All Variables

	PECRQ MOTHER	PECRQ FATHER	PECRQ M-F	CPPE	ERAS	CSR	GATES
PECRQ MOTHER	----	----	----	----	.0284	.1128	.3669
PECRQ FATHER	----	----	----	----	.0060	.1375	.3910
PECRQ M-F	----	----	----	----	.1654	.3098	.4616*
CPPE	----	----	----	----	----	.4768*	.2603
ERAS	.0284	.0060	.1654	----	----	----	.1625
CSR	.1128	.1375	.3098	.4768*	----	----	.5921*
GATES	.3669	.3910	.4616*	.2603	.1625	.5921*	----

Note

PECRQ MOTHERS = Parental Expectations of Children's Reading Questionnaire for Mothers  
 PECRQ FATHERS = Parental Expectations of Children's Reading Questionnaire for Fathers  
 PECRQ M-F = Parental Expectations of Children's Reading Questionnaire for Mothers and Fathers  
 CPPE = Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations  
 ERAS = Elementary Reading Attitude Survey  
 CSR = Concept of Self as Reader  
 GATES = Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test  
 N = 40  
 \* =  $p < .01$

**GENDER EFFECTS: PARENTS AND CHILDREN****RESTATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

Hypothesis 13: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations and grade two female children's reading comprehension.

Hypothesis 14: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's reading comprehension.

Hypothesis 15: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two female children's perceptions of parental expectations.

Hypothesis 16: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's perceptions of parental expectations.

Hypothesis 17: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two female children's attitudes toward reading.

Hypothesis 18: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's attitudes toward reading.

Hypothesis 19: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two female children's self-concepts as



readers.

Hypothesis 20: There will be no gender effect on parental expectations for grade two male children's self-concepts as readers.

Hypothesis 21: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's reading comprehension.

Hypothesis 22: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's perceptions of parental expectations.

Hypothesis 23: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's attitudes toward reading.

Hypothesis 24: There will be no gender effect for grade two children's self-concepts as readers.

An analysis of variance was conducted to screen the data for gender effects. The first analysis of variance determined whether or not parental expectations produced gender effects. Children's reading comprehension, perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading and self-concepts as readers were entered as dependent variables.

The analysis of variance produced main effects for gender on mother's and father's expectations for children's reading comprehension and self-concepts as readers. The results of the analysis of variance are described in tables fourteen and fifteen.

The second analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether or not the children produced gender effects.

Children's reading comprehension, perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading and self-concepts as readers were entered as dependent variables. No significant gender effects emerged.

Table 14

Analyses of Variance Test: Parental Expectations  
for Children's Reading Comprehension: Gender Effects.

VARIATE	GROUP	MEAN	F	DF	P
PECR (M)	F	38.3846	4.8204	1,31	.0357*
	M	31.4000			
PECR (F)	F	41.333	7.7208	1,25	.0102*
	M	32.1667			

Note

PECR (M) = Mother's Expectations for Children's Reading

PECR (F) = Father's Expectations for Children's Reading

F = Female Children

M = Male Children

p = <.05

Table 15

Analyses of Variance Test: Parental Expectations  
for Children's Self Concepts as Readers: Gender Effects.

VARIATE	GROUP	MEAN	F	DF	P
PEXR (F)	F	39.1111	5.5025	1,18	.0272*
	M	28.500			

Note

PEXR (F) = Father's Expectations for Children's Reading

F = Female Children

M = Male Children

p = <.05

### SUMMARY

A statistical analyses of the data collected during this investigation of the interrelationships among parental expectations for children's reading, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension, and the effects of gender on these variables, generated major findings.

The major findings were summarized as follows:

1. There was a significant relationship between parental expectations and children's reading comprehension.
2. There was no significant relationship between mothers' expectations and children's reading comprehension.
3. There was no significant relationship between fathers' expectations and children's reading comprehension.
4. There was no significant relationship between parental expectations and children's attitudes toward reading.
5. There was no significant relationship between mothers' expectations and children's attitudes toward reading.
6. There was no significant relationship between fathers' expectations and children's attitudes toward reading.
7. There was no significant relationship between parental expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.
8. There was no significant relationship between mothers'

expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.

9. There was no significant relationship between fathers' expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.

10. There was a significant relationship between children's perceptions of parental expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.

11. There was no significant relationship between children's attitudes toward reading and children's reading comprehension.

12. There was a significant relationship between children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading achievement.

13. Mothers and fathers expected females to perform better in reading than males.

14. Fathers influenced females self-concepts as readers more than males self-concepts as readers.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

#### INTRODUCTION

Chapter five was designed to discuss the findings arising from the statistical analyses of data collected during this investigation. Educational implications were based on these results. Recommendations for further research were also addressed.

#### SUMMARY

The study emerged from a review of the literature regarding the interrelationships among parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension.

The literature review on parental expectations proved to be diverse and, at times, dated (i.e., parental expectations and children's scholastic achievement). Parental expectations were not clearly defined. Parental expectations were described as expectations for children's occupations, educational

levels, (Douglas, 1964; Hess et al., 1980, & 1984) mathematics marks, science marks, reading marks or general achievement marks (Entwisle et al., 1982; Thompson et al., 1988; Seginer, 1986). The variables which researchers predicted were correlated to parental expectations, included numerous dependent measure a) mathematics and science, (Stevenson et al., 1986; Parsons et al., 1982; Keeves, 1974) b) reading, (Entwisle et al., 1978; 1982; 1983; 1987) c) academic achievement (Gigliotti et al., 1975; Weiss, 1974; Hess et al., 1980 & 1984) and d) attitude development (Douglas, 1964; Keeves, 1974; Stevenson et al., 1986). More recently, researchers investigated the relationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations (Parsons et al., 1982; Dillabough, 1990) and children's self-concepts as readers (Phillips, 1987; Ladd et al., 1986).

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the interrelationships among parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers and children's reading comprehension. The effects of gender on these variables were also considered.

The hypotheses proposed during this investigation resulted from a review of the literature. An attempt was made to consider all of the known variables, to date, which were believed to be associated with parental expectations and

children's reading comprehension.

The following relationships were investigated.

1. The relationship between parental expectations and children's reading comprehension.
2. The relationship between mothers' expectations and children's reading comprehension.
3. The relationship between fathers' expectations and children's reading comprehension.
4. The relationship between parental expectations and children's attitudes toward reading.
5. The relationship between mothers' expectations and children's attitudes toward reading.
6. The relationship between fathers' expectations and children's attitudes toward reading.
7. The relationship between parental expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.
8. The relationship between mothers' expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.
9. The relationship between fathers' expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.
10. The relationship between children's perceptions of parental expectations and children's self-concepts as readers.
11. The relationship between children's attitudes toward reading and children's reading comprehension.
12. The relationship between children's self-concepts as

readers and children's reading comprehension.

13. There are gender effects for parental expectations on female children's reading comprehension.

14. There are gender effects for parental expectations on male children's reading comprehension.

15. There are gender effects for parental expectations on female children's perceptions of parental expectations.

16. There are gender effects for parental expectations on male children's perceptions of parental expectations.

17. There are gender effects for parental expectations on female children's attitudes toward reading.

18. There are gender effects for parental expectations on male children's attitudes toward reading.

19. There are gender effects for parental expectations on female children's self-concepts as readers.

20. There are gender effects for parental expectations on male children's self-concepts as readers.

21. There are gender effects for children's perceptions of parental expectations.

22. There are gender effects for children's attitudes toward reading

23. There are gender effects for children's self-concepts as readers.

24. There are gender effects for children's reading comprehension.



A sample of forty grade two children and their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) was selected to participate in the investigation. Forty parents gave their consent for their children to participate. Seventy-four parent(s) and guardian(s) responded to the questionnaires.

The children were administered two questionnaires, one survey and one test a) the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, b) the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, c) the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* and d) the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test, Level 3, Form B*.

The mothers', fathers' and guardians' expectations were measured using the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire*.

The scores obtained on the questionnaires, survey and test were correlated using the Pearson Product-Moment Method. Analysis of variance tests were also performed to compute the influence of parents' gender on children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers, and children's reading comprehension. As well, T-tests were used to produce the influence of children's gender on their perceptions of parental expectations, their attitudes toward reading, their self-concepts as readers, and their reading comprehension.

**PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHILDREN'S READING COMPREHENSION**

The results of this investigation supported the hypothesis that parental expectations (i.e., mothers' and fathers' expectations combined) were related to children's reading comprehension. Parents who held high expectations for their children's reading comprehension had children who performed well on the reading comprehension test. This finding corroborated the work of Boocock (1972), Entwisle and her associates (1978; 1982; 1983; & 1987) and Becher (1986).

An examination of the parent's responses to items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and of the children's scores on the reading comprehension test, suggested that the parents of children who scored well had fundamentally positive expectations about their children's reading. The parents of high-achievers expected that their children believed themselves, to be good readers, to do as well in reading as in other subjects, and to do as well at reading as their parents expected them to. In addition, these parents expected their children to enjoy reading and to find it easy.

These results implied that parental expectations were predictive of children's reading comprehension. Parents who had positive expectations about their children's reading had children who performed well in reading. The parents who were

examined in this investigation not only expected their children to perform well in academic reading (i.e., 'I expect my child to do as well in reading as in other school subjects'), but also expected their children to do well in reading-related activities at the recreational level (i.e., 'I expect my child to enjoy reading'). Parental expectations also reflected how the parents felt about their children's self-concepts as readers. The parents of high-achievers expected their children to believe themselves to be good readers, and to find reading easy. Similarly, Boocock (1972) concluded from her research that parents of high-achieving children expected their children to perform well in school-related activities (i.e., reading) and demonstrated behaviours (i.e., did homework with their children) which promoted the fulfilment of parental expectations.

Entwisle et al. (1982) expressed the same view when they suggested that parental expectations influenced children's reading because parents who held high expectations for their children's reading often demonstrated behaviours (i.e., read to children at home) which helped their children improve their reading performance in order to meet parental expectations.

Becher (1986) believed that parents with realistic expectations, in terms of their children's actual abilities, had children who performed well on cognitive tasks.

Correlational analyses were administered to determine

whether mothers' expectations, independent of fathers' expectations, and fathers' expectations, independent of the mothers' expectations, were related to children's reading comprehension. The results of the analyses produced no significant findings. The expectations of one parent did not influence the children's reading comprehension. When mothers' and fathers' expectations were examined as a collective unit, only then did their expectations have a significant impact on their children's reading.

Thompson et al. (1987) reported on the importance of family structure and parents' assessment of their children's abilities. Their investigation showed that mother-father families, mother-father extended families and one-parent families, where a significant other was present, influenced children's reading achievement. Thompson et al.'s findings, in conjunction with the findings of this investigation, seem to suggest that parental expectations were effective when they were combined with the expectations of another person, whether it be another parent or a significant other (i.e., teacher or grandparent).

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD  
READING

Presently, the scarcity of the literature regarding parental expectations indicates that the relationship between parental expectations and children's attitudes toward reading has not been explored. What does exist is research which explored the relationships between parental attitudes toward school, parental ratings of children's academic performances and children's attitudes toward mathematics, science and academic achievement in general (Douglas, 1964; Keeves, 1974; Stevenson et al., 1986). Douglas (1964) Keeves (1974) and Stevenson et al. (1986) showed that parents' attitudes toward school and their ratings of children's abilities, were related to children's own attitudes toward mathematics and science.

In light of the absence of literature exploring this relationship, statistical analyses of the data collected regarding parental expectations and children's attitudes toward reading seemed warranted. Overall, the analysis showed that neither parental expectations (i.e., mothers' and fathers' expectations combined), mothers' expectations nor fathers' expectations were related to the children's attitudes toward reading. However, an analysis of specific items on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* and the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* revealed

that mothers who expected their children to become good readers had children who enjoyed:

1. reading in general.
2. reading books on rainy Saturdays.
3. starting new books.

As well, when mothers and fathers expected that their children would become good readers, their children enjoyed visiting book stores.

Mothers who expected their children to do as well in reading as in other subjects, had children who enjoyed:

1. starting new books.
2. visiting book stores.
3. reading stories in class.

The data also showed that mothers who expected their children to find reading easy had children who enjoyed:

1. starting new books.
2. going to book stores.
3. reading in class.
4. learning from books.
5. taking reading tests.

When fathers expected their children to become good readers their children liked to receive books as presents. As well, fathers who thought their expectations for their children's reading were important, had children who enjoyed starting new books.

An examination of these data suggested that both mothers' and fathers' expectations, were related to some aspects of children's attitudes toward reading. This was evident in the academic domain (i.e., learning from books) but most pronounced in the recreational domain (i.e., reading books on rainy Saturdays, visiting book stores and starting new books).

Possibly, parental expectations were related to children's attitudes toward recreational reading more than academic reading because the parents who had high expectations for their children may have engaged their children in recreational reading-related activities. In so doing, parents would have demonstrated that they themselves perceived recreational reading activities to be worthwhile (i.e., took their children to book stores and gave their children books for presents). As well, parental involvement in recreational reading-related activities may have contributed to parents maintaining or enhancing their own expectations for their children's reading because parent-child reading-related activities would have provided feedback to the parents regarding their children's interest in reading. Further research into parent-child reading-related activities would help to confirm or negate this speculation.

Another plausible explanation why parental expectations were related to children's attitudes toward recreational reading more than to academic reading may be because parental

expectations with regard to academic reading might be more influential in conjunction with the expectations of a significant other, such as the children's reading teacher, since teachers are primarily responsible for children's academic reading behaviours rather than recreational reading. In future research, teacher expectations could be studied along with parental expectations in the academic and recreational domains to see if in fact parental and teacher expectations together are related to children's reading attitudes.

On the contrary, fathers who expected their children to find reading easy had children who disliked answering questions which the teacher asked during reading class and doing reading workbook pages.

These findings may have occurred because the children of these fathers might not have perceived reading to be as easy a task as the fathers expected it to be. Researchers have indicated that concrete measures of actual ability (i.e., completing workbook pages) could be related to children's own expectations for success (Dweck, 1975; Stipek et al., 1980). Stipek et al. 1980 reported that female children tend to lower their expectations for academic success when they are required to engage in activities which purport to measure their reading ability (i.e., workbook pages). The female children in this present investigation who indicated that they disliked



answering teacher questions and doing workbook pages may have done so because they may have wished to avoid reading-related activities which measured their actual abilities, for fear of not being able to fulfil their fathers expectations.

Male children's achievement-related expectations are primarily related to their past academic performances rather than to the expectations of others (Dweck et al., 1975). It is possible that the male children in this investigation recently scored poorly on workbook pages or failed to answer a teacher's question correctly, which may have consequently stimulated negative feelings toward these activities, during the time of this investigation.

Another plausible reason for these findings may be that the children's fathers may not have valued reading activities such as doing workbook pages or answering teacher questions. If the children in this investigation internalized their father's values, they themselves may not regard doing workbook pages and answering teacher questions as worthwhile tasks. As well, these children may have thought that these activities were too simple to engage in or were not challenging.

If this finding is typical of young readers, future researchers should try to understand why fathers' expectations for their children to find reading easy promotes negative feelings toward certain academic reading tasks (i.e., workbook pages) which to some degree, provide explicit

measures of their performance. It may be because fathers who have positive expectations for their children's reading fail to demonstrate behaviours (i.e., helping children develop strategies to bring meaning to the text and asking questions while reading aloud) which could help their children develop confidence to cope with the anxieties of answering questions about what they have read or of doing workbook pages.

Mothers have traditionally been responsible for ensuring that their children's homework was completed, reading aloud to children and providing reading-related experiences at an early age (Battle, 1983). If fathers assumed the role of being equally responsible for providing reading-related experiences to their children (i.e., doing home work, reading aloud and asking questions while reading aloud) negative attitudes toward reading tasks which provide explicit measures of achievement may be alleviated. Children who engage in reading-related activities with their fathers may better understand their fathers' expectations as well as having 'at-home' opportunities to demonstrate their actual performance abilities.

Further research is required to discover why fathers expectations for their children to find reading easy stimulates negative attitudes toward reading performance in young children. Additionally, this research could provide data which could be used to find strategies to help children

overcome the anxieties they feel toward certain reading-related activities or to help fathers make their expectations for children's reading less threatening for engaging in these activities.

#### CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND SELF-CONCEPTS AS READERS

Children's perceptions of parental expectations and the development of their self-concepts as readers was not well researched. At least two research studies have, however, considered children's perceptions of parental expectations as an important variable which could have an impact on children's perceptions of themselves as learners. Parsons et al. (1982) investigated the relationships between children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's self-concepts and their academic achievement where mathematics was used as the dependent variable. Parsons showed that children's academic self-concepts were related to the children's perceptions of their parent's expectations, more than to their actual past academic performance. As well, Dillabough (1990) found that children's perceptions of parental expectations were related to children's self-perceptions of their academic ability.

An analysis of the overall scores on the *Children's*

*Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, and the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* revealed that children's perceptions of parental expectations were related to their self-concepts as readers.

An analysis of the children's specific responses to items on the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire* along with their responses to the items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* revealed that children who perceived that their parents expected them to become good readers, believed that they got good marks in reading and that they enjoyed reading.

As well, when children perceived that their parents expected them to enjoy reading, the children believed that they got good marks in reading.

Children who perceived that what their parents expected for them was important:

1. got good marks in reading.
2. felt they were good readers.
3. enjoyed reading.

Children who perceived that they did as well in reading as their parents expected them to:

1. enjoyed reading.
2. were interested in reading.
3. looked forward to reading.

The children in this investigation who perceived that

their parents held high expectations for their reading achievement had positive self-concepts as readers. Besides perceiving that their parents expected them to be good readers and to enjoy reading, the children perceived their parent's expectations as being important. Lehr (1982) suggested that children of parents who perceive reading to be important will probably perceive reading to be important themselves. If the children in this study perceived reading to be important because their parents did, they may have put extra effort into reading-related tasks and, consequently, believed themselves to be effective readers.

Equally important was the finding that, children with positive self-concepts about themselves as readers, believed that they were able to achieve their parent's expectations. This finding provides further support for researchers who, as a result of these findings, caution parents to keep their expectations in line with their children's actual abilities (Entwisle et. al., 1982; Becher 1986). These findings could have possibly occurred because the parents of children whose perceptions of parental expectations were related to their self-concepts as readers may have demonstrated behaviours (i.e., asked their children to read a book aloud) which showed that they supported and encouraged their children's reading.

Regrettably, parental reading-related behaviours were not examined in this investigation. Further research regarding

parental behaviours and their relationship to parental expectations seems necessary in order to help establish which parental behaviours mediate positive, realistic expectations and which have an impact on children's perceptions of parental expectations.

#### PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPTS AS READERS

Since children's perceptions of parental expectations were related to children's self-concepts as readers, an examination of the relationship between children's self-concepts as readers and actual parental expectations seemed warranted.

An analysis of the overall scores of children's self-concepts as readers and parental, mothers' and fathers' expectations did not produce significant results. Nevertheless, some aspects of children's self-concepts (i.e., feeling that they were good readers and being interested in reading) were related to specific parental expectations.

A correlational analysis between children's responses to questions on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, and the raw scores on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* showed that children who felt that they

got good marks in reading had parents who held high expectations for them. An analyses of the correlations between the mother's and father's responses to items on the *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and the children's responses to the items on the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire* revealed that children who felt that they got good marks had mothers who expected them to do as well in reading as in other subjects, and to perform as well as she expected them to.

The fathers of these children expected that their children:

1. were aware of their expectations.
2. believed themselves to be good readers.
3. expected to become good readers themselves.

As well, the parents of these children expected them to perform well enough in reading to achieve their expectations. Children who believed that they were good readers had mothers who expected their children to perform well enough in reading to meet their expectations, and to do as well in reading as in other subjects.

The fathers of these children believed that their children expected to become good readers.

Children who were interested in reading had mothers who expected them to:

1. do as well in reading as in other subjects.

2. perform as well as she expected them to.
3. find reading easy.
4. feel that reading was important.

When children believed that reading was easy for them, both parents expected the children to do as well in reading as in other subjects. The fathers of these children expected their children to:

1. become good readers.
2. feel they themselves would become good readers.

As well, the fathers expressed that their own expectations for their children's reading were important.

Children who looked forward to reading had mothers who expected them to find reading easy.

The mothers and fathers of children who enjoyed reading expected their children to perform as well in reading as in other subjects.

The mothers of children who enjoyed reading expected that their children did as well in reading as she expected.

An examination of these data revealed that three recurring expectations were related to children's self-concept as readers, more frequently than the other expectations. They were, 'My child does as well in reading as in other subjects', 'My child does as well as I expect him or her to do' and 'My child expects to become a good reader'.

An examination of the specific expectations suggests that



parents were tuned into children's perceptions of themselves as readers (i.e., 'My child expects to become a good reader'). The parental expectations also suggests that the children did as well at reading as in other subjects, but probably, more importantly, the children felt that they were able to do as well as their parents expected them to do. Entwisle et al. (1982) and Becher (1986) posited that parental expectations are more related to children's reading achievement when they are in line with the children's actual abilities. It appears that the importance of parental expectations being in line with the children's actual abilities is also evident in this finding. When children had positive self-concepts as readers, their parent's expectations were obviously related to their children's abilities since the children believed they were able to fulfil their parent's expectations.

These findings may have possibly occurred because the parents of children with positive self-concepts as readers may have demonstrated behaviours, in addition to having positive, realistic expectations, which suggested that they felt that their children were effective readers (i.e., asking their children to read a book aloud for them, praising their children for their reading and encouraging their children when they experience difficulty). In future research, parental reading-related behaviours need to be examined in relation to parental expectations to determine if parental expectations

and reading-related behaviours are conducive to the children's positive self-concepts as readers.

#### CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD READING AND READING COMPREHENSION

Attitude toward reading is considered by some to determine a child's scholastic fate (Bettelheim et al., 1981; Heilman, 1972). To have a positive attitude toward reading has been suggested to be the first prerequisite for reading (Alexander, 1983).

Athley and Holmes (1976) claimed that attitudes, values, and beliefs are as important to the reading process as cognitive strategies, like word identification. In fact, cognitive and affective domains are believed to be so intertwined that cognitive processes such as reading are dependent, to an extent, on affective behaviours such as attitude. Even though many theorists of reading consider the reading process to be a form of information processing, most assume that affective processes such as attitudes operate at the same time.

Children's attitudes toward reading in this investigation were not related to their reading comprehension ability as measured by the overall scores on the *Elementary Reading*

*Attitude Survey* and the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test*. However, an analysis of the children's specific responses on the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* and their raw scores on the reading comprehension test showed that high-achieving children enjoyed two recreational reading activities, starting new books and visiting book stores.

These findings may possibly have occurred because the children in this investigation may not have had enough academic reading experience (i.e., reading to learn, reading tests and reading workbook pages) to develop a potent attitude toward academic reading. However, their attitudes toward reading were beginning to have an impact on their engagement in recreational reading activities (i.e., starting new books and going to bookstores). The children who had positive attitudes toward recreational reading may have had more exposure to recreational reading activities before coming to school.

If, in fact this is the case, many concerns arise regarding parental involvement and expectations which influence children's attitude toward academic reading in early childhood. Parents may neglect to instill expectations and involve children in academic reading-related activities until their children are engaged in academic reading situations in school. Parents may not expect their children to read books or answer questions about books before they enter school. These

possibilities could be explored through further research which delves specifically into parental expectations about children's academic reading situations (i.e., Do you expect your child to answer questions about stories as you read aloud?). Children who are beginning to read could benefit as much from some academic reading-related expectations (i.e., expecting children to recall stories they heard) and behaviours (i.e., giving children informational books) as recreational reading-related expectations (i.e., expecting children to read books for pleasure) and behaviours (i.e., taking children to bookstores or libraries).

On the other hand, children who were good at reading comprehension enjoyed recreational reading-related activities. The better readers may have perceived reading to be a pleasurable and meaningful task, as well as an academic endeavour. If so, this perception would be conducive to the development of a positive attitude toward reading activities in general.

#### **CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT AS A READER AND READING COMPREHENSION**

The impact of children's self-concepts as readers on their reading achievement has been researched extensively.

When Ignoffo (1988) addressed the influence of self-concept on reading achievement, she claimed that children's beliefs of being unable to learn sabotaged any chance for reading improvement.

Other researchers have shown that children who experienced difficulty in reading were more likely to improve their reading abilities when remedial reading programs were implemented along with self-concept improvement strategies (Wooster et al., 1982; Cant et al., 1985; Lawrence, 1985). The findings of this investigation provided further support for the relationship between self-concept and reading achievement.

As was the case in other research, the children in this investigation who perceived themselves as good readers were, in fact, good readers. Children with positive self-concepts as readers expressed several fundamental beliefs about their own reading ability. The data showed that they were interested in reading, looked forward to reading, believed they got good reading marks, found reading easy and felt they were good readers.

This result was not surprising. These data provide further support for parents and teachers to create positive, risk-taking contexts which promote children's self-concepts as readers. Children who are encouraged, praised and given chances to take risks (i.e., allowing children to make some mistakes regarding word identity) when reading, have

opportunities to build positive self-concepts about themselves as readers and toward reading-related activities. Children who are treated as readers are more likely to become readers.

**GENDER EFFECTS: PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S  
READING COMPREHENSION, AND SELF-CONCEPTS AS READERS**

When the data were analyzed for gender effects, main effects emerged. The mothers and fathers in this investigation held higher reading comprehension expectations for female children than for male children. This finding corroborated the findings of other researchers (Stipek et al., 1980; Entwistle et al., 1982; Stevenson et al., 1986)

Entwistle et al. (1982), Stevenson et al. (1986) and Stipek et al. (1980) having found similar results, described the discrepancy between parental expectations for male and female children's reading as being consistent with popular sex stereotypes. The researchers believed that female children more often seek adult approval (i.e., trying to fulfill parental expectations and asking parents for help), whereas male children are more likely to seek independence and autonomy with respect to academic reading-related activities. Additionally, female children frequently score equally well and often surpass males performance in reading during

elementary school. According to Entwisle et al. (1978) feedback parents receive regarding their children's reading achievement (i.e., children scoring well on reading test and seeking help from parents) affected parental expectations. Possibly, the parents in this investigation attended to feedback regarding their children's reading-related behaviours before forming their own expectations.

In any case, this finding suggests that sex stereotyping interferes with parental expectations and possibly their reading-related behaviours. This is a most unfortunate circumstance for male children because parental expectations were related to children's reading achievement in this investigation. Therefore, parents, teachers and significant others need too recognize the need to form expectations and demonstrate behaviours which are high but realistic expectations for both males and females.

Furthermore, even if males seek autonomy much earlier than females, parental expectations probably will have an impact on males' reading comprehension, attitudes toward reading, and self-concepts as readers periodically, because young male children are not completely autonomous of other's influences.

Fathers' expectations affected females' self-concept as readers more than those of mothers. This finding confirms the recent awareness that is emerging regarding the importance of

male role models (i.e., fathers, and grandfathers) in shaping and contributing to children's concepts of themselves as learners and readers. Until recently, mothers have been considered to be the primary care givers regarding children's academic careers (i.e., doing homework and attending parent-teacher interviews). The impact of fathers on children's self-concepts as readers may be related to the fathers emerging role regarding their children and their children's academic endeavour. Literacy programs now emphasize the importance of fathers as role models for children who are learning to read. As well, modern family units, where mothers are absent or working outside the home, lend themselves to situations where fathers are solely or equally responsible for providing academic reading-related activities.

**GENDER EFFECTS: CHILDREN'S READING COMPREHENSION,  
PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS, ATTITUDES TOWARD  
READING AND SELF-CONCEPT AS READERS**

An analysis of variance regarding the effects of children's gender on their reading comprehension, their perceptions of their parents expectations, their attitudes toward reading and their self-concepts as readers, did not produce main effects. The female and male children in this



investigation, perceived parental expectations, achieved in reading comprehension and developed attitudes and self-concepts as readers, equally well. These data corroborated the findings of Walberg et al. (1974).

This result may have emerged because young children, regardless of the stereotypes society uses to label male and female qualities, can be equipped to perceive parental expectations, to develop attitudes toward reading, to form self-concepts as readers, and to achieve on reading comprehension equally well, at least at the grade two level.

This result is encouraging because, even if significant others (i.e., parents) have higher expectations as discussed earlier for female children than for male children regarding reading-related activities (i.e., greater expectations for females than for males), these children themselves are not susceptible to gender-related discrepancies. Further research on children as they become older would help to determine if this finding is sustained as children proceed through school and have more life experiences, which might cause them to fulfil socialized gender-related roles.

#### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

Until recently, many teachers believed reading to be

acquired primarily through 'cognitive type' exercises (i.e., phonics, vocabulary flash card drills and information processing strategies). However, as the holistic approach to reading (i.e., helping children use background knowledge to bring meaning to text and displaying children's own stories throughout the classroom) is being more widely used by reading teachers, a new emphasis is being placed on affective education in conjunction with cognitive skills (i.e., developing positive attitudes toward reading by inviting children to choose their own reading material).

Recent empirical evidence supports the effects of the social and psychological domains on learning to read. The literature review, prior to this investigation, implicated parent's and children's social (i.e., communication of parental expectations through their behaviour) and psychological (i.e., attitudes toward reading and children's self-concepts as readers) domains as variables which enhance, maintain or inhibit one's reading ability.

The empirical data collected during this investigation provided further support for the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, children's attitudes toward reading, children's self-concepts as readers, and reading comprehension.

Children who were skilled in reading comprehension had positive self-concepts as readers and parents who held high

expectations for them as readers.

A synthesis of these data provide the basis for specific educational implications. The educational implications of the study include the following:

1. Parents who expected their children to become good readers had children who were good readers. Based on this finding it is imperative for parents who want their children to become good readers to reflect upon their own expectations and behaviours to determine whether or not they create contexts which maintain, promote or hinder their children's reading development. The literature review showed that parents who expected their children to become good readers often demonstrated behaviours which created contexts (i.e., read to their children and exposed their children to various print material), where their expectations for their children's reading could be realized (Boocock, 1972; Entwisle et al., 1982). Teachers of children who are learning to read could help to promote positive, realistic parental expectations by initiating or maintain parent-teacher contacts to keep parents abreast of children's reading-related accomplishments. When parents receive positive feedback about their children's academic behaviours they are more likely to maintain or create positive expectations (Entwisle et. al., 1978). In addition, teachers could make helpful suggestions to parents about ways in which they could enrich the quality of reading-related

activities which take place at home (i.e., have parents ask questions about stories as they read aloud to children at home and have parents help children figure out unknown words). If parents and teachers work together to create positive contexts which are conducive to learning, their children will have a better opportunity to reach their maximum reading potential and become life-time readers.

2. One parent's expectations, when combined with the expectations of a significant other, (i.e., another parent) were related to children's reading comprehension.

The findings of this study helped to confirm the importance of 'significant others' in children's lives. Smith (1971) stated that "Children learn what they are taught and parents are a child's first teacher" (p. 11). Lehr (1982) suggested that if parents perceived reading to be important, their children probably would too.

People who are significant in children's lives (i.e., parents, teachers, grandparents), have significant effects on children's achievement behaviours. Parents, teachers and others who instruct children, should assess the types of messages that they send to the children about their own perceptions of the children as learners. Positive messages seem to promote learning. Negative messages seem to be detrimental to children's scholastic success.

Traditionally, mothers provided academic supporting

behaviours (i.e., did homework, met teachers and encouraged positive attitudes and self-concepts) which helped their children to fulfil parental expectations. According to the results of this investigation, parental expectations were more successfully fulfilled when more than one person held positive expectations for children's reading comprehension. Therefore, fathers, grandparents and others should adapt positive, realistic expectations for the children's reading, and take active roles in providing positive reading-related experiences (i.e., visiting bookstores, reading aloud to children and doing homework with children) which could help to promote children's reading achievement.

3. Although the overall scores of parental expectations were not related to children's attitudes toward reading, the data revealed relationships between specific parental expectations and children's recreational reading-related activities. This implies that parents who held high expectations for their children exposed them to recreational reading-related activities (i.e., giving books for presents and visiting bookstores). In so doing, not only did the parents communicate to their children that reading was an enjoyable and worthwhile task, but also that reading is more than an academic pursuit. Therefore, it is highly recommended that parents engage their children in reading-related activities on a regular basis. If children perceive reading to

be an enjoyable endeavour as well as an academic task, they may aspire to becoming life-time readers more readily.

The fact that the overall scores of parental expectations were not related to children's attitudes toward academic reading is somewhat alarming. Parental expectations should reflect positive, realistic messages about the value of academic reading-related activities. Parents need to create positive, realistic expectations (i.e., expecting children to value learning from books) about their children's attitudes toward academic reading and mediate their expectations through their behaviours (i.e., exposing children to informational books as well as trade books and helping children retrieve information from books) because the ability to read at an academic level is essential for mastery of most other school curricula (i.e., mathematics, science, social studies, and so forth). However, this relationship may change as reading comes to play a larger role in content area learning, usually considered to occur with greater emphasis in grade four. Research on these variables at different grade levels may help to determine if this relationship changes as the children progress through school.

Teachers have a critical role in helping parents find methods to expose their children to academic reading-related activities at home (i.e., parents and children doing school projects at home, making books at home to share with others

and at school) because many parents, who are often eager to become involved, sometimes feel that they do not know how to help their children at home.

Teachers are also advised to provide support and encouragement to parents who wish to have active roles in their children's reading. Parents will probably feel more confident and put more effort in home-school reading-related activities if they receive guidance and praise for their efforts from their children's teacher.

4. The fact that fathers' expectations for their children to find reading easy was negatively related to their children's desire to perform on academic reading-related tasks which measure actual ability (i.e., workbook pages), implies that fathers play an important role in the development of their children's attitude toward academic reading. Father's expectations could promote or hinder their children's development of a positive attitude toward reading-related activities. Fathers should realize that having high expectations for their children's reading does not necessarily ensure that their children will conform to these expectations. Fathers need to assess their expectations for their children's attitude toward reading and determine whether or not they make efforts, through their behaviours (i.e., allowing children to chose their own reading material and doing reading-related homework with children), to help their children meet their

expectations. If children are given at-home opportunities to engage in reading-related activities with their fathers, and display their actual achievement (i.e., answering father's questions while reading) children's anxieties toward certain reading-related activities may be alleviated. Children could be provided with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to their fathers in a nonthreatening context. Hence, fears of being unable to achieve father's expectations may be lessened. As well, fathers who participate in reading-related activities which require their children to display actual achievement (i.e., having children retell stories and recall ideas from informational books) demonstrate to children that these activities are valuable and worthwhile tasks. When children, gain experience in reading-related activities at home, they may eventually become more comfortable with reading activities which display their abilities in an academic setting.

5. The overall scores of parental expectations and children's self-concepts as readers were not correlated. However, some specific parental expectations were related to some aspects of children's self-concepts as readers. This implies that parents and teachers need to maintain realistic, positive expectations for their children's reading-related activities and demonstrate behaviours which promote the development of children's self-concepts as readers (i.e., telling children that they are or are becoming good readers



and showing children reading strategies that help them develop as readers). Children who have positive self-concepts as readers are more likely to become good readers.

6. Children perceived what their parents expected of them in reading, and consequently, there was a relationship between children's perceptions of parental expectations and their self-concepts as readers.

In light of this parents should reflect upon the expectations they hold for their children and determine if their expectations communicate positive or negative messages about their children as learners. Entwisle et al. (1978) emphasised this when she stated, "... the ideas others have about the children's abilities exert powerful influences on a child's performance" (p.2). Children who receive positive, realistic expectations and behaviours regarding their reading comprehension will probably feel more inspired to do well in reading than will children who receive negative messages from significant others about themselves as readers. Positive expectations and behaviours about children's reading comprehension are conducive to the development of positive self-concepts as readers. Negative expectations and behaviours about children's reading comprehension could be detrimental to the children's development of positive self-concepts as readers. The development of a positive self-concept as a reader could help children become life-time readers.

7. Overall, children's attitudes toward reading were not related to reading comprehension in this investigation. This finding causes concern for the children in this study because research has shown that positive attitudes toward reading are related to reading comprehension (Alexander, 1983; Briggs, 1987). However, children's reading comprehension was related to two recreational reading-related activities, starting new books and visiting bookstores. These data provide further support for parents holding positive, realistic expectations for their children's reading and demonstrating behaviours in recreational and academic reading-related activities which communicate positive messages about the value and importance of reading. Positive, realistic parental expectations and behaviours would help to promote the development of positive attitudes toward reading.

In addition, for children to develop positive attitudes, teachers as well as parents need to promote reading as a pleasurable worthwhile endeavour in their regular reading regime. Teachers can model reading by reading a book of their pleasure during sustained silent reading activities, discuss books they particularly like or dislike, and so forth.

Children who have positive attitudes toward reading are better candidates for becoming life-time readers than children who have negative attitudes.

8. Children's self-concepts as readers were related to

their reading performance. Some researchers (Lawrence, 1985; Cant, 1985; Ignoff, 1988) stated that the development of a positive self-concept is so important that remedial reading programs cannot be effective unless the development of a positive self-concept as a reader is addressed.

Children's self-concepts as readers, during this investigation, proved to be related to children's reading comprehension and to children's perceptions of parental expectations.

Since self-concept as a reader is so important to children's reading achievement, parents and teachers should create contexts in which children's self-concepts as readers can be fostered. Parents and teachers must ensure that children receive praise for their reading accomplishments, encouragement while learning to read (i.e., helping children to develop strategies to bring meaning to words) and freedom to take risks while becoming skilled readers.

Children who are made to believe that they will become good readers usually succeed in reading.

9. Parents generally have higher expectations for females' reading comprehension than for males', as was the case in this study. When parent's expectations are manifested by their behaviours, parents need to engage male children in positive behaviours (i.e., reading aloud at home) which foster reading development, as much as they do for females. Parents

who expect that female children perform better on reading-related activities should enlarge their expectations to include the realization that male children, given the same opportunities as female children, can perform equally well in reading-related activities. Some researchers have suggested that males seek autonomy rather than parental approval with regard to achievement-related behaviours (Stevenson, 1980; Stipek et al., 1980). Even if this suggestion is true, children, in general, internalize adult values and expectations through the behaviours of their role models (Boocock, 1972). Undoubtedly, male children can benefit from positive, realistic parental expectations and behaviours which attempt to create contexts in which reading development is encouraged and viewed as important. Parents who set good examples for children through their own behaviours, may eventually have children modelling those behaviours.

10. Father's expectations affected female children's self-concepts more than mother's expectations. This implies that fathers, even though they are not usually the primary caregivers with respect to academic reading-related behaviours in two-parent homes, are very important with respect to female children forming concepts of themselves as readers. In light of these findings, fathers must ensure that they hold positive, realistic expectations for their daughters' reading and express their expectations through positive behaviours

(i.e., praising their daughters for reading-related accomplishments and involving themselves and their daughters in reading-related homework).

The implications arising from this investigation are applicable to all primary grades, even though the investigation was conducted on a group of grade two children. Parents and teachers of all young children who have positive, realistic expectations and who create contexts which foster the development of children's attitudes toward reading, their self-concepts as readers and eradicate expectancies with gender related overtones (i.e., higher expectations for female children in reading comprehension than for male children), provide contexts conducive to producing a generation of children who should become life-time readers.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As any investigation evolves, many questions emerge which could not, at the outset, have been anticipated. The very nature of the investigative process provides opportunities for the examiner to synthesize and analyze the data as they become available. During the investigative process, examiners realize questions or issues which need to be added to their investigation in order, to provide a more salient perspective

of the research topic.

In order to overcome the limitations of this study, the recommendations for further research should be addressed.

1. In single-parent families, significant others (i.e., step parent, grandparent, boyfriend, girlfriend) should be requested to complete an *Expectation for Children's Reading Questionnaire*. This investigation showed that parental expectations were related to children's reading comprehension when combined with the expectations of another person (i.e., mother's expectations when combined with father's expectations). If significant relationships are found between parental expectations and the expectations of significant others, the role of significant others in children's lives could be given weight.

2. A *Parental Expectations for Children's Reading Questionnaire* and *Children's Perception of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, which has proven reliability and validity, should be used or devised. The scores tabulated from instruments with proven reliability and validity would allow researchers to have greater confidence in the data as they comment on the implications of the study.

3. The study should be replicated using a larger sample of children and their families, in urban and rural communities in order to explore the relationships with these and other variables in urban and rural communities, as well as to test

the reliability of these findings.

4. Parents should be examined with regard to their reading-related behaviours at home, so that parental expectations can be compared and contrasted with their actual behaviours. Findings regarding the relationships between parental expectations and behaviours could be used to help parents choose behaviours which would help to create, maintain or enhance and communicate positive, realistic expectations.

5. Children should be examined regarding their mother's and father's expectations for their reading achievement. Any discrepancy between children's perceptions of mother's or father's expectations may become evident. This information would help determine whose expectations children themselves feel they are more susceptible to, mother's or father's. The information could be used by parents to help ensure that their sons and daughters are aware of their separate expectations and to adjust their behaviours accordingly to communicate positive, realistic expectations.

6. Research should be conducted into young children's ability to reflect upon and report on their perceptions of parental expectations. The findings of such a review would help to create an appropriate instrument to effectively measure this variable.

7. Statistical analysis such as path analysis should be administered to address questions of directionality between

the variables. For example, appropriate statistical procedures could determine if parental expectations affect children's reading comprehension or whether children's reading comprehension affect parental expectations. The same procedure could be applied to the other significant relationships found in this study.



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## Appendix A

119 Pennywell Road  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1C 2L3

Dr. Walter Okshevsky  
Chairperson  
Ethical Review Committee  
Faculty of Education  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
St. John's, Newfoundland

Dear Dr. Okshevsky:

In order to complete the requirements for the Master's Degree programme in Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I wish to conduct a study with a group of grade three student's this winter. The study is designed to test the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perception of parental expectations, self-concepts as readers, attitudes toward reading, and reading achievement. The effect of gender on these variables will also be examined. Written consent will be required from the parent(s) or guardian(s) to permit their child to participate in the test, survey and questionnaires that will be used. Please find enclosed five copies of my research proposal, the parental consent form, testing materials, as well as other correspondence required for the investigation.

Thank-you for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Legge

## Appendix B

119 Pennywell Road  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1C 2L3

Assistant Superintendent  
Avalon Consolidated School Board  
P.O. Box 1980  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1C 5R5

Dear Assistant Superintendent:

I am a replacement kindergarten teacher at St. Andrew's Elementary School, and am currently enrolled as a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am presently working on my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. My supervisor is Dr. Joan Oldford-Matchim. In order to fulfil the requirements for this degree, I must conduct a study. I have chosen to investigate the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, self-concepts as readers, attitudes toward reading, and reading comprehension. The effect of gender on these variables will also be examined. In order to establish any correlations among these variables, it will be necessary to administer two simple questionnaires, a survey and a reading comprehension test to a group of grade two students. The questionnaires include the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, along with the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* and the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test*. The parent(s) or guardian(s) will also be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their expectations for their child's reading achievement. I have enclosed a copy of the parent/guardian consent form for your perusal.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. Participation is voluntary and the students or parents may withdraw at any time. This study has received approval from the Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee. The results of my study will be made available to you upon request. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with this study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development. If you have any concerns regarding this matter, please contact me at 739-4890. Except for these questionnaires and the test, which will take approximately two hours over a two day period, the regular classroom program will not be interrupted in any way. I hereby request your permission to test three classes of grade two children in your school district. I look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience. Thank-you for your kind attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Legge

## Appendix C

119 Pennywelll Road  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1C 2L3

New Perlican  
St. John's  
Newfoundland  
A3R 7H8

Dear Sir:

In order to complete the requirements for the Master's Degree program in Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I wish to conduct a study with a group of grade two student's during the winter of 1994. The study is designed to test the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, self-concepts as readers, attitudes toward reading, and reading achievement. The effect of gender on these variables will also be examined. In order to establish any correlations among these variables, it will be necessary to administer two simple questionnaires, a survey and a reading comprehension test on a group of grade two students. The questionnaires include the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, along with the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* and the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test*. Written permission from the parents will be required before any child can participate in the study. The parents will also be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their expectations for their child's reading achievement. I would like to send these questionnaires, and the consent forms, to the parent(s) or guardian(s) by way of the children. The completed questionnaires will be sent directly to Memorial University and the consent forms will be returned to the school.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. Participation is voluntary and the students or parents may withdraw at any time. This study has received approval from the Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee. The results of my study will be made available to you upon request. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with this study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development. If you have any concerns regarding this matter, please contact me at 739-4890. Except for these questionnaires and the test, which will take approximately two hours over a two day period, the regular classroom program will not be interrupted in any way. I hereby request your permission to allow me to conduct this study using a grade two class at your school. I thank-you for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Legge

## Appendix D

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian:

I am a graduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. I am presently working on a Masters Degree in Curriculum and Instruction with my supervisor Dr. Joan Oldford-Matchim. I have chosen to investigate the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, attitudes toward reading, self concepts as readers and their reading comprehension. The effects of gender on these variables will also be examined. In order to collect data on these variables it is necessary for me to conduct a study. With your permission, I would like to administer three questionnaires and a reading comprehension test to your child.

Your child's participation will consist of two sessions over a two day period. Each session is approximately one hour. On the first day your child will be asked to complete three short questionnaires. The questionnaires include the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire*, *Children's Perception of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, and the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey*. The questionnaires will help to determine your child's attitude toward reading, self concept as a reader and what he or she believes you expect of them in reading. Each question on all three questionnaires will be read aloud twice. After each question is read your child will be asked to circle the response which best describes how he or she feels. The response choices will either include four poses of Garfield, the cartoon character, depicting very happy to very sad expressions or the words 'NO', 'no', 'sometimes', 'yes', 'YES' expressing strong agreement to strong disagreement.

On the second day your child will be given the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test* designed for children at the second grade level. Your child will be required to read a series of passages which begin as simple then progress to become more difficult. After each passage is read he or she will then select a picture which answers a question about the passage or that describes the passage.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. Participation is voluntary and you or your child may withdraw at anytime. This study has received approval from the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.



If you are in agreement with having your child participate in this study please sign below and return one copy to the classroom teacher. The other is for you. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call me at 737-3500 or 737-7604. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with this study please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development.

I would appreciate it if you would please return this sheet to me by March 18, 1994.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours Sincerely,

Joanne Legge

I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) hereby give permission for my child to take part in a study regarding the interrelationships among parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, self-concepts as readers, attitudes toward reading and reading achievement undertaken by Joanne Legge. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at anytime. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

---

Date

---

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)  
Signature

## Appendix E

119 Pennywelll Road  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1C 2L3

New Perlican  
St. John's  
Newfoundland  
A3R 7H8

Dear Madame:

In order to complete the requirements for the Master's Degree programme in Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I wish to conduct a study with a group of grade two student's during the winter of 1994. The study is designed to test the interrelationships between parental expectations, children's perceptions of parental expectations, self-concepts as readers, attitudes toward reading, and reading achievement. The effect of gender on these variables will also be examined. In order to establish any correlations among these variables, it will be necessary to administer two simple questionnaires, a survey and a reading comprehension test on a group of grade two students. The questionnaires include the *Concept of Self as Reader Questionnaire-1*, the *Children's Perceptions of Parental Expectations Questionnaire*, along with the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* and the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test*. Written permission from the parents will be required before any child can participate in the study. I have enclosed a copy of the parental consent form for your perusal. The parents will also be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their expectations for their child's reading achievement. I would like to send these questionnaires, and the consent forms, to the parent(s) or guardian(s) by way of the children. The completed questionnaires will be sent directly to Memorial University and the consent forms will be returned to the school.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. Participation is voluntary and the students or parents may withdraw at any time. This study has received approval from the Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee. The results of my study will be made available to you upon request. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with this study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development. If you have any concerns regarding this matter, please contact me at 739-4890. Except for these questionnaires and the test, which will take approximately two hours over a two day period, the regular classroom program will not be interrupted in any way. I hereby request your permission to allow me to conduct this study using your grade two class. I thank-you for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Legge

## Appendix F

## CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

BOY: \_\_\_\_\_

GIRL: \_\_\_\_\_

## INSTRUCTIONS

I am going to read you some sentences about what parents expect from boys and girls who are learning to read. I want you to tell me if these sentences are always true. If they are circle the big YES. If these sentences are only true sometimes, circle the small yes. If these sentences are sometimes true and sometimes false circle the word sometimes. If the sentences are mostly untrue circle the small no. If the sentences are always untrue circle the big NO. First though we will do a few examples together.

## EXAMPLES

1. My parent(s) expect me to read five hundred books each day.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

2. My parent(s) expect me to take care of my books.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

3. My parent(s) expect me to choose a new library book each week.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

Are there any questions before we begin?  
Please turn the page.

## CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. My parent(s) expect me to become a good reader.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

2. My parent(s) expect me to enjoy reading.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

3. My parent(s) expect me to become as good at reading as my other school subjects.

Yes            yes            sometimes            no            NO

4. I do not know what my parent(s) expect of me in reading.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

5. My parent(s) expect me to find reading easy.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

6. My parent(s) do not expect me to become a good reader.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

7. What my parent(s) expect for me is important.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

8. My parent(s) do not expect me to become as good at reading as I am at other school subjects.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

9. I do as well at reading as my parent(s) expect me to do.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

10. My parent(s) expect me to dislike reading.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

11. I know what my parent(s) expect of me in reading.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

12. My parent(s) do not expect me to find reading easy.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

13. What my parent(s) expect for me is not important.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

14. I do not do as well at reading as my parent(s) expect me to do.

YES            yes            sometimes            no            NO

## Appendix G

## PARENTS EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S READING QUESTIONNAIRE

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (Child): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent' (s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child:                      MOTHER                      FATHER

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The information which you give on this questionnaire will be held in the strictest confidence. It is important that you answer each question as honestly as possible. Please answer each question keeping in mind how YOU feel as a parent without consulting with another family member. It is imperative that you complete this survey independent of your spouse. Otherwise the findings of this survey may not reflect the true effects of parental expectations on children's reading related achievement.

After you have completed your survey please find enclosed an addressed and stamped envelope. Use this envelope to return your survey no later than one week after you have received it. Your time, honesty and participation are deeply appreciated.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Please read each statement carefully. Select ONE of the following answers by circling the response of your choice.

1. I expect my child will become a good reader.  
True            Sometimes            False
2. My child expects to become a good reader.  
True            Sometimes            False
3. I expect that my child will become as good at reading as s(he) is at other subjects.  
True            Sometimes            False
4. My child does not know what I expect of him/her in reading.  
True            Sometimes            false
5. I expect that my child will find reading difficult.  
True            Sometimes            False
6. My child does not do as well in reading as s(he) does in other subjects.  
True            Sometimes            False
7. My child expects that I think s(he) is a good reader.  
True            Sometimes            False
8. My child enjoys reading.  
True            Sometimes            False
9. Being able to read is not important for my child.  
True            Sometimes            False
10. My child knows what I expect of him/her in reading.  
True            Sometimes            False
11. It is important what I expect for my child in reading.  
True            Sometimes            False



12. My child does not do as well in reading as I expect him or her to do.

True            Sometimes            False

13. My child does not expect to become a good reader.

True            Sometimes            False

14. I do not expect my child to become a good reader.

True            Sometimes            False

15. I expect my child to find reading easy.

True            Sometimes            False

16. It is not important what I expect of my child in reading.

True            Sometimes            False







